

Man Plummets to Deck From Cruise Ship Adventure Ride

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A man was seriously injured when he crashed to the deck on a cruise ship. NBC 6 investigates what went wrong and his warnings to other people looking for an adventure on a cruise.

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You name the adventure and Casey Holladay has done it.

Snowboarding, wakeboarding, hiking and power yoga with his girlfriend were his passions.

So when he was on the Royal Caribbean's Mariner of the Seas in February, he figured he was a natural for an adventure attraction the cruise line calls the SkyPad.

"We were really excited because we had seen a commercial that Royal was promoting for this SkyPad, this awesome experience in the sky," Holladay told NBC 6.

The ride is promoted as a trampoline and bungee jump in one.

He says he was enjoying himself until something happened that caused him to crash and drop an estimated 20 feet to the ground.

"I just felt the momentum release from my body that I wasn't being held by anything anymore," he said. "When I hit all I really remember is the hit and the noise and the fear."

His girlfriend was recording on her mobile phone when it happened. After his fall, she rushed to where he was being treated on the ship's deck.

"It's kind of one of those cliché moments when your life changes in the blink of an eye," Holladay said.



Royal Caribbean shortened the cruise and brought Holladay back to Miami where doctors performed several surgeries to repair his broken pelvis. He also dislocated his shoulder.

He spent nine days in a South Florida hospital.

A month after the fall, we saw Casey at his Sarasota home pulling himself up out of bed, using a walker, and wheelchair.

"My life got changed without me having a say," he said. "I am fearful that I am not going to be able to enjoy the day-to-day like I'm used to."

Holladay is now suing Royal Caribbean in federal court in Miami using maritime attorney Brett Rivkind.

"He suffered very severe debilitating injuries," Rivkind told NBC 6. "This is a life changing accident that never ever ever should have happened."

Holladay's lawsuit against Royal Caribbean says the operators gave him no warnings and failed to inspect and maintain the support ropes.

"These are activities that were designed to be operated on land by experienced amusement park operators. They really do not have the experience to do a proper analysis of the safety risks of putting these types of activities on a cruise ship," Rivkind said.

Royal Caribbean declined NBC 6's request for an interview about what is seen in the video or alleged in the lawsuit.

In an email, the cruise line wrote, "We operate all our ships safely, professionally and responsibly. We do not comment on pending litigation."

Holladay is also upset about what he found out later happened when he was lying on the deck.

One of his friends was attempting to record what was happening, but a cruise line worker is holding out his hand in an attempt to prevent the recording.

"100 percent - all staff should have been attending to me," Holladay said. "They just had the most horrific incident around."

Rivkind was also surprised by what he saw.

"The video shows there was a stronger interest in preventing other passengers from videotaping and preserving the evidence than paying attention to Casey. That's appalling," Rivkind said.

Holladay has been told he has months of rehabilitation ahead and wants others to know what happened.

"That's the scariest part. It could have happened to anybody," he said.

Rivkind questions Royal Caribbean's move placing rides like the SkyPad on a moving ship.

"A passenger may have a false sense of security in believing that the activities offered on board a cruise ship are safe because they are being operated by a big cruise ship company," he said.

"You should be aware; it may not be the case."

Rivkind also says that rides like those are operated by the ship's hotel staff, something he says brings into question the level of training and experience they have and could add to the risk.

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