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Family disputes story about teen's death in Mexico

The father of a Selkirk, Manitoba teen says he is frustrated by the lack of information and support the family is getting from the Canadian government after 19-year-old Josh Wasiuk died while on holiday in Puerto Vallarta last week.

By Canwest News Service January 29, 2008 [Be the first to post a comment](#)

The father of a Selkirk, Manitoba teen says he is frustrated by the lack of information and support the family is getting from the Canadian government after 19-year-old Josh Wasiuk died while on holiday in Puerto Vallarta last week.

“We haven’t been told anything, really,” Josh’s father, Jerry Wasiuk Sr. said Tuesday. “The only thing we’ve been told is the damage was to the back of his head. I’m sure if he fell ten stories, his body should be broken up pretty bad.”

Mexican authorities concluded Josh Wasiuk fell from a balcony while staying at the Get Away Resort.

Jerry Sr. said he is considering having an independent autopsy performed on his son’s body when it is returned to Canada on Sunday.

“We made some phone calls, and I’ve been talking to (Foreign Affairs Canada) but you don’t get much out of them. All they say is the investigation is ongoing. But you don’t get any answers,” he said.

“We shouldn’t even have to ask to get information. You’d think they would freely give it to you so you’d have some peace of mind. But you don’t get anything at all.”

An Ottawa spokeswoman with Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada said they are liaising with authorities in Puerto Vallarta.

“We are in contact with local authorities regarding the investigation into the death,” Eugenie Cormier-Lassonde said Tuesday.

“We are in close contact with the individual’s family and offering consular assistance and support,” she said.

“Support? No. You don’t get any support,” Wasiuk said. “All I have is the 1-800 number for Foreign Affairs.”

“They’re being polite and everything. It just seems like they’re trying to hide or cover up or they’re scared to say anything.”

Josh had been vacationing with his 28-year-old brother, Jerry Jr. who said the two had been drinking heavily in the hotel bar on Saturday afternoon.

“People at the hotel told me they took me back to our room around 3:00. I woke up around 8:00 on Sunday morning and tried looking for my brother. Another guest told me somebody fell off the balcony. I looked all over for him, but no one would answer me. No one would tell me anything.”

He said someone from the Canadian consulate finally took him into a back room and told him his brother had fallen from a communal balcony at the other end of the building from their room and was dead.

But Jerry disputes the story.

“The railing are too high. About 48 inches. He’s too short. And the thickness of the rail is about a foot wide which would stop you from falling over.”

Jerry also says he was not questioned by local police although the hotel staff said they were unable to wake him up when the accident happened.

Family and friends of a southern Alberta man, Chris Morin, 30, were also told he had fallen to his death from a fourth-floor balcony in November 2007. A Cancun newspaper reported Morin fell after a night of drinking.

Last February, Ontario couple Dominic and Nancy Ianiero were found on the floor of their room, also in a Cancun resort, their throats slashed. They were there for their daughter’s wedding.

An investigation by Mexican authorities suggested two Canadian women from Thunder Bay, Ont., guests at the same resort, were the main suspects. Former Mexican president Vincente Fox declared the Canadians were likely to blame for the couple’s grisly murder.

One of Canada’s most powerful criminal lawyers, Edward Greenspan, rebuked the president for trying to protect Mexico’s tourist industry at all costs. Greenspan urged Canadians to stay out of Mexico for their own safety.

- with files from Alexandra Paul, Winnipeg Free Press

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