

Plaintiffs in wrongful death case could lose out after adoption

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

- February 2, 2012

Losing a loved one to an accident is an inexplicably emotional point in a family's life. Trying to make sense of and cope with it is hard enough without the person supposedly responsible for the loss playing any sort of games.

This post is about an out-of-state wrongful death case that has sparked national attention. At the center of the case is a wealthy Florida man who is accused of causing a drunk driving accident and leaving the scene. The victim died, the family sued for [wrongful death](#), and the suspect is apparently doing what he can to protect his money.

ABC News reports that the 48-year-old defendant adopted a new "child" recently. The kicker is that his new adopted daughter is 42 years old, and she's his girlfriend. Sources suspect that the adoption is a way for the defendant to shield more of his assets from the family's wrongful death case, should they be awarded damages.

The defendant has trusts created for his children, and that money is protected in the potential circumstance that the court rules in favor of the hit-and-run victim's family. The defendant is worth a reported "several hundred million dollars" but is still worried enough about his bottom line that he would turn to adopting his girlfriend for economic benefit.

Our source does not share any response from the DUI accident victim's family. The adoption has, however, reportedly moved the plaintiffs to challenge the court's prior decision that the trusts for the children be off limits as recoverable assets.

If there is an update in this notable case, we will keep you informed.

Source

ABC News: "[Polo Club Founder Adopts Girlfriend Amid Civil Suit Over DUI Death](#),"
Christina Ng, Feb. 2, 2012