

October 21, 2015



Scott Shaw, 38
~ 7/13/1964 - 10/7/2002 ~

Weeks Marine contracted with Armco in Philadelphia
By: Holly Shaw-Hollis, Widow

My husband, Scott Shaw celebrated his 38th birthday on July 18, 2002. Scott and I celebrated our 9th wedding anniversary on August 14, 2002. Our son, Nicholas, celebrated his 3rd birthday on September 12, 2002. His Daddy wasn't there. His Daddy died 5 days before, when he fell into the Schuylkill River. Scott fell off a barge he was working on, helping to dredge the river. There were only two other employees on both the barges at the time. Scott walked from one barge to another to get oil. He was missed after several minutes, and his hat was discovered floating in the water. Scott's body was found two days later.



Scott didn't have a life jacket on. He wasn't required by his company to wear one. There were no life preservers on the barge. When Scott walked from one barge to another, he navigated tires that were attached between the barges. This is how the employees traveled between the barges.

No one saw Scott go in the water. He just disappeared. He was 6'3", handsome, strong, and was an excellent swimmer.

This was not the first time Scott had fallen off of the barge. There were at least two other times that Scott came home soaking wet, complaining that he had fallen in. The company should have known then that there was a problem.

Scott's death was needless. The company Scott was working for neglected to follow safety regulations. OSHA completed an investigation into Scott's death, and found the company had committed 4 serious violations, and they were fined only \$4,950.00.

The first violation was committed when the employees weren't checked and confirmed that they were wearing life jackets. For this, his company was fined. The second violation was found because the company did not have life preservers on the barge. The third violation was for the way the barges were hooked together. Again, this was termed a "serious" violation. The last violation, another "serious" one, was levied because of the toxic fumes that the employees were breathing when they put the crane away. OSHA terms these fines "citations". I call it a travesty.



I am writing you so I can personalize the fact that a worker's life is worth more than the fines that OSHA places on these companies that are at fault.

Scott and I have two sons. It's been 13 years. Our boys are now 16 and 19. One is a sophomore in college, the other a sophomore in high school. There dad wasn't there to watch them grow. To watch them graduate,



succeed. Their dad wasn't there to watch them play baseball, or to comfort them when they needed him. All of us had counseling to help us handle our grief. Ryan remembers Scott. He remembers the times they went fishing, or tossed a football. Nicholas doesn't remember a lot. I remember when he was younger though, every balloon he had he wanted to let go into the sky so it could go to Daddy in Heaven. My sons were left without a father. I was left without a husband. I would never buy my first house with my husband. We would never sit together and watch our sons graduate from high school, and then college. I would never feel my husband's arms around me again. I would never again be able to hear his voice.

According to the fines OSHA levied on Scott's company, Scott's life was worth \$4,950.00. The company owner was not prosecuted. If he had been charged criminally, he



would have been convicted of a misdemeanor. That's it. Not a felony. He could walk away, and live his life. My husband didn't walk away. Scott left behind a wife, three sons (two sons from our marriage, and one from a previous marriage), two sisters, a brother, a mother, and many family members and friends who loved him tremendously.

Something needs to happen so OSHA is able to raise the fines that are levied against a company when there is an accident. The company can be criminally prosecuted, and can be convicted of a felony. I believe it is imperative that a message is sent that a worker's life is worth more than a couple of dollars. Companies that do not practice safety precautions should be convicted, and sent to prison. They must be punished.

As a teacher and as a parent, I know that it is important that a child understand there are consequences to their actions, and they must accept responsibility for what they have done. Adults must face their responsibility, and must be held accountable for their actions. Please, don't let another family suffer as we have. The more that companies are actually punished, the more they realize they must practice workplace safety, and must protect their workers.

Thank you for your time.

Holly Shaw

