

Elopement: Detox Patient's Actions Not Foreseeable.

The chronic alcoholic patient was in acute withdrawal when his wife brought him to the rehab center. The physician convinced the patient to admit himself and took him to the nurses station.

The nurse started taking vitals and gave the 25 mg of Librium the doctor ordered. Soon, however, it appeared from his rising BP that his withdrawal was more severe than thought and he needed more Librium. The nurse believed she had a rapport with the patient. He seemed to understand she needed to step away to phone the doctor for more medication to help him with his symptoms.

The nurse took three steps away. The patient got up and ran out. As he ran he had a seizure, fell, hit his head and died.

Elopement Attempt Not Foreseeable

The Court of Appeal of Louisiana ruled the nurse did nothing wrong. The nurse had no reason to foresee what happened. The court dismissed the widow's lawsuit. **Ball v. Charter Behavioral Health, ___ So. 2d ___, 2006 WL 2422866 (La. App., August 23, 2006).**