

THE NATIONAL
LAW JOURNAL | 2020
**ELITE
TRIAL LAWYERS**
W I N N E R
LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR
AVIATION



CLIFFORD LAW OFFICES®

A HISTORY OF MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR
SETTLEMENTS AND VERDICTS IN
AVIATION LITIGATION





CLIFFORD LAW OFFICES®

MORE THAN 100 YEARS OF COMBINED
AVIATION LITIGATION EXPERIENCE

1979

AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 191

Just seconds after American Airlines Flight 191 took off from O'Hare Airport, the McDonnell Douglas DC-10 crashed, killing all 258 passengers on board and 13 crew members along with two people on the ground. Robert Clifford worked on the complex litigation involving numerous defendants in what would be the deadliest crash in our country's history.

1989

UNITED AIRLINES FLIGHT 232

A severely injured 70-year-old woman was awarded \$28.3 million. The plane cartwheeled down the runway during landing and burst into flames. A Chicago area man who lost his wife and daughter was awarded \$15 million. Clifford Law Offices was key in proving that GE, the manufacturer of the engine, failed to detect a crack in a disk.

1991

UNITED AIRLINES FLIGHT 585

Twenty passengers and five crew members were en route from Denver to Colorado Springs when a Boeing 737 crashed on its final approach to Runway 35. This was the first case to identify rudder problems in 737s aircraft that led to the FAA ordering three design modifications. Clifford Law Offices represented five families, including four crew members, and reached a settlement with Boeing and United Airlines.

1994

AMERICAN EAGLE FLIGHT 3379

Flight 3379 crashed in Morrisville, North Carolina, after one engine failed and the plane's pilot did not follow proper procedures.

1994

AMERICAN EAGLE FLIGHT 4184

An inattentive flight crew and a poorly designed de-icing boot system caused a crash during an ice storm. Everyone on board perished. Clifford Law Offices represented 16 passengers' families and helped to secure \$110 million for 28 families whose damages cases were consolidated.

1994

USAIR FLIGHT 427

All 132 passengers on Flight 427 were killed during landing due to a rudder malfunction. The FAA enacted three rudder direction modifications to the aircraft to prevent future air catastrophes. Clifford Law Offices obtained \$54 million for the families it represented.

1995

TAROM AIRLINES FLIGHT 371

All 60 passengers on flight 371 were killed when the pilot lost control over Romania due to health problems. The co-pilot attempted to turn on the autopilot, but necessary parameters were not met. Clifford Law Offices settled the case for \$4.7 million for a business consultant who was a passenger aboard this tragic flight.

1996

TWA FLIGHT 800

Flight 800 crashed off the coast of New York due to an explosion in the center wing fuel tank. Clifford Law Offices represented a victim's family and collected damages in a case filed in New York Federal District Court. The Boeing 747-100 had taken off from John F. Kennedy Airport en route to Paris.

1998

SWISSAIR FLIGHT 111

Electrical arcing in wiring of the in-flight entertainment system started an insulation blanket fire that spread to the cockpit. Clifford Law Offices represented the family of a passenger killed in the crash. The McDonnell Douglas MD-11 aircraft was en route from New York to Geneva, Switzerland, when it crashed off a small fishing and tourist community in Nova Scotia.

1999

AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 1420

The flight crew was unable to control Flight 1420 during

inclement weather, causing the aircraft to overshoot the runway, crash into a chain-link fence and strike an anchored stanchion in Little Rock, Arkansas. The captain and 10 passengers were killed; the first officer, four flight attendants and 105 passengers were injured. Clifford Law Offices settled the case of two brothers who survived.

1999

EGYPTAIR FLIGHT 990

217 passengers were killed when flight 990 crashed in the Atlantic Ocean near Nantucket, Massachusetts, after taking off from Los Angeles International Airport en route to Cairo, Egypt. The National Transportation Safety Board determined the crash was caused by the intentional act of the first officer. Among those killed was an 80-year-old woman represented by Clifford Law Offices. She left behind a legally blind husband who relied on her for help and assistance with his day-to-day living.

2000

ALASKA AIR FLIGHT 261

Clifford Law obtained more than \$40 million in settlements for seven families after Flight 261 crashed in the Pacific Ocean en route from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, to Seattle, Washington with a stop at San Francisco International Airport. Nearly 100 depositions were taken to establish that a defective jackscrew system and improper maintenance caused the crash that killed all 88 aboard, including 83 passengers, two pilots and three crew members.

2000

SINGAPORE AIR FLIGHT 006

A Boeing 747 headed to Los Angeles entered the wrong runway at Chiang-KaiShek Airport in Taiwan. During take-off, in heavy rain and strong winds, the airplane rolled and collided into construction equipment, bursting into flames. Eighty three people died, including four crew members. Forty four others were injured. Clifford Law Offices represented the family of a Utah businessman who was killed.

2001

AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 11 AND UNITED AIRLINES FLIGHT 175

Clifford Law Offices represented the property interests of companies, corporations and business owners involved in the destruction of the World Trade Center's Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. These suits were complex, representing insurance compa-

nies and business interests around the world. It settled in 2012 for \$1.2 billion.

2002

AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 587

The National Transportation Safety Board determined Flight 587 crashed due to faulty actions taken by the first officer during take-off that caused the tail of the aircraft to fall off. The flight had taken off from John F. Kennedy Airport in New York and was heading to Santo Domingo's Las Americas International Airport in the Dominican Republic. All 260 passengers, as well as five people on the ground, were killed when the plane crashed in a residential neighborhood in New York.

2003

TURKISH AIRLINES FLIGHT 634

Clifford Law Offices represented the wife of the only American on board Flight 634. The plane crashed in thick fog as it approached Diyarbakir Airport in Turkey.

2005

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES FLIGHT 1248

Clifford Law Offices represented a family who was struck by a Boeing 737 that skid off of Chicago Midway Airport's runway during a snowstorm. The family was traveling in their car when the plane crashed through the barrier wall and collided with their vehicle. The collision resulted in injuries to several family members and the death of their 6-year-old child.

2006

COMAIR FLIGHT 5191

A crew on an early morning flight, from Lexington, Kentucky's Blue Grass Airport, violated the sterile cockpit rule when they weren't paying close attention and used a runway that was too short and under construction. Air traffic control violations led to the deaths of 47 passengers and two crew members. Clifford Law Offices represented five families including the only Canadian passenger on board.

2009

CONTINENTAL CONNECTION FLIGHT 3407

What should have been a routine Newark-to-Buffalo flight ended in tragedy as the Bombardier Dash 8-Q400 crashed into a house, killing all 49 people on board and a man on the ground. National

Transportation Safety Board hearings revealed numerous mistakes made by inexperienced, fatigued pilots and an aircraft that should have been better equipped. Clifford Law Offices represented a number of families who lost loved ones.

2009

TURKISH AIRLINES FLIGHT 1951

Nine people were killed when Flight TK1951 crashed into a muddy field in Amsterdam. The aircraft broke into three pieces on impact, scattering debris. The aircraft stalled as a result of a faulty radio altimeter and the crew failed to recognize the aircraft was losing speed. Clifford Law Offices represented numerous individuals injured in the crash.

Clifford Law Offices consistently garners multi-million dollar settlements and verdicts in aviation litigation. Robert Clifford has represented those injured or killed in every major commercial airline crash in the United States over nearly three decades.

2011

CARIBBEAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 523

In the early morning hours of July 30, 2011, Caribbean Airlines Flight 523, a Boeing 737, crash landed in Guyana. Clifford Law Offices represented five individuals who were injured on the international flight in cases filed under the Montreal Convention in The United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

2013

ASIANA FLIGHT 214

Pilot mismanagement was one of the major causes of Asiana Flight 214 that crashed at San Francisco International Airport. The crash left three people dead and nearly 200 more injured. The Boeing 777 aircraft's tail struck a seawall and was ripped off upon its approach to land, causing the plane to slide and spin down the runway before a fire erupted. The passenger flight had taken off from Incheon International Airport in Seoul, South Korea, and crashed on its final approach to the runway.

2014

MALAYSIA AIRLINES FLIGHT 370

A Boeing 777 on its way to Beijing from Kuala Lumpur International Airport suddenly disappeared from all air traffic control radar over the South China Sea about an hour into the flight. The

search for the wreckage was called off following a three-year underwater multinational investigation. In July 2011, it is believed that several pieces of the missing jet were found on an island in the southern Indian Ocean. Clifford Law Offices represented two permanent U.S. residents who were passengers on that flight and left behind two minor children.

2016

AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 383

The Boeing 767 heading to Miami erupted and became a ball of fire and smoke as it attempted to take off on Chicago O'Hare Airport's Runway 28R. The G.E. disk in the right engine failed. The crew aborted takeoff and an emergency evacuation of all 161 passengers and crew members was ordered. More than 20 passengers were taken to Chicago area hospitals. Clifford Law Offices represents numerous passengers aboard that flight who suffered permanent mental and emotional distress in addition to their physical injuries.

2018

AEROMEXICO/AEROLITEROL FLIGHT 2431

Aeromexico/Aeroliterol flight 2431 crashed immediately after takeoff from Durango, Mexico during severe storm and wind conditions. Clifford Law Offices represents numerous passengers who were bound for the Chicagoland area. The aircraft crashed because the carrier and crew failed to properly account for changing weather conditions, including the potential for wind shear, and permitted an unauthorized and inexperienced crewmember to be at the controls during takeoff.

2018

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES FLIGHT 1380

Clifford Law Offices represents a victim of Southwest Airlines Flight 1380 that had to make an emergency landing as a result of the catastrophic failure of fan blades and other engine component parts on April 17, 2018. A window on the Boeing 737-700 was shattered by engine debris, causing rapid depressurization and resulting in one death and injuries to numerous other passengers.

2019

ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 302

Clifford Law Offices has been retained by families who lost loved ones in the crash of a Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft that crashed en route from Ethiopia to Kenya in March 10, 2019. All 157 on board were killed when the plane crashed minutes after takeoff.



CLIFFORD LAW OFFICES®

120 NORTH LASALLE STREET 31ST FLOOR CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

TELEPHONE 312-899-9090 FAX 312-251-1160

www.CliffordLaw.com

Clifford Law Offices has represented victims of aircraft disasters around the world. The firm has represented passengers and crew against virtually every major airline carrier, manufacturer and assembler, earning the firm a distinguished reputation for managing complex litigation arising from commercial and private air disasters.

ARTICLES AND SPEECHES

Below is a list of articles that Clifford Law Offices' attorneys have contributed to and speeches presented by the aviation litigation team at the firm.

ARTICLES

- ◆ "Expert: Pilots of Doomed Plane May Have Flown Too Low to Get Glimpse of Runway," *Sun-Sentinel, Florida*, Jan. 29, 2017.
- ◆ Aviation Law, Chapter in Thompson Reuters Business and Commercial Litigation in Federal Court book, 4th edit., 2016.
- ◆ "Germanwings: How Much Will the Families of Flight 9525 Receive in Crash Settlements?" *International Business Times*, March 30, 2015.
- ◆ "Liability for Germanwings Crash May Still Rest with Airline, Insurer; Copilot's secretary wouldn't necessarily exonerate Lufthansa, lawyers say," by Robert Wall, *Wall Street Journal*, March 30, 2015.
- ◆ "Germanwings Crash Cause Means Recoveries Uncapped," by Stephanie Bodoni, *Bloomberg News*, March 27, 2015
- ◆ "Action Needed to Protect Flights from War Zones," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 21, 2014.
- ◆ "Time to Act on Aviation Safety Technologies," *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin*, Law Day, 2014.
- ◆ "2 Essential Tools Would Prevent Repeat of Malaysian Mystery" *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 20, 2014.
- ◆ "How many more crashes until the FAA acts?" *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 12, 2013.
- ◆ "How Secure is Airport Security? Clifford's Notes," *Chicago Lawyer*, September, 2010.
- ◆ "Search for Airline Safety, Clifford's Notes" *Chicago Lawyer*, July, 2009.
- ◆ "Soliciting Crash Victims, Clifford's Notes," *Chicago Lawyer*, March, 2009.

- ◆ "Safety in the Air, Clifford's Notes," *Chicago Lawyer*, December, 2008.
- ◆ "Not All Airline Cases Arise Under Federal Law," Clifford's Notes, *Chicago Lawyer*, July, 2007.
- ◆ "Using FOIA to Investigate the TWA 800 Crash," Clifford's Notes, *Chicago Lawyer*, December, 2006.
- ◆ "Airline Relief Legislation Needs Scrutiny," Clifford's Notes, *Chicago Lawyer*, November, 2001.
- ◆ "Issues to Examine in Cases Against Common Carriers," Product Liability Law and Strategy, *Leader Publications*, New York, June, 1999.
- ◆ "Power of the People: The Jury in Flight 4184," *Chicago Lawyer*, May, 1998.
- ◆ "When a Plane Goes Down," *The Washington Post*, December 9, 1997.
- ◆ "Where Should Plane Crash Cases Land?" Clifford's Notes, *Chicago Lawyer*, November, 1996.
- ◆ "Battling for Big Bucks," *Litigation Magazine, American Bar Association, Journal of the Section of Litigation*, Fall, 1996.
- ◆ "Valujet Crash Shows Flawed System," Voice of the People, *Chicago Tribune*, June 11, 1996.
- ◆ "Like Travel, Travel Litigation is Broadening" Clifford's Notes, *Chicago Lawyer*, August, 1994.
- ◆ "Aviation Industry Putting its Head in Clouds," Clifford's Notes, *Chicago Lawyer*, June, 1994.

SPEECHES

- ◆ "Use of Flight Simulations in Aviation Claims," Pan-European Organisation of Personal Injury Lawyers, Manchester, England, March 28, 2019.
- ◆ "Court is in Session: Analyzing the Importance of Trial in

- Aviation Accident Cases," Eleventh Annual McGill University/PEOPIL Conference on International Aviation Liability, Insurance & Finance, Dublin, Ireland, October 19-20, 2018.
- ◆ "How Did We Get Here? The Development of International and Domestic Aviation Law and Regulation," 2014 International Air & Transportation Safety Bar Association Conference, November 13, 2014.
- ◆ "Air Crash Litigation: Key Issues in the Years Ahead," American Bar Association Forum on Air & Space Law Meeting, Seattle, Washington, October 26-27, 2010.
- ◆ "Compensation Funds: Are They Enough?" Chicago, Illinois, American Bar Association CLE teleconference, September 19, 2007.
- ◆ "Foreign Plaintiffs - Issues and Problems, Aviation Issues in the Real Millennium," American Bar Association Tort and Insurance Practice, Washington, D.C., October 18, 2001.
- ◆ "The Criminalization of Aviation Accidents," ABA Annual Seminar, New York, June 7, 2001.
- ◆ "Aviation on Trial - In the Trenches with Aviation Accident Litigation," American Bar Association, Section of Litigation, New York, May 13, 1999.
- ◆ "Avcon - 99, Debate - Plaintiff's Perspective After an Airline Crash," London, U.K., April 27, 1999.
- ◆ "Aviation Litigation: Trial Evidence Issues After Valujet & TWA 800" American Bar Association, Washington, D.C., April, 1997.
- ◆ "The Plaintiff's Perspective on Exclusive Federal Jurisdiction," Aviation Liability Into the 21st Century, American Bar Association, Washington, D.C., October, 1996.
- ◆ "Airplane Design, Product Liability Litigation," Illinois Trial Lawyers Association, Jan. 13, 1996.