

## STEELERS

# Lawsuit: Steelers' Antonio Brown nearly hit toddler in furniture-throwing rage

MADASYN CZEBINIAK AND MEGAN GUZA | Tuesday, Oct. 9, 2018, 8:51 a.m.



Steelers wide receiver Antonio Brown nearly struck a toddler and his grandfather with furniture thrown from a 14th-floor balcony in a rage fueled by the alleged theft of \$80,000 from his closet, according to a lawsuit filed by the toddler's family and a police report from the incident.

Ophir Sternberg, the CEO and founding partner of Miami-based Lionheart Capital, LLC, is seeking more than \$15,000 in damages, claiming the incident left his then-22-month-old son "severely traumatized," according to an Aug. 16 lawsuit filed in Miami-Dade County, Fla.

“Mr. Brown’s out of control and inexcusable behavior could have killed my son. His reckless tantrum displayed complete disregard for the safety of others. We intend to hold Mr. Brown accountable, to hopefully ensure that something like this never happens again,” Sternberg said in a statement released by his attorney.

Sternberg is suing Brown on behalf of his son, Amnon Sternberg, who is named as the plaintiff in the lawsuit.

“I have no comment about that. I know nothing about it,” Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said during his weekly news conference Tuesday.

The alleged incident occurred at about 10:30 a.m. April 24 at The Mansions at Acqualina in Sunny Isles Beach, Fla., according to the lawsuit. Brown had been leasing one of the units at the complex at the time and Amnon Sternberg was one of his neighbors, the suit said. Alan Kluger, Sternberg’s attorney, called Brown’s actions “intentionally negligent” and said they showed a “reckless disregard for human life.”

“Not only did Mr. Brown cause considerable damage to the property, he came close to striking and potentially killing the Sternberg family’s young son,” Kluger said in a statement. “This has undoubtedly caused considerable emotional distress and trauma for the child and family. Our lawsuit seeks to hold Mr. Brown responsible for his reckless actions.”

According to the lawsuit, Amnon Sternberg and his grandfather had been walking near the pool when large and heavy objects, including two vases, an ottoman and other pieces of furniture started to fall from the building from many floors above them for several minutes. Some of the items fell within “a mere foot or two” of them and could have severely injured or possibly killed them, the suit said.

Amnon Sternberg was “immediately terror stricken and ran away crying hysterically,” and “severely traumatized by the incident, crying for hours on end the day it occurred and was unable to sleep that night,” the suit said.

“Since that day, (Amnon Sternberg) has exhibited symptoms of fear and anxiety, having night terrors every night and waking up numerous times in a panic and crying, when this never occurred prior to the incident,” the lawsuit said.

The incident was investigated by security personnel, who determined Brown was responsible for throwing the objects. Surveillance video also shows the objects falling from the 14th floor balcony and landing close to Amnon Sternberg and his grandfather, the suit said.

The incident apparently came a day after Brown returned to his apartment and discovered \$80,000 and a handgun missing from his closet.

According to a Sunny Isles Beach police report, Brown returned home from a 10-day trip about 11:30 p.m. on April 22 and discovered the money and a 9mm-handgun missing. The money and firearm had been in a tote bag in a closet, he told police.

He said the apartment had been cleaned and his laundry put away, though he reported to police that he had not hired a cleaning service, according to the report.

Security footage showed three women identified as housekeepers entering Brown’s unit on April 13, according to the police report. The security director at the complex told police that when the housekeepers arrived that day, they contacted Brown for permission to enter the unit.

“An unknown representative” for Brown answered Brown’s phone and advised security to let the women into the apartment to clean it, according to the report.

Brown later identified the women as being from the cleaning service he'd used in the past, police wrote. All three women denied taking the money and the gun. One told police that she'd been sent to clean Brown's home April 9, at which time he was hosting a large group of guests. Police have been unsuccessful in getting a list of those guests, according to the report.

According to the lawsuit, Brown allegedly caused extensive damage to the room in a fit of rage and threw the objects over the balcony. The suit further alleges that Brown was "extremely agitated, acting aggressively, and yelling at security personnel when the Sunny Isles police arrived to the scene."

Acqualina 1402 LLC is also suing Brown in excess of \$15,000 for damages the star football player allegedly caused to the unit he was leasing. That lawsuit was filed in Miami-Dade County, Fla. on Aug. 15.

That lawsuit says Brown's unit was leased with high end custom furniture such as a leather couch, silk fabric covered sofas and top of the line appliances, and Brown breached his lease by defacing the premises and damaging the furnishings. He was renting the unit for \$35,000 a month on a six month lease, according to the suit.