



ABROAD, BUT AWARE

BY REBECCA MORSE

IT'S SUMMERTIME: do you know where your children are? For many New York families, those children, whether teen- or college-aged, are likely traveling internationally. What started as an effort to fatten college applications has blossomed into a rite of passage, whether building homes for Habitat for Humanity in Peru, studying at the Sorbonne, or sunning in Cancun over spring break. Such travels can be seminal experiences in a young adult's life, but in many cases, danger lurks abroad.



Whether the subject is Amanda Knox, the Seattle college student recently convicted of murder by an Italian court, or Natalee Holloway, the Alabama high-school senior kidnapped and killed in Aruba in 2005, recent headlines about tragedies abroad strike fear in parents' hearts. As you look ahead to your children's trips abroad this year, you can do more than just drive them to the airport:

Left: Ross Thompson, director of International Student Security.

you can keep them safe.

Enter Ross Thompson. A sophisticated twenty-something in a tailored suit, he looks like a cross between your son's college pal and a master spy, which, in fact, he is: Thompson is the director of the International Student Security division at Investigative Management Group (IMG). Knowing, and blending in with, his clients adds to his effectiveness in keeping them protected. "Any trip can be done safely," says Thompson, and you can't help but believe him.

Thompson's endeavor falls under the corporate umbrella of IMG, the leader in high-end security and investigation. IMG's principals, the renowned former federal law-enforcement agents Robert Strang and Ann Hayes, preside over staff including former prosecutors and law-enforcement agents, providing discreet background investigations, personal safety, and now, student services.

PREVENTION. With Thompson at the helm of the student security division, IMG first focuses on preventative measures for clients by consulting on trip itineraries and providing pre-departure counseling. Thompson

and his network of "local assets" in most of the world's countries have gathered in-depth information, from the general to the specific: what part of town to stay in, which hotel, which room. They offer a totally comprehensive approach to danger prevention, advising on local culture, crime rate, health risks, and specific special situations—like corruption.

REACTION. Once a child has departed, having Thompson and his team on retainer throughout the trip allows parents to sleep at night. IMG seamlessly handles crisis management, repatriation, medical evacuation, and on-the-ground support in case of an emergency, like abduction, arrest, drug use, or medical crisis. Using sophisticated electronic and radio surveillance, cars, and private planes, Thompson is able to manage any situation within the critical first twelve hours of an emergency.

Today, danger is a reality, but engaging International Student Security can allow your child to see the world—safely.

For more information, call 212.308.8500 or email rct@investigativemanagement.com.

TRAVEL SAFETY TIPS

- *Touching the pocket where your wallet is stashed reveals its location to thieves.
- *Avoid displaying your country of origin by wearing university paraphernalia.
- *Book only rooms between the second and eighth floor of hotels, preventing unwanted entry from the roof and street, while remaining within reach of firefighting equipment.
- *When not in your hotel room, leave the lights and television or radio on.
- *Do not carry luggage or parcels for others, including friends or other traveling companions.
- *Pre-program all important numbers into your cell phone, complete with proper dialing codes (including emergency services, embassies, program directors, and home).

