

We thought we were safe too!

In January of 1992, John Hutchcroft introduced our family to a complete, high quality fire alarm system. We decided that based on information given to us by others that we did not need complete protection and that First Alert brand smoke detectors were top of the line, and all we needed. After all we had seen them advertised and sold everywhere. And I think like most people, we thought that because they would go off so quickly from cooking that they would surely do the same in a real fire.

Approximately one year later on January 18, 1993 we learned the hard way, that our information and thinking was WRONG; it turned out DEAD WRONG!

That evening my husband and I put our two sons, Bradley 3, and Travis 18 months, to bed. We turned on their baby monitor and went back down stairs to watch TV and unwind after a long day. Just like we had done almost every night before.

Not long after that we heard a “thud” from the boys bedroom. My husband, Nathan went upstairs to check it out. He was met with thick, blinding, choking smoke and unbearable heat. Running back down the stairs he yelled for me to call 911...the house was on fire!

While waiting for the Fire Department to arrive he asked our neighbor that lived in the other side of our duplex if he could break through a wall to try to get to the kids, because the baby crib was just on the other side. Nathan was able to reach Travis, who by now had been badly burned, but was unable to reach Bradley whose bed was just across the room. During this time I was in the front yard screaming hysterically for someone to help get my baby's out. Soon after, the Fire Department arrived and was able to rescue Bradley.

But it was too late!

Then an unexpected thing happened. While the Fire Department was extinguishing the fire, they could hear the smoke alarms finally start to go off.

When they took the boys to the hospital they looked normal but when we arrived and were able to see them we could not recognize them because they were so swollen and distorted from the burns. In fact we could not tell them apart.

Our world was forever changed!

For a while, all was hopeful but then Bradley took a turn for the worst and died several days later. Travis survived, but so far has undergone 17 surgeries.

When the fire investigators completed their investigation they told us that the fire had been started by the baby monitor in the boys bedroom and that they estimated that 19 minutes had passed from the recording of the 911 call and the time that fire fighters heard the smoke alarms start to go off. Let alone when the fire actually started.

We were shocked!

Two of the things that we had purchased to protect our children had failed us and done just the opposite.

Not only was our family, as we knew it ripped away from us, but now we faced mounting funeral expenses and medical bills in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Money we could never repay in our lifetime. We had no choice but to file lawsuits against the Baby Monitor Company and First Alert to help with the medical costs.

The baby monitor company agreed to settle but admitted no wrongdoing and a jury awarded us more than \$17 million in damages from First Alert. The Judge said in the case, "A smoke detector that does not sound until 19 minutes after smoke has reached its sensing chamber is like an airbag that doesn't go off until 19 minutes after a car accident". Even though the jury awarded in our favor, after all of the legal and medical bills were paid, little was left and still our lives will never be the same. There are no winners when a child is lost.

Twelve years later in a strange turn of events, I met John Hutchcroft from DeTech again. I have since made the right decision and now have my family protected by DeTech's reliable heat detectors and fast acting smoke detectors with the level of quality that I can trust. I was very impressed with the fact that DeTech customers have never suffered a loss of life or personal injury from a home fire. I only wish I could turn back time and be among that statistic!

Thank you John, and DeTech for giving me peace of mind.



Jennifer (Mercer) Fromm

P.S. I recommend that every family install this system. I tell my story with the hope that no one will ever have to suffer the pain and anguish that my family has suffered. All the money in the world will never replace your children; but a small investment can prevent losing them. I hope everyone that reads this letter will make the right decision before they have a fire.