NON-FATAL STRANGULATION
#NotAlleged

Change the verb!

Reported
DISCLAIMER

• There are photographs of injuries.
• No one deceased.
• Scratch marks.
• Graphic stories of assaults.
• Please take care of yourself.
OBJECTIVES

• Show non-fatal strangulation investigations are a Multi-Disciplinary Team process.
• The Victim Advocacy portion: will be explained why it is so important.
• Medical reasons will be briefly explained: why these cases are so dangerous.
• Main focus are Police Investigations, this will show the team effort of evidence-gathering. Concentrating on trauma, medical trauma, predominant aggressor, and documentation.
• Prosecution will be briefly discussed.
Strangulation is external compression of the neck until either blood flow or airflow is restricted. This can result in asphyxia or oxygen deprivation to the brain.
WHEN AND HOW SHOULD AN ADVOCATE BE INVOLVED?

Always
MEN WHO STRANGLE

- KILL POLICE OFFICERS
- Plain and Simple
Final Suit Over LAPD’s Use of Chokehold Settled

September 29, 1993 | JAMES RAINNEY | TIMES STAFF WRITER

Ending a long string of lawsuits over the Los Angeles Police Department’s use of the carotid chokehold, the City Council on Tuesday agreed to pay $450,000 to the father of a man who died 11 years ago in police custody.

Updated June 6, 2017 - 12:04 am

The Las Vegas police officer who stunned Tashii Brown seven times with a Taser and held him in an unauthorized chokehold for more than a minute before his death last month is now facing criminal charges. Sheriff Joseph Lombardo announced Monday.

Pittsburg police sued over 2016 neck hold death; attorney calls it ‘major civil rights case’

MARTINEZ — One year after a 32-year-old man died after he was placed in a neck hold by police, his family has filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the Pittsburg police department.

The suit seeks unspecified damages in the death of Humberto Martinez, a Bay Point resident who died July 26, 2016 after the bloodstream to his brain was cut off. The lawsuit alleges officers violated their training procedures and badly injured Martinez, who suffered several broken ribs.

Michael Haddad, the attorney representing Martinez’s family, compared Martinez’s death to the infamous killing of Eric Garner, who died after an NYPD officer placed him in a chokehold in an incident that sparked nationwide protests.

“This is a major civil rights case in the Bay Area,” Haddad said.
POPULAR CULTURE

Simpsons Video
## SUMMARY OF MECHANISMS OF STRANGULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Pressure to Occlude*</th>
<th>Unique findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tracheal Compression</td>
<td>33 pounds</td>
<td>No air to lungs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cannot Breathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carotid Artery Compression</td>
<td>11 pounds</td>
<td>No blood to brain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Most rapid effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jugular Vein Compression</td>
<td>4 pounds</td>
<td>No blood out of head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May cause petechiae</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Approximate, may vary
STRANGULATION IS EASY BECAUSE

The pressure needed to strangle someone is comparable to the pressure needed to open a new jar of pickles

20 Pounds of pressure
...A FIRM HANDSHAKE

Approx 80 pounds of pressure
“Most abusers do not strangle to kill. They strangle to show they can kill. When a victim is strangled, she is on the edge of homicide.”

DEADLY EFFECTS OF STRANGULATION
BRAIN CELLS DIE WHEN DEPRIVED OF OXYGEN

- 10 – 20 seconds: Unconsciousness
- 3 minutes: Permanent brain damage
- 4 minutes: death
HOW DOES STRANGULATION STOP THE BRAIN GETTING OXYGEN?

• 1. Compression of the Trachea
• 2. Compression of the Carotid Arteries
• 3. Compression of the Jugular Veins
HYOID BONE

CAROTID ARTERY

JUGULAR VEIN

THYROID CARTILAGE (with fracture shown)

TRACHEAL RINGS
TRACHEAL COMPRESSION

- No air exchange in the lungs.
- Some oxygen remains in the lungs and the blood being circulated to the brain
- Signs of inadequate oxygen to the brain will begin within one minute
• The victim will state “I couldn’t breathe”

• The trachea is located in the middle front of the neck

• Requires approximately **33 pounds** of pressure to occlude (more pressure than needed to occlude the jugular veins or carotid arteries)
THE CAROTID ARTERIES

- Two carotid arteries. One on each side of the trachea
- Stops all oxygen to the brain immediately
- Rapidly causes death
- Healthcare providers taught to never check for pulse on both carotid arteries at the same time
• Requires approximately **11 pounds** of pressure

• Will **not** cause the victim to feel they cannot breathe

• Victim may experience feeling light-headed and/or dizzy prior to becoming unconscious
THE JUGULAR VEINS

• Affect brain oxygenation by not allowing blood out of the head, limiting the amount of oxygenated blood that can get into the brain.

• The increased pressure causes the small thin vessels to rupture causing petechiae.
• Requires the least amount of pressure to occlude (approximately 4 pounds of pressure)

• Will not cause the victim to feel they cannot breathe.

• Light-headedness and/or dizziness may precede loss of consciousness.
SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF STRANGULATION

VISIBLE INJURY

• Petechiae
• Conjunctival hemorrhages
• Scratches to neck
• Red marks on neck
PETECHIAE

• Non-painful, non-blanching, smooth rash

• Capillaries burst causing micro hemorrhages under the skin

• Can be caused from other causes such as:
  • Infection -- Autoimmune response
  • Direct pressure -- Some drugs
  • Allergic reaction -- Straining, crying, vomiting
PETECHIAE IN STRANGULATION

- Occurs only above where the pressure was placed on the neck
- Can be seen as larger hemorrhages in the eyes
- Can be hidden
  - Under eyelids
  - In the mouth
- May not be visible at all, e.g. in the brain
- Absence does not mean the strangulation was not life threatening
IMAGINE FOR A MINUTE...
OUR STORY STARTS EONS AGO...
• Helps us be rational
• We can reason
• Perceived control
• Can have thoughts and behaviors not simply based on habits and reflexes
• Focuses our attention
Rational Thinking
Prefrontal Cortex

Impaired

Defense Circuitry
DURING TRAUMA OF ASSAULT

PERPETRATOR ACTIONS

• Tunnel vision
• Suspect is focused
• Thinking is planned and systematic
• Perceived control of behaviors and actions
• Memories are very orderly, narrative is chronological

VICTIM RESPONSES

• Terrified, overwhelmed
• Defense Circuitry in control
• Involuntary focus – danger, threats, survival
• Behavior controlled by emotions, reflexes
• Memories fragmented and illogical, not chronological
BACK AND FORTH
• Fear? Defense? Both?
PHOTOGRAPHS SELL THE CASE
WORKING 360 DEGREES
WHY WE DO OUR JOBS

Are they both victims?
West Valley City Fire Department
Patient Care Record

Name: [Redacted]  Incident #: 141000511  Date: 01/21/2014  Patient 1 of 1

Narrative:
1. On arrival pt standing on side of the road with Police, Gcs-15, pt ambulatory
2. Pt was assaulted by her ex-boyfriend
3. Pt c/o face/head px; pt has swelling to her face and has a small lac on top of her head, pt also c/o hip px; pt has 2 bite marks on her left hip with some bruising, pt also has some abrasion/bruising to her anterior neck- from being choked and said it hurts to swallow, pt also is c/o generalized aches through out body due to being thrown down and pushed around,
4. Neg LOC, Neg diff breathing, neg weapon no injuries due to hands
5. Pt was given a cold pack to help with swelling of her face
6. We advised transport and pt agreed to changes to pt condition on arrival at PVH

Incident Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Disposition</th>
<th>Transported To</th>
<th>Incident Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3670 s willow hollow rd</td>
<td>Transport Due To Patient</td>
<td>Pioneer Valley Hospital</td>
<td>Call Received 01:53:34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Petechiae

Subconjunctival Hemorrhage
INJURIES TO THE SUSPECT
OFFENSIVE OR DEFENSIVE?
DEFENSIVE OR OFFENSIVE?
SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF STRANGULATION

- Neck pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Pain with swallowing
- Lightheaded
- Nausea
- Loss of memory
- Ears Ringing
- Loss of control of urine
- Loss of control of stool
- Loss of consciousness
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Weakness/numbness
- Vision changes
MULTIPLE STRANGULATION ATTEMPTS

- Neck and Throat Injuries
- Neurological and Psychological Disorders
  - Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)/Post Concussion Syndrome (PCS)
    - Not all patients experience post-concussion syndrome
    - Syndrome may be worse in patients who have had previous concussions or head trauma
  - Traumatic brain injuries are cumulative

DV Victims have more TBIs than NFL Players
• All victims of strangulation should be encouraged to have medical evaluation

• Yes, this means ALL of them.
In cases where death isn't immediate, the risk of delayed airway obstruction is significant due to swelling. Strangulation injuries can also result in delayed death due to vascular injuries, stroke, dysrhythmias, and hypoxic brain damage. Dec 22, 2015
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