

**STRANGULATION
INVESTIGATION AND
AWARENESS**

Sgt. Tony Craig

Acknowledgements

- *"Sgt. Anthony Craig gratefully acknowledges the Family Justice Center Alliance, a program of Alliance for HOPE International [and Ret. Detective Mike Agnew], for allowing me to reproduce, in part or in whole, the power point on Strangulation."*

Objectives

- The history and need for training
- Medical aspects
- Investigation/Recognition

In Memory...



Sgt. Paul Starzyk

The Danger to Law Enforcement

- Abusers who strangle their victims are a threat to law enforcement.
- Hi correlation between men who strangle and men who will shoot a police officer
- Mentioned in lethality and dangerousness assessment
- We see this in our own state

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WV Cases

- **Domestic call turns violent on trooper in Lincoln County**



WSAZ/Taylor Eaton

- Units from numerous agencies converged on the shooting scene Tuesday morning in Lincoln County

By **Chris Lawrence** in **News** | March 28, 2017 at 2:33PM

- **ALUM CREEK, W.Va.** — A veteran state trooper encountered a hostile situation when dispatched to an early morning call Tuesday in Lincoln County.

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And many others...



Profile of individuals who strangle

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They are Killers



Casey Gwinn, President,
Family Justice Center Alliance

- "The most dangerous domestic violence offenders strangle their victims. The most violent rapists strangle their victims. We used to think all abusers were equal. They are not. Our research has now made clear that when a man puts his hands around a woman, he has just raised his hand and said, "I'm a killer." They are more likely to kill police officers, to kill children, and to later kill their partners. So, when you hear "He choked me", now we know you are the edge of a homicide."

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2013 Treasure Valley (ID) Study

- Evaluated ten officer-involved critical incidents where officer shot a suspect or suspect shot an officer
- 80% of suspects with domestic violence history
- Non-fatal strangulation history in 30%
- Based only on public records history
- More research needed
- We all should be looking for it/tracking it

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Riverside County District Attorney's Office 2013 Study Gerald Fineman, J.D.

- Law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty
- 1993-2013
- 50% of officers were killed by a criminal suspect with a public records act history of strangulation assault against a woman in a prior relationship

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Interview with retired FBI Supervisory Special Agent Mark Safarik, behavioral scientist now at *Forensic Behavioral Services International*

<http://www.aolnews.com/2010/04/04/expert-no-surprise-cleveland-victims-strangled/>

- Safarik said serial killers who choose strangulation like to be up close and personal with their victims.
- "They want to look into the eyes of the victim," he said. "That's really the ultimate control and power they can have over somebody. They essentially play God -- they can take their life or let them live."
- That power and control can also lend itself to sexual stimulation, Safarik said. "It oftentimes arouses them. It is a nonsexual behavior [that] serves sexual needs," he said.
- "There are a number of them that will strangle [the victim], bring them back, let them go unconscious, bring them back -- essentially torturing them. John Wayne Gacy was pretty famous for that. It goes back to that control of life and death."
- You'll see that kind of behavior more from sexual sadists than you will from a straight killing. They enjoy that component. That control. It allows them to engage with the victim the way they want, but not kill them, at least not outright."

"Expert: No Surprise Cleveland Victims Strangled" by David Lohr for AOL News
Apr 4, 2010 - 6:15 PM

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Rapist Says He Likes 'Playing God' While Choking His Victims



Rapist Zach Rankin charmed young women before he strangled them. The videotape.

"I remember him actually saying to me at one point that he liked the look on my face when I look like I'm about to stop breathing. He definitely enjoyed that; I could see it in his face as I started to splutter and choke. I tried to pull his fingers and his hands from around my neck but he was pretty strong. A lot of the time I knew it was pretty pointless trying to fight or battle back. I think: 'How can I let myself get to this point that I'm so scared of somebody that I can't even tell him to stop hurting me and can't even tell someone I trust what's...'"

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There are certain behavioral links among sex offenders, serial killers, and domestic batterers. These perpetrators utilize sexual violence to degrade the victim; they seek power and control over the victim, and they utilize strangulation and suffocation.

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The Journal of Emergency Medicine, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 105-111, 2010
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doi:10.1097/JEM.0b013e3181d1d1d1

Violence: Recognition, Management and Prevention

NON-FATAL STRANGULATION IS AN IMPORTANT RISK FACTOR FOR HOMICIDE OF WOMEN

Nancy Glass, MD, MPH, MS, Kathleen Laughon, MD, MS, Jonathan Campbell, MD, MS,
Carolyn Rebecca Block, MD, Ginger Hanson, MD, Phyllis W. Shaffer, MD, MS,
and Ellen Tansler, MD, MPH

School of Nursing, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland; School of Nursing, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia;
Illness, Crime, Justice, Washington University, Chicago, Illinois; School of Nursing, Oregon Health and Science University, Portland,
Oregon; and Health After Trauma Project, Children's Communications, Redwood City, California.
Reprint Address: Nancy Glass, MD, MPH, MS, School of Nursing, Johns Hopkins University, 525 N. Wolfe Street, Room 433, Baltimore,
MD 21205.

Abstract—The purpose of this study was to examine non-fatal strangulation by an intimate partner as a risk factor for major assault, or attempted or completed homicide of women. A case-control design was used to describe non-fatal strangulation among homicide victims and attempted homicides (n = 206) and sexual assault (n = 427). Interviews of police, medical and survivors of attempted

homicide—intimate partner violence, strangulation, risk of homicide.

INTRODUCTION

The 1993 National Mortality Followback Survey of

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■ **Victims of prior attempted strangulation are 800% more likely of becoming a homicide victim.**

■ **(Glass, et al, 2008).**

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Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention



- Project of the Family Justice Center Alliance
- Launched October 2011
- Sponsored by the Office on the Violence Against Women (2011-2013)
- The leading training institute in the country on strangulation assaults
- Now operates as a fee-based training program of the Alliance

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The History and Need for Strangulation Training

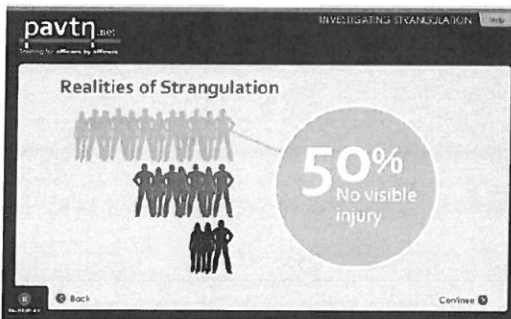
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Gael Strack, JD

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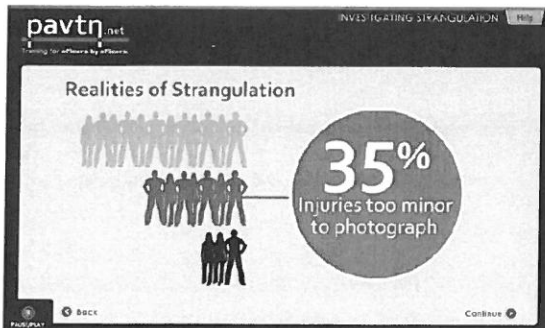
In Memory of Casondra Stewart and Tamara Smith



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Signs and Symptoms Documented in San Diego Police Reports

- Redness to neck
- Scratch marks
- Rope burns
- Thumb print bruising
- Red eyes
- Spasm
- Urination & defecation
- Pain to neck/throat
- Coughing
- Raspy voice
- Nausea or vomiting
- Unconsciousness
- Ears ringing
- Head rush
- Miscarriage

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Strangulation occurs most often at home (78%)

Only **39%** of those strangled
reported it to the police

"Survey Results of Women Who Have Been Strangled While in an Abusive Relationship"
Lee Wilbur, MD October 2000

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Carotid Restraint: Prohibited or Restricted by Many Police Departments Nationwide

- Many police agencies do not allow officers to use carotid restraint.

- SDPD: No more than 30 seconds (7/92)

- POST: First aid protocol.

- "... subject should be checked by medical personnel"



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Manual Strangulation - Most Common Method Used



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Minimization by Victims

- Victims may not understand the danger and maybe reluctant to seek medical attention.
- "He didn't really choke me, he just had me in a headlock and I couldn't breathe."
 - Plattsburgh, NY
 - Santa Clara County policy to roll out the paramedics on each case

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Minimization by Defendants

- San Diego, California case:
 - "Why are you arresting me? All I did was choke her."
- Portland, Oregon case:
 - "Officer, I swear I didn't hit her. All I did was choke the living shit out of her once or twice. I swear I didn't hit her."
 - Thank you Officer Pam Moen (5/99)

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Minimization by Professionals

- Dispatch operators may not realize the danger and trivialize the violence.
- Training for all



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Minimization at Court

- Don't expect your judges or jurors to understand the seriousness of strangulation
- Without an expert, jurors are likely to think it didn't happen because the injuries were too minor (San Diego Jury)
- With an expert, jurors wanted to know why the case was only prosecuted as a misdemeanor (Orange County Jury)

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Power & Control

- It is ALL about POWER and CONTROL!!!



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Ruth

- *"Actually, when I came out of that [strangulation incident], I was more submissive – more terrified that the next time I might not come out – I might not make it. **So I think I gave him all my power from there** because I could see how easy it was for him to just take my life like he had given it to me."*

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Link to Child Abuse

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Strangulation and Children

Northern Illinois woman charged with murder for choking toddler after he bit her

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Published May 21, 2014 • 1:13 pm
Last Updated May 21, 2014 • 1:13 pm

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — A woman whose 15-month-old son bit her was charged with murder after authorities say she choked the child.

The defense said the woman, who is not being charged with murder, was charged with the degree murder on Tuesday after the boy bit her on the neck.

Win Quick Dynasty Tickets!

Clackamas man charged for putting 14-year-old daughter in a headlock at Lake Oswego softball ...

The Oregonian

A Clackamas man is facing a harassment charge after witnesses told police he tried to choke his 14-year-old daughter at a Lake Oswego softball ...

Machias woman jailed for injuring her child

Buffalo News

... in custody at the Custerwag County Jail after being arrested by State Police for allegedly beating and shaking her young child Wednesday.




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San Diego Strangulation Study

Gael Strack and Dr. George McClane

In 50% of the Strangulation Cases.....

Children were present



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Putnam County Stats


- Year 2015 in Putnam County
- 20% of the cases involved a juvenile victim
- 94% of perpetrators were male
- 25% of the victims reported the assault was stopped when they were interrupted by someone else
- *"I thought that was it. I thought my kids will have to see me laying here."*
- One child fought the perpetrator off of his mother.

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The chances of becoming a violent offender later in life.

Young boys who are physically abused are **3 X** more likely

Young boys who wit.DV in the home are **6X** more likely



Kalmuss, D. (1989).

Strangulation

Potentially Lethal Symptoms

240,000 pregnant women are subjected to domestic violence each year.

40% of assaults begin during the first pregnancy.

Pregnant women are at twice the risk of battery than non-pregnant women.
2000-2004 data.

www.Americanpregnancy.org/main/statistics/html



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Link to Elder Abuse

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New Chapter on Elder Strangulation Dr. Dean Hawley and Candace Heisler



- Strangulation as the cause of death increases in frequency with the victim's age.
- Strangulation actually becomes more difficult to detect in death investigations of older adults.

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Understanding Lethality

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Strangulation is a Red Flag...

- When battered women were asked what made them believe they were in danger or not -- the majority of women perceiving a great amount of danger in both a shelter & a hospital study mentioned "**choking**" as a tactic used against them that made them believe their partner might kill them.
- Stuart & Campbell, 1989

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Chicago Women's Health Study

Carolyn Rebecca Block

- Past Violence 85%
 - Use of Weapon or **Attempted strangulation**
- Leaving 45%
- Recent physical incident with an increase in frequency over the prior 12 months

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Anatomy and Medical Aspects in Surviving and Non-surviving Victims

Created by
Dr. Dean Hawley, MD

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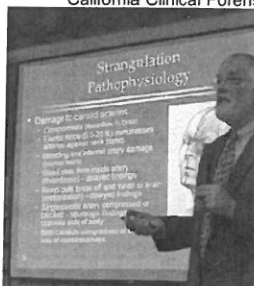
Dr. Dean Hawley,
Forensic Pathologist, Professor
University of Indiana Medical School

- "Fatal strangulation can occur without any external evidence of violence on the human body."
- "The best way to document a strangulation case is still by an autopsy"



Dr. Bill Green, Medical Director (Bonus)

California Clinical Forensic Medical Training Center



- When external compression to the neck alters blood and/or airflow, the mechanism is in place to kill someone. The difference between a living and dead victim is only the duration and the amount of the pressure. The footprints left behind that tell us of a near lethal event are signs or symptoms such as loss of consciousness, altered mental status, incontinence, petechiae, inability to speak or breath, and visual changes.

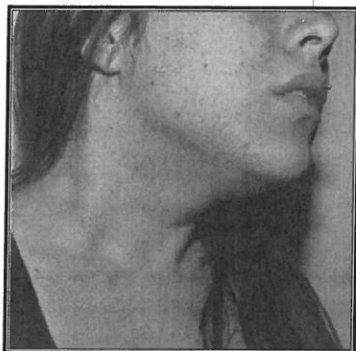
Temporary obstruction of the carotid arteries, or the jugular veins (strangulation), or the airway (suffocation) will produce **ASPHYXIATION** -- an interruption of oxygenation.

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STRANGULATION AND SUFFOCATION

- With complete and sustained obstruction of both jugular veins:
 - 20-30 seconds causes petechiae above the point of constriction
 - 2 minutes to full unconsciousness
 - another 2 minutes of sustained unconsciousness until death
 - With complete obstruction of the mouth and nose by suffocation, you get the same approximate time interval, but the petechiae become generalized throughout the body, rather than just isolated to the head.
- These are just approximate times. The presence of certain predisposing conditions can accelerate the process of irreversible asphyxiation -- the duration of sustained compression required to reach the "point of no return."

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Petechiae

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Petechiae



Pronounced petechiae in the whites of the eyes and on the cheeks/face.

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Petechiae



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Petechiae



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Petechiae



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Petechiae



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Petechiae

- Petechiae are minor bleed from broken capillary blood vessels
- Petechiae are produced by **mechanical forces**
- The presence or absence of petechiae neither proves nor disproves strangulation (presence = consistent)
- **Conjunctival petechiae** (around the eye) indicate a significant risk for a life-threatening strangulation event...just as with a history of loss of consciousness

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ASPHYXIATION

- If asphyxiation persists for long enough, the victim becomes unconscious, and then dies
- The rate of development of asphyxiation depends primarily on the circulation of blood through the brain, and to a much lesser extent it depends on the victim's ability to breath through the airway -- airway obstruction is rarely a factor in fatal strangulation assault, but death may be accelerated if suffocation occurs simultaneously with the strangulation assault.

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ASPHYXIATION

- Most often the blood flow through the brain is obstructed by compressing the jugular veins, while leaving the carotid arteries open.
- Obstruction of the carotid arteries requires a great deal of force, but if it is done, then unconsciousness and death can occur in just a few seconds

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Medical Information for Strangulation

- Obstruction of:
- Jugular vein: Most common, 4.4 lbs of pressure completely obstructs
- Carotid artery: Second most common, 11 lbs of pressure for 10 seconds, unconsciousness, but regained in 10 seconds if pressure released
- Tracheal: 33 lbs of pressure, fracture of tracheal, and death
- Brain death occurs if strangulation persists for 4 to 5 minutes

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STRANGULATION

- Pressure placed upon the neck
- Resulting in reduction of blood flow through the brain
- If this persists, then oxygen delivery to the brain is impaired, and the brain cells become hypoxic, then anoxic, then dead
- This type of serious bodily injury is called **ASPHYXIA**, and it occurs first at the cellular level, then throughout the body

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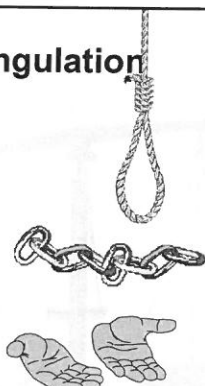
Suffocation

- Obstructing oxygen from getting into the lungs
- Sealing off the mouth and nose by manual compression
- Duct tape over face
- Head inside plastic bag
- Pillow over mouth and nose
- Sitting on chest

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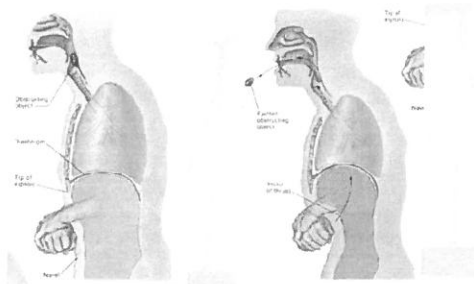
3 Forms of Strangulation

- Hanging
- Ligature
- Manual



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Strangulation is not "CHOKING"

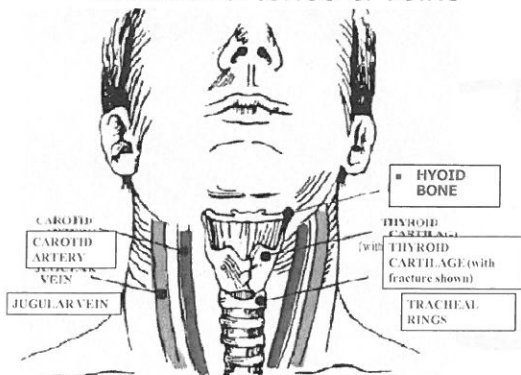


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INJURY DURING STRANGULATION OR SUFFOCATION ASSAULT

- It is, of course, possible to touch the neck or cover the mouth and nose without causing strangulation or suffocation injury or posing a risk of serious injury or death
- Touching the neck becomes strangulation if there is sufficient pressure to cause internal injuries that promote asphyxiation.

Vessels: arteries & veins



Most Common Symptoms

- Changes in speech
 - Sore throat, raspy, scratchy voice
- Changes in swallowing
 - Pain on swallowing, usually intense
- Changes in breathing
 - Rare, severe, immediately life threatening

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Strangulation Clinical Signs and Symptoms

- Other neurologic **symptoms** and **signs**
 - Vision changes (blurring, tunneling, "stars", white-out, "dimming")
 - Ringing in the ears (**tinnitus**)
 - Facial or eyelid droop (**palsies**)
 - One-sided weakness (**hemiplegia**)
 - **Incontinence** (bladder or bowel)
 - Miscarriage



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Other Strangulation and Suffocation Signs and Symptoms

- Skin abrasions (scratch marks, fingernail marks) and tiny red spots (petechiae) just over the face in strangulation, or generalized in the skin in suffocation
- Abrasions over nostrils
- Lip incised abrasions where lips are pushed against teeth
- Red linear ligature marks or bruising
- Light-headed or head rush
- Fainting or unconsciousness
- Loss of control of bodily functions (urination/defecation)

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Injuries of the Suspect/Defendant:

1. **Pattern of injuries can prove position during assault**
2. **Self-defense is common, and can be confusing to investigators when the assailant has injuries**
3. **Transfer of evidence (DNA) can prove identity of assailant**

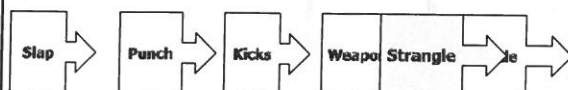
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Strangulation Investigation

Created by
Det. Mike Agnew (Ret.)

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Continuum of Violence



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What type of Assault?

Domestic Battery-
grabs the neck with no pressure

Strangulation charge-
grabs the neck and applies pressure
WV Code 61-2-9d

Attempted Homicide-
continual pressure past LOC or
reapplying pressure when the
victim struggles and gets free

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INVESTIGATION

Symptoms of Strangulation



1	Intermittent
2	Continuous
3	Intermittent/Continuous
4	Intermittent/Continuous/Struggling
5	Intermittent/Continuous/Struggling/Choking
6	Intermittent/Continuous/Struggling/Choking/Struggling
7	Intermittent/Continuous/Struggling/Choking/Struggling/Struggling
8	Intermittent/Continuous/Struggling/Choking/Struggling/Struggling/Struggling
9	Intermittent/Continuous/Struggling/Choking/Struggling/Struggling/Struggling/Struggling
10	Intermittent/Continuous/Struggling/Choking/Struggling/Struggling/Struggling/Struggling/Struggling


Signs of Strangulation

1	Reddened
2	Swollen
3	Reddened/Swollen
4	Reddened/Swollen/Struggling
5	Reddened/Swollen/Struggling/Choking
6	Reddened/Swollen/Struggling/Choking/Struggling
7	Reddened/Swollen/Struggling/Choking/Struggling/Struggling
8	Reddened/Swollen/Struggling/Choking/Struggling/Struggling/Struggling
9	Reddened/Swollen/Struggling/Choking/Struggling/Struggling/Struggling/Struggling
10	Reddened/Swollen/Struggling/Choking/Struggling/Struggling/Struggling/Struggling/Struggling

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Read the Injuries



Read the Injuries



Have the victim describe how they were strangled

One or two hands;
forearm; ligature?

From the front, side or
behind?

What positions were
you both in?

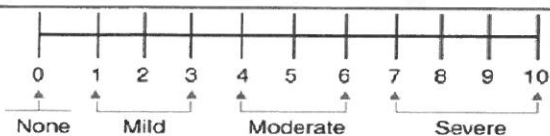
Where specifically did
you feel the pressure?



Mechanics

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On a scale of 1 -10 how hard was the pressure?



Pressure Scale


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More questions to ask.....

How long did they hold your throat?

Was there shaking?

Did the strangling stop and start up again?



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80

More questions to ask.....

What did the suspect say during the strangulation?

What did you say to him during the event?

Could you breathe, could you talk, could you scream?

Did you have any hearing changes?


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When speaking with a child

- Know what they are saying and figure out how to have them describe feelings and sounds they were making to you.
- One child when asked by the doctor, said after Daddy picked them up by the neck and held them tight they sounded like a duck (hoarse, raspy voice=possible Laryngeal Injury)

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What did you see?



Visual Changes


"I saw stars, then white."
OR
"I saw anger, madness and hatred in his eyes."
"He had the eyes of a demon. They were full of hate."

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What did you see?

Rossen Study 1942
Red Wing, MN
Acute Arrest of Cerebral Circulation in Man

- Blurred vision
- Narrowing field of vision
- Streaks or spots
- Twinkling lights
- Inability to move their eyes

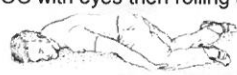


Visual Changes

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How would we show if someone lost consciousness- LOC?

- Loss of memory
- Standing up one minute then waking up on the floor
- Bowel or bladder incontinence
- Unexplained bump on head
- Visual changes just before LOC with eyes then rolling up
- A witness



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Describe how you felt?

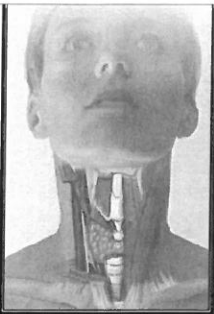
"I felt dizzy and the room was starting to spin"

"I felt like my head was going to explode"

"I felt like I could not breathe."

- Numbness
- Tingling
- Shooting Pain in hands, arms, face

Rossen Study 1942; Redwing MN.



Indicators of Losing Consciousness

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Stages of Death

pavtn RESEARCH INVESTIGATING STRANGULATION

Signs and Symptoms | VICTIM MINDSET

Disbelief
Victims cannot believe their air or blood supply is being stopped.

Realization
The victim realizes there are bruises or visible blood supply; often their thoughts are of survival, their family, or children.

Primal
Victims fight with whatever means they have available to them to get air and/or blood flow back.


Resignation
The victim gives up believing they can do anything and getting help.

STAGES OF STRANGULATION

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What were you thinking about?

- Disbelief
- Belief
- Primal
- Resignation
 - Family, children




Thought Phases During Strangulation

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2011 Maine Study

How did it Stop?

- #1 victim fought back
- #3 intervention by others



My kids started screaming = **witness**

Someone walked in = **witness**

#2 fear of arrest

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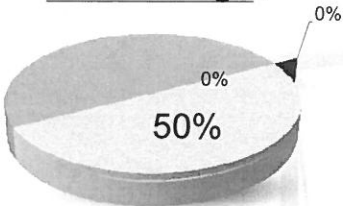
How did it Stop?

- 2015 Putnam County Stats
 - 33% victims stated they fought back in a primal manner i.e. eye gouging, anything to survive
Or the third phase of thought!!
 - 25% interruption by others
"After my **son** intervened....."
 - 25% Perpetrator stopped-maybe fear of arrest
 - 17% resigned to the demands of perpetrator
The fourth phase of thought!!

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Laryngeal Nerve

Voice Changes



911 Call Record or video your victim interview Does your voice sound different?

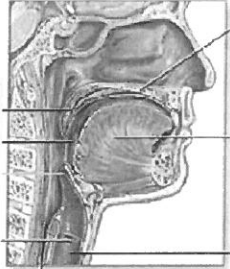
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What does it feel like when you swallow?

Describe:

- ☐ "It feels like a sore throat"
- ☐ "It just hurts to eat.
I have only had
soup for last 3
days."



Swallowing Changes

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Tell me what happened to you after they let go of you:

- Was there any **coughing**?
- Was there any **vomiting**?



Coughing – Vomiting

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People who are strangled sometimes lose control of their bodily functions

Did anything happen to you?

Did you change your clothes?

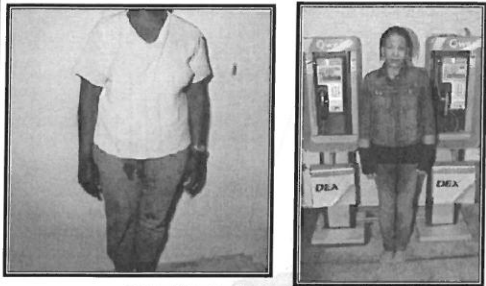
Do you know when it happened?



Loss of Control of Bodily Functions

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Involuntary Urination
 Photographed at the scene



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Do you feel pain anywhere?


- Tell me how your neck feels? (movement and touch)
- Do you have pain anywhere (Describe)
- Photograph these areas

--Pain--

Describe Pain and Location

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Petechiae

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Follow-up – or late report

What symptoms may victims talk about in the days following?

Voice Changes

Trouble swallowing / eating

Difficulty sleeping

Headaches

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Consent

■ Asphyxiation applied or monitored by sexual partner

- She likes sex that way
- Bondage
- "Choke holding" during intercourse

Strangulation Death Was Consensual Sex, Suspect Says

The victim's boyfriend says the killing took part in sexual asphyxia. So the did he watch her's a witness help?

By Linda Harsanyi | August 23, 2012



THE HUFFINGTON POST
JONAS CLERICUS

Update: A charge of manslaughter in the death of Jennifer Zales was upgraded to second-degree murder Wednesday. St. Paul police homicide detectives said they changed the manslaughter charge, after an autopsy revealed additional injuries to the victim's body "consistent with intentional homicidal violence."

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How do you know?

Evidence

- The presence of sexually stimulating paraphernalia: vibrators, dildos, and pornographic magazines
- Books on subject
- The presence of bondage or complex ligature arrangements: ropes, chains, blindfolds, and gags
- History. Repeated use of special fantasy items and objects
- The use of feminine attire or cross-dressing

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Strangulation Laws

- Alabama (2011)
- Alaska (2005)
- Arizona (2012)
- Arkansas (2009)
- California (2011)
- Connecticut (2007)
- Delaware (2010)
- Florida (2007)
- Hawaii (2006)
- Idaho (2005)
- Illinois (2009)
- Indiana (2006)
- Iowa (2012)
- Louisiana (2007)
- Maine (2012)
- Maryland (Sexual Assault) (unknown)
- Michigan (2013)
- Minnesota (2005)
- Mississippi (2010)
- Missouri (2000)

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Strangulation Laws Continued

- Nebraska (2004)
- Nevada (2009)
- New Hampshire (2010)
- New York (2010)
- North Carolina (2004)
- Oklahoma (2004)
- Oregon (2003)
- Rhode Island (2012)
- South Dakota (2012)
- **WEST VIRGINIA (2016)**
- Tennessee (2011)
- Texas (2009)
- Vermont (2006)
- Virginia (2011)
- Washington (2007)
- Wisconsin (2008)
- Wyoming (2011)
- Federal Assault Statute (2013)
- Pending/Proposed:
 - Massachusetts (proposed leg. to fall under assault statutes, in addition to current Attempted Murder statute)
 - Maryland (proposed leg. to fall under assault statute, in addition to current SA statutes)

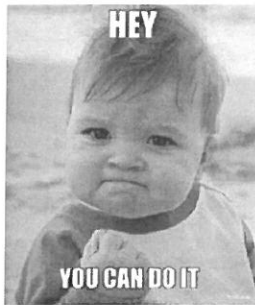
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Collaboration on Case

- Stakeholders of the case
 - Law Enforcement
 - Prosecutor's Office
 - Child Advocacy Center
 - DHHR
 - Hospital
- Additional Parties to consider
 - Domestic Violence Advocate/Sexual Assault Advocate
 - Local Mental Health?
 - Counselors for child and possible family?
 - Others?

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Questions????



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