



“He Choked Me and Left No Marks” – A Really Short Session on Investigation of Strangulation Assaults!

Casey Gwinn, JD, and Sgt. Dan Rincon, Scottsdale PD
Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention

www.strangulationtraininginstitute.com



www.familyjusticecenter.com

Strangulation Training | Strangulation Training - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.familyjusticecenter.com/Strangulation-Training/strangulation-training.html

Strangulation Training | Strangulation Training

Site Map Members Login Contact Us DONATE TODAY ESCAPE TO YAHOO!

TEXT_SIZE

 Local Services, Global Reach
888-511-FJCA (3522)

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.
Margaret Mead

Home About Us Family Justice Centers Get Involved News Library **Technical Assistance** Media Kit Store

Strangulation Training



- Strangulation News
- Strangulation: What We Have Learned (DVD)
- Important Facts
- Strangulation Resources

The Family Justice Center Alliance provides training on the handling of Strangulation cases for every domestic violence and sexual assault professional. Casey Gwinn and/or Gael Stack, former domestic violence prosecutors, are available to assist communities improve the identification, documentation, investigation, prosecution and advocacy with strangulation cases.

"I was truly motivated by yours [Gael Stack] and Dr. McCrane's presentation...there are so many important changes that must be made on victims' behalf and changes that may [help us] intervene before someone is tragically murdered."

"I was very fortunate to be selected to attend last month's seminar in San Diego on domestic violence strangulation. Your presentation was very, very informative, and I am excited to apply the knowledge – medical and tactical – in my upcoming prosecutions for strangulation."

"Your presentation on [Prosecution of Strangulation Cases] was informative and enlightening. Thanks so much for your assistance!"

"I really enjoyed the training on Friday. Your passion for helping [domestic violence victims] and prosecuting [their abusers] is outstanding. Dr. McCrane was great as well. Your passion and excitement kept the audience's attention focused on..."

http://www.yahoo.com/ Internet | Protected Mode: On 9:24 AM 10/22/2010



FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
ALLIANCE

Family Justice Center Alliance @2013

strangulationtraininginstitute.com

The screenshot shows a Safari browser window displaying the website. The address bar shows "strangulationtraininginstitute.com - Welcome". The navigation menu includes "Home", "About Us", "Media", and "Join". The main header features the "FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER ALLIANCE" logo and the text "STRANGULATION TRAINING INSTITUTE". Below this is a secondary navigation menu with "WHAT WE DO", "RESOURCES", "TRAINING", and "IMPACT OF STRANGULATION CRIMES". The main content area includes a large image of a woman's face with a hand near her neck, and a smaller image of a woman's eyes. Below these are three update boxes: "US Department of Justice Funds National Strangulation Training Institute", "Have you provided training on the Identification, Documentation, Investigation, and Prosecution of IPV Strangulation Crimes? If so, let us know!", and "Investigating Strangulation Online Course".



FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
ALLIANCE

Family Justice Center Alliance @2013

familyjusticecenter.com

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying a Google Books page. The address bar shows the URL: <http://books.google.com/books?id=Q04Q07UmyowC&pg=PA217&pg=PA217&dq=strangulation+chapter+taliaferro+strack+hawley+mcclane+>. The page title is "Intimate Partner Violence: A Health-Based Perspective" by Connie Mitchell. The search bar contains the text "strangulation chapter taliaferro strack hawley mcclane mitc". The main content area displays "Chapter 16" and "Strangulation in Intimate Partner Violence" by Ellen Taliaferro, Dean Hawley, George McClane, and Gael Strack. The page is identified as Page 217. The left sidebar includes a search box, "Add to My Library", and links to purchase the book from Oxford, Amazon.com, Barnes&Noble.com (\$78.80), Books-A-Million, and Find in a library. Related books are also listed. The bottom of the browser window shows the taskbar with various application icons and the system tray displaying the time as 9:26 AM on 10/22/2010.



FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
ALLIANCE

Family Justice Center Alliance @2011

DVD on Strangulation

www.familyjusticecenter.com

Visit Our **STORE!**

Dream Big
a simple, complicated idea to stop family violence
Casey Gwinn with Gael Strack

Girls

Strangulation: WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

Featured Product

Strangulation:
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED



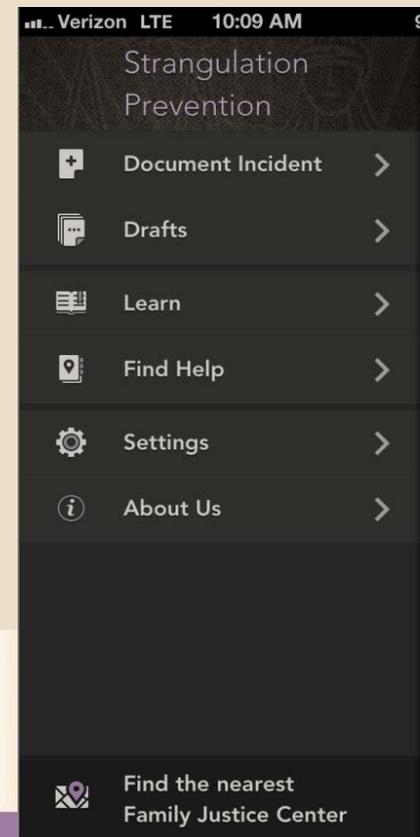
2013 New iPhone APP

“Document It”

A Mobile App to Document Near-Fatal Strangulation Cases

The mobile application will assist professionals from ***all disciplines*** and individuals who are “choked” by an intimate partner to document multiple incidents using:

- Photo, Video, and Audio capture
- User-friendly survey of possible symptoms and injuries
- Text area to tell the story of the incident
- Signed consent for release of information; and
- Ability to send a full report to law enforcement
- Confidential storage
- Syncs with a DropBox.com account

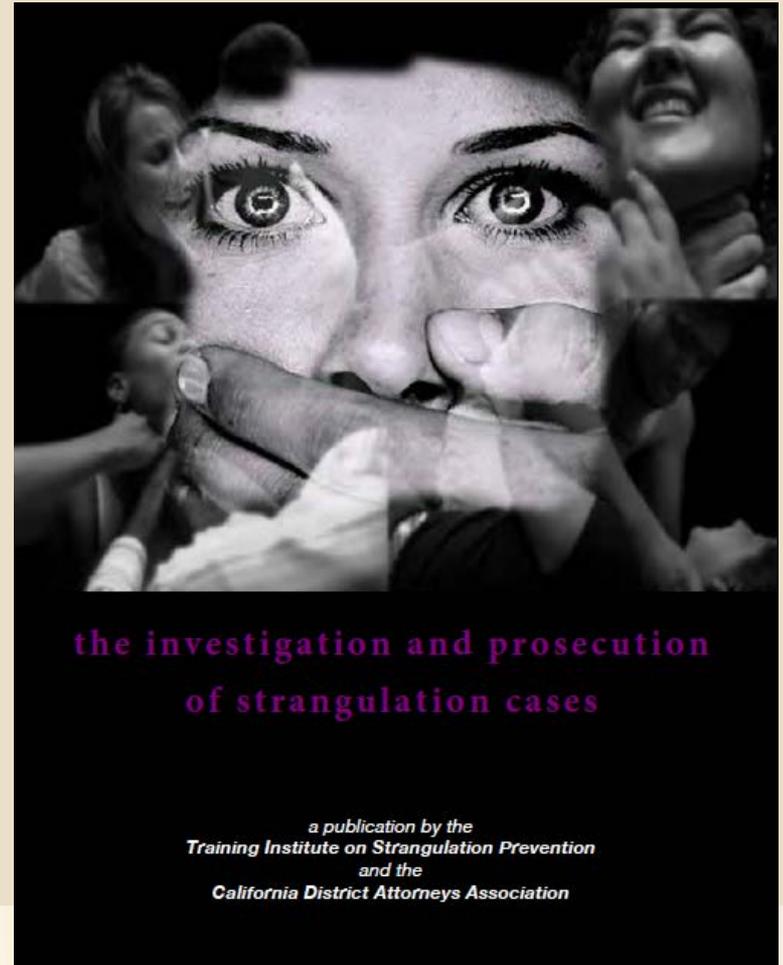


FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
ALLIANCE

Alliance Publishes New Manual in 2013!

IPV Strangulation Crimes

- IPV Strangulation Crimes Manual – Developed by the National Family Justice Center Alliance/Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention
- In Partnership with the California District Attorneys Association
- Manual includes chapters on advocacy, investigations, prosecution, and legislation, among other topics



San Diego City Attorney's Office 1995 Study of 300 Strangulation Assault

- 42 % - No visible injury
- 20 % - Pain only
- 22 % - Minor visible injury
 - redness and/or scratches
- 16 % - Visible injury
 - red marks and/or bruising



Observations

- 90% of the cases had a DV history
- 50% of the cases, children were present.
- 99% of the suspects were men.



Signs & 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



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”



Definition

- Strangulation is a form of asphyxia characterized by closure of the blood vessels and/or air passages of the neck as a result of external pressure on the neck



Asphyxia

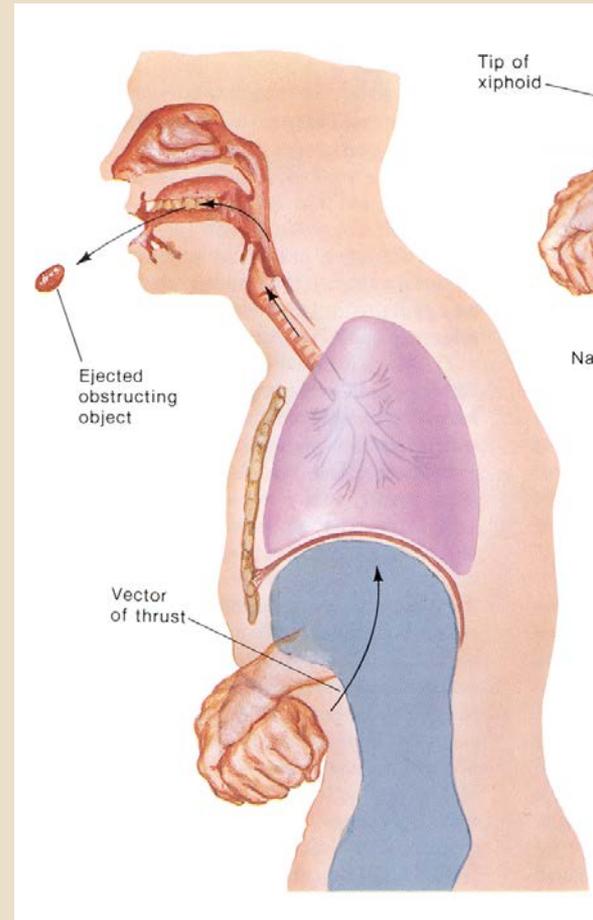
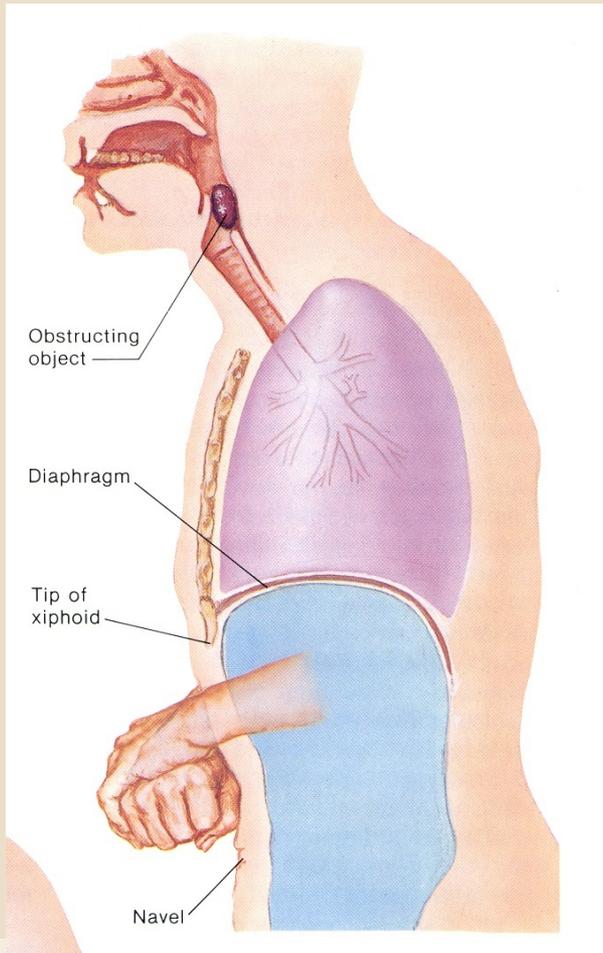
- Any process which deprives the tissue cells of oxygen.
- Asphyxia, anoxia and hypoxia are virtually synonymous



- **Suffocation**
 - If there isn't enough oxygen in the air, such as when trapped in a small space
- **Smothering**
 - Caused by an object over the mouth and nose, such as a pillow or the murderer's hand
- **Choking**
 - Caused by an obstruction in the airway - food, inhaled vomit, etc. Seldom used in homicide, except when people choke on their gags.
- **Crush asphyxia**
 - Caused by pressure on the chest, such as a collapsed building, or in a crowd. Post-mortem appearances include a lot of hemorrhaging between the chest and head, cyanosis, bulging eyes, etc.



Strangulation is not “CHOKING” but...



2 Primary Forms of Strangulation

- Ligature
- Manual

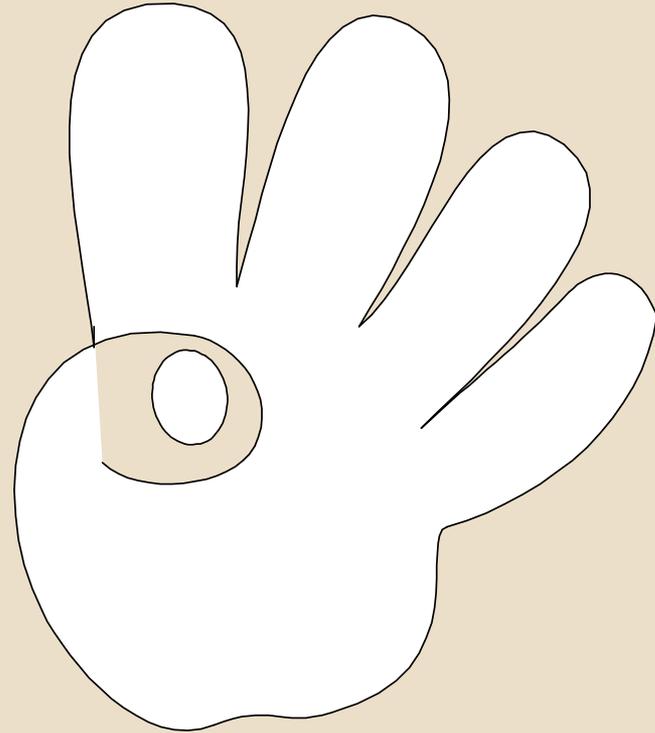


ANATOMY



4 Important Structures

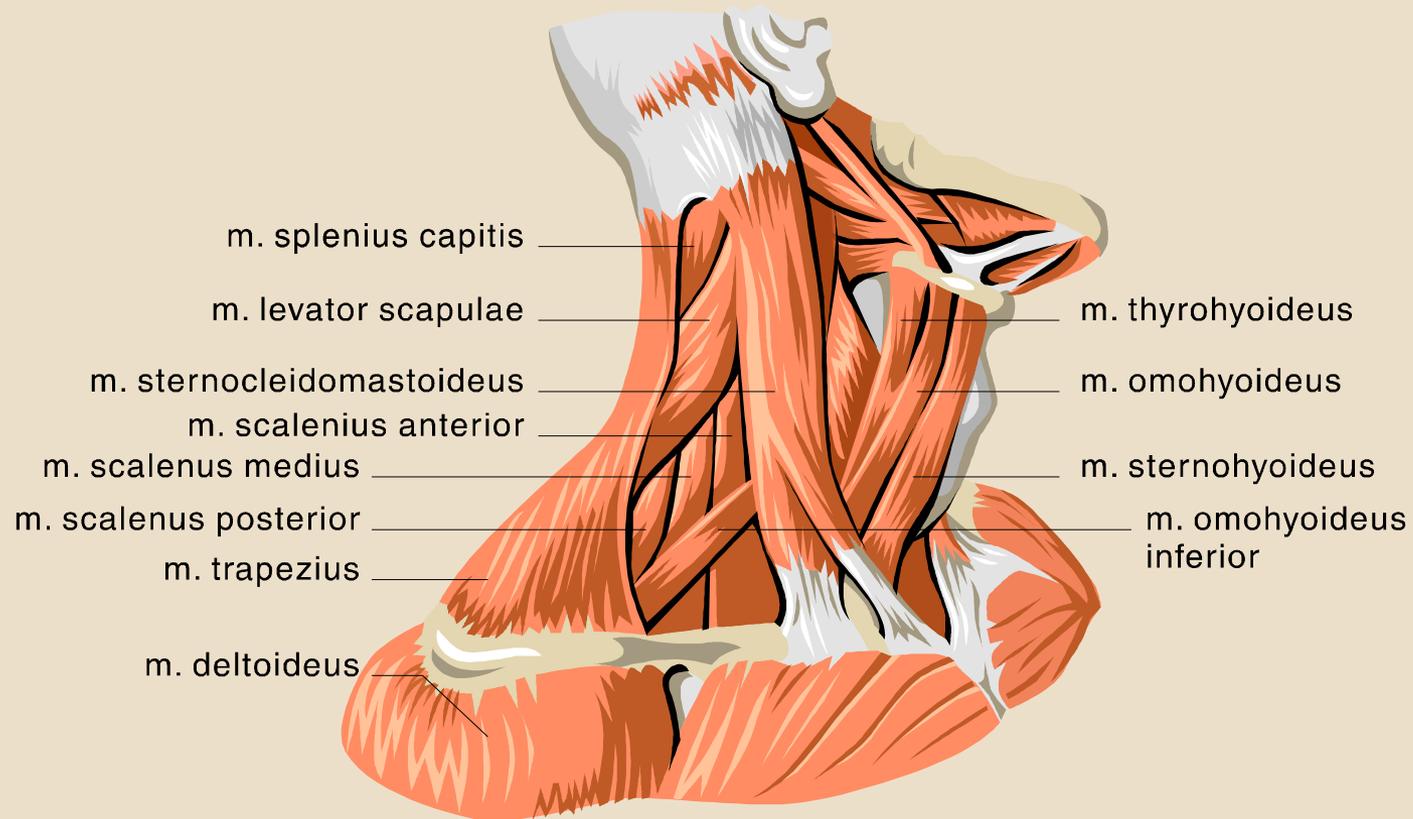
- Muscles
- Vessels
- Bones
- Cartilage



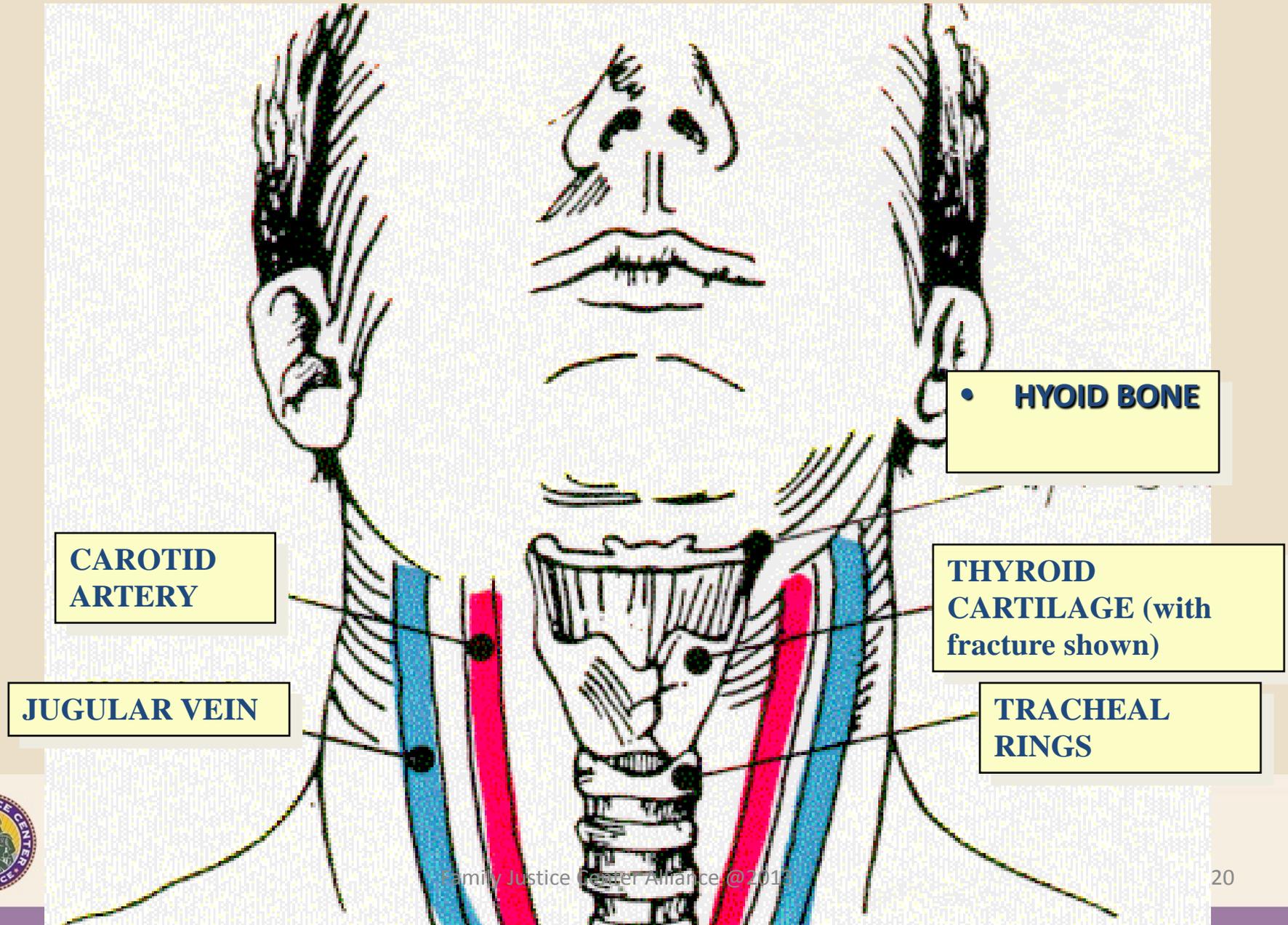
FOUR

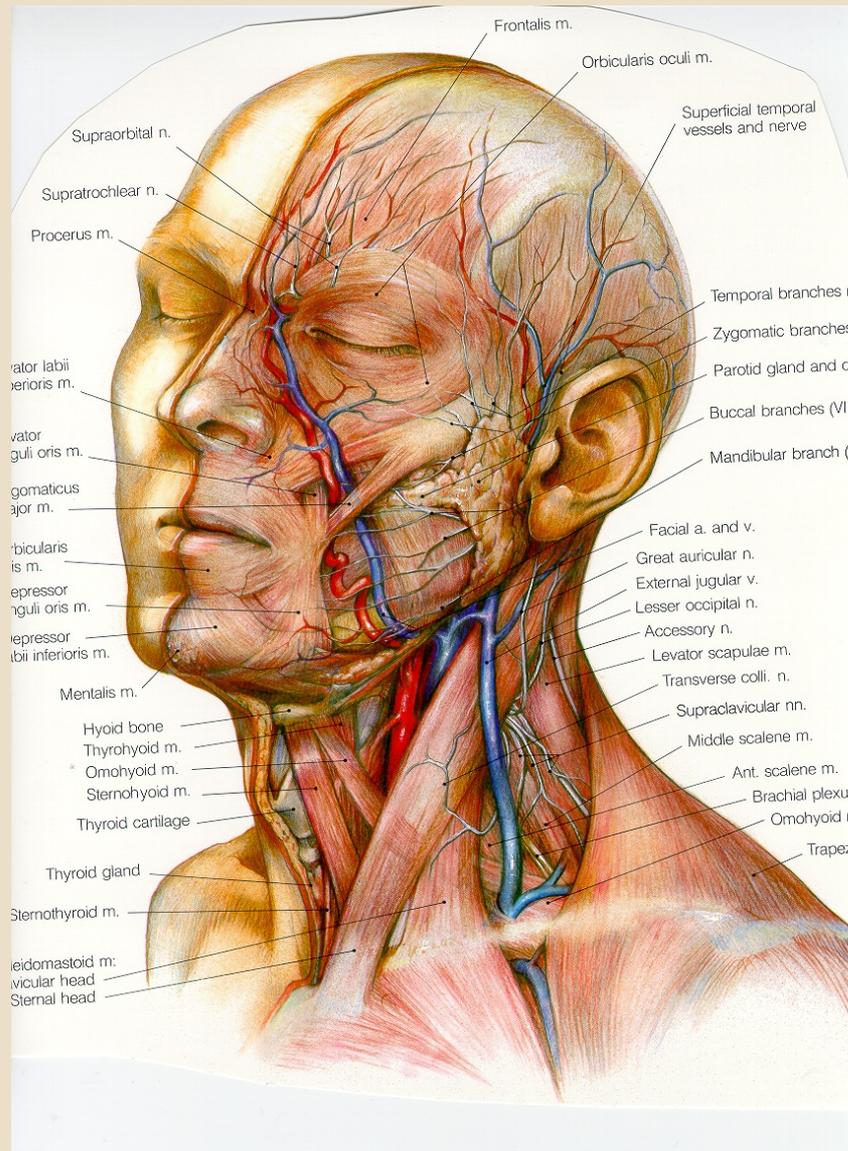


Muscles



Vessels: arteries & veins





Unconsciousness & Death



Brain Death



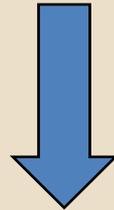
4

Minutes ...

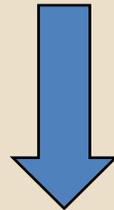


SEQUENCE:

- Consciousness



- Unconsciousness



- Death



Vessel Occlusion

- **Carotid artery occlusion**

- Anterior neck
- 11 pounds of pressure for 10 seconds

- **Jugular vein occlusion**

- Lateral neck
- 4.4 pounds of pressure for 10 seconds



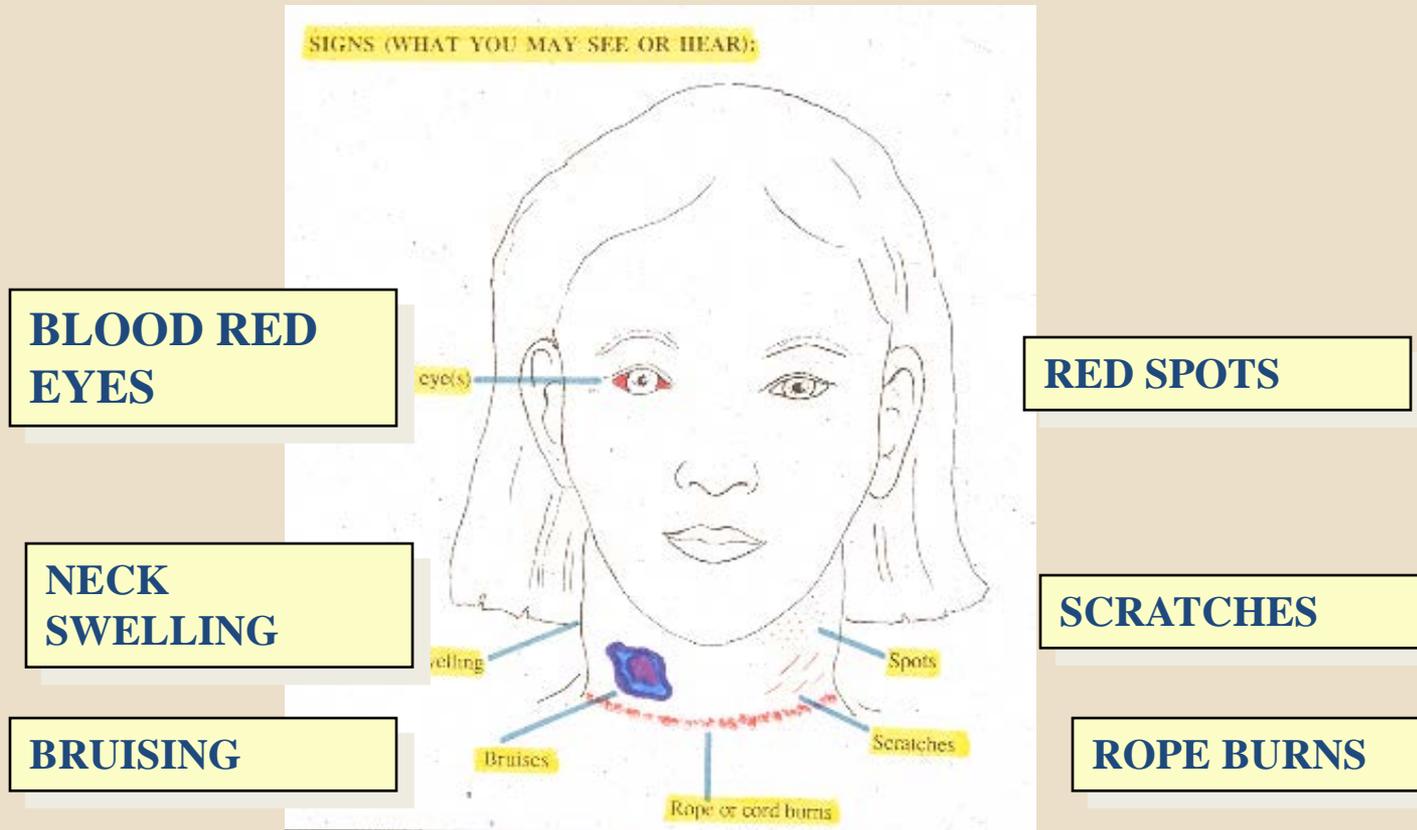
UNCONSCIOUSNESS



Signs & Symptoms



SIGNS (Objective)



“Survey Results of Women Who Have Been Strangled While in an Abusive Relationship” Dr. Wilbur

- **Medical symptoms experienced by victims**

- Difficulty breathing: 85%
- Scratches on neck: 44%
- Dysphagia: 44%
- Voice change: 45%
- Loss of consciousness: 17%
- **Ptosis: 20%**
- **Facial palsy: 10%**
- **L or R sided weakness: 18%**
- Memory deficit: 31%
- Suicidal ideation: 31%



“Survey Results of Women Who Have Been Strangled While in an Abusive Relationship” JEM

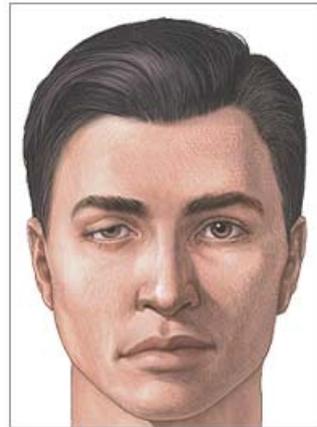
- **Ptosis: 20%**
- **Facial palsy: 10%**
- **L or R sided weakness: 18%**

Ptosis (drooping of the eyelid)



ADAM.

Facial drooping



ADAM.



Neck swelling (edema): Laryngeal fracture - (subcutaneous emphysema)

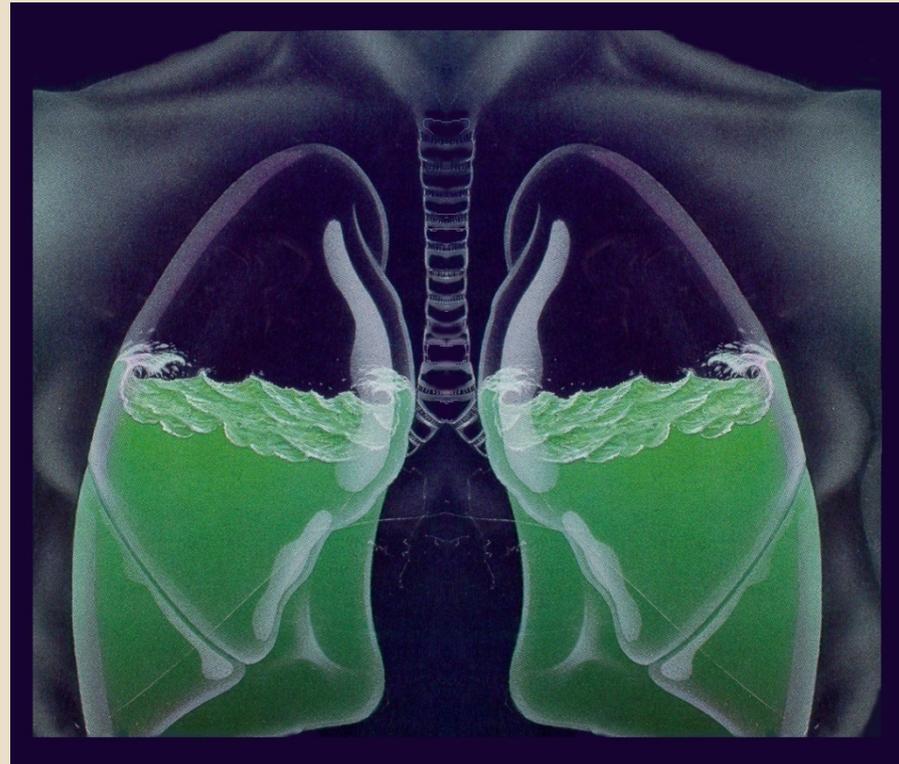


***Courtesy of DDA Derrick Ewin and Ian McIvor from
Contra Costa County***



Internal/External Signs

- Coughing up blood (hemoptysis)
- Lung (pulmonary) damage
 - Pulmonary edema
 - Aspiration pneumonitis
 - Pneumonia



Internal/External Signs

- Involuntary urination or defecation (sphincter incontinence)



Impression marks



Courtesy of San Diego District Attorney's Office, DDA Dan Goldstein



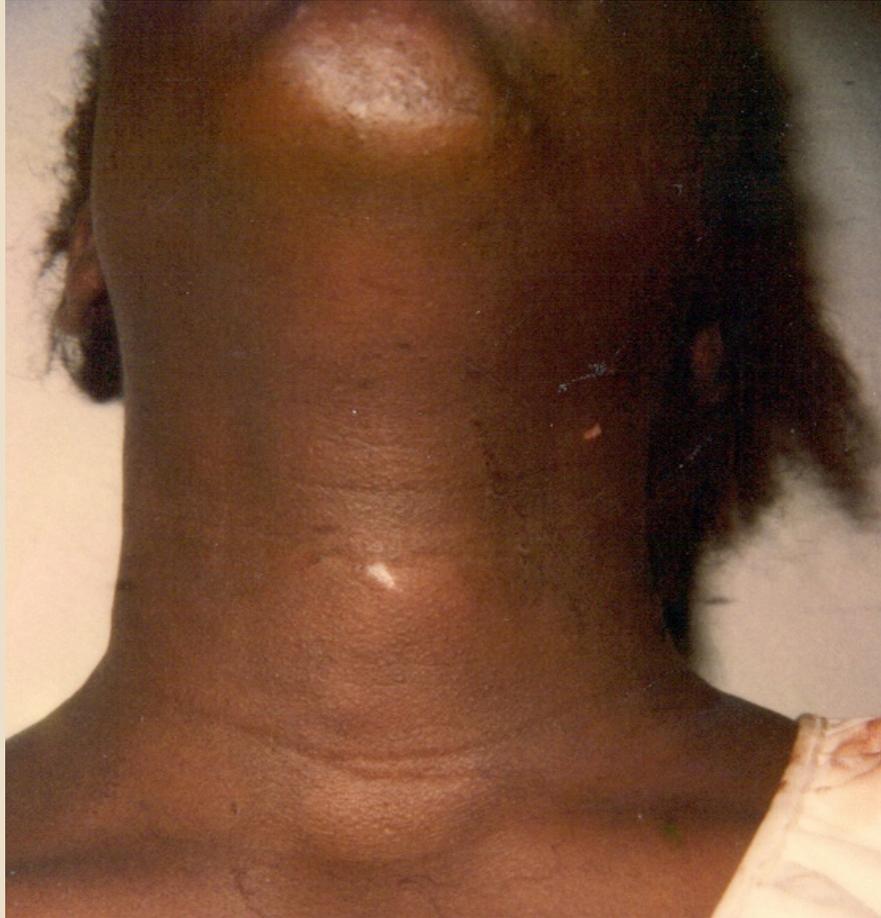
FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
ALLIANCE



**Abrasions: Under chin – due to
instinctual chin lowering**



Scratches



W O R D S



Claw marks



Bruises Behind the Ear



Thumb-print bruise



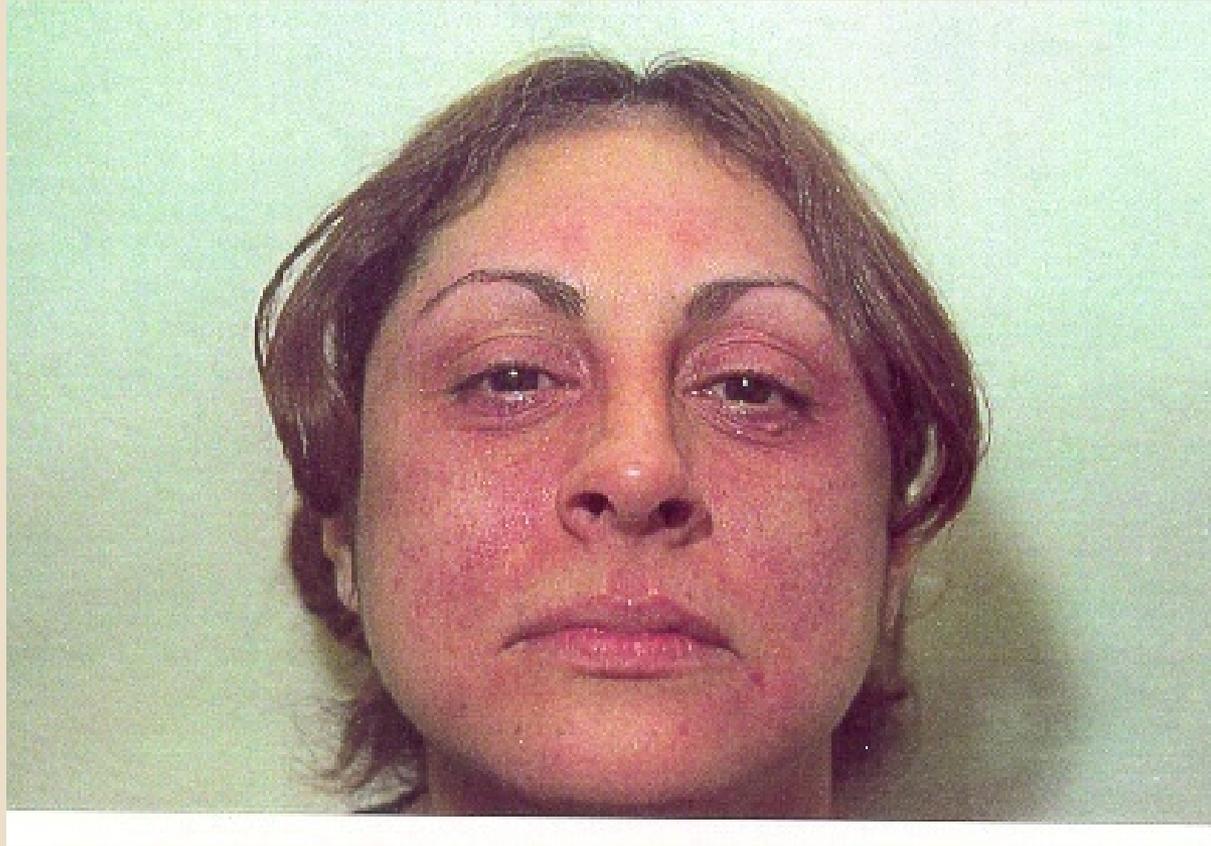
Massive tongue swelling (edema)



Petechiae - one red spot in eye



Day 1



Courtesy of Fresno Police Department, Mike Agnew



FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
ALLIANCE

Day 2





FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
ALLIANCE

Family Justice Center Alliance @2011

Day 2

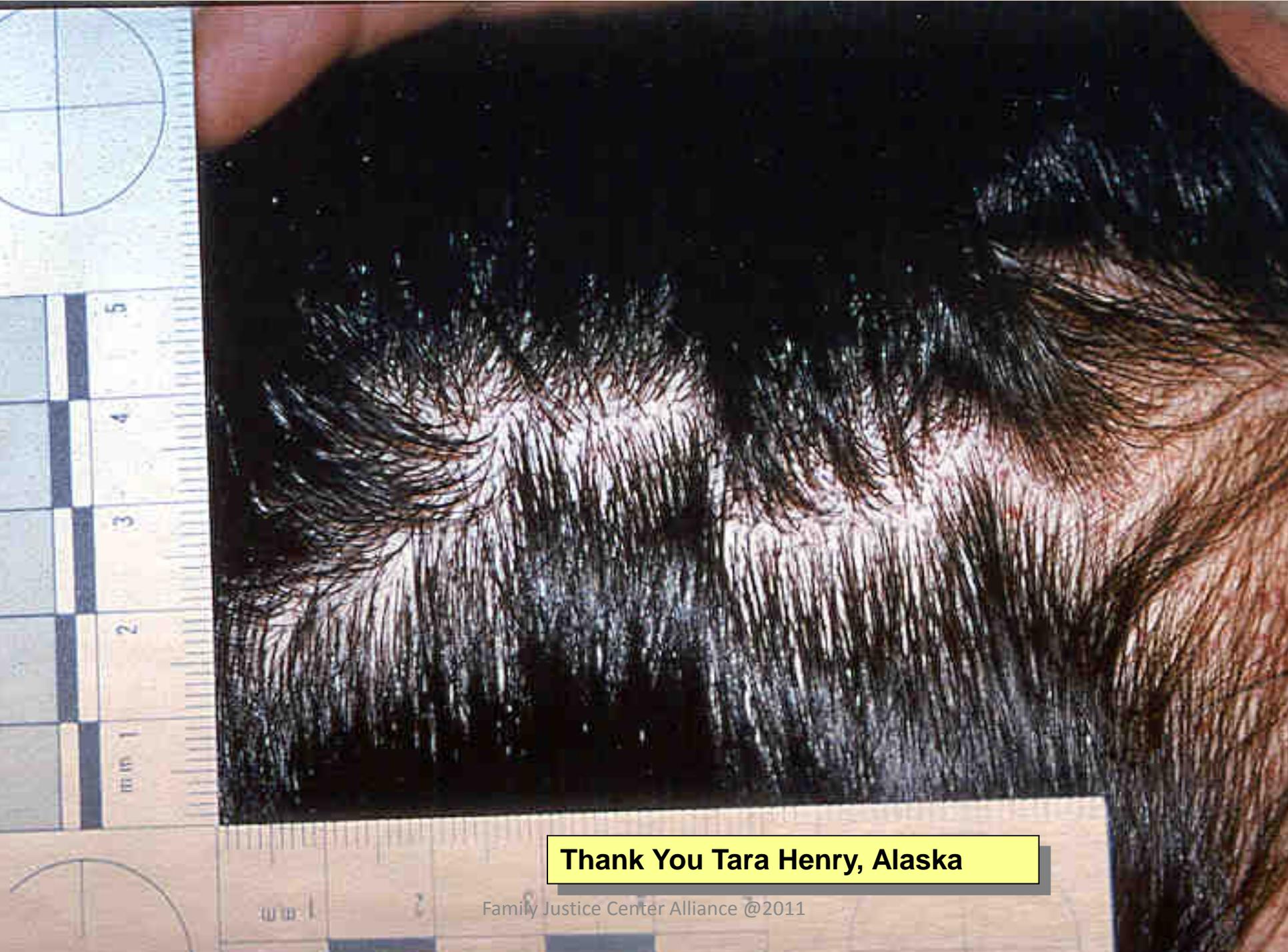


FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
ALLIANCE

Family Justice Center Alliance @2011

Day 30





Thank You Tara Henry, Alaska

Family Justice Center Alliance @2011



Are there other causes for
petechiae?



Yes!

- Strenuous labor
- Scuba diving
- Severe coughing or vomiting
- What else?



Self-Defense



Self-Inflicted Injuries

- She lied.
- Injuries are self-inflicted.
- It's a set up.
- Jealous of the new girlfriend.



Consent

- Applied or monitored by sexual partner
 - she likes sex that way
 - Bondage
 - “choke holding” during anal intercourse



Describe the Method of Strangulation

How did he choke you?



Was it one hand?



Was it two hands?



From the front or behind?

- Front



- Back



One arm?



Was it the Carotid Restraint?



Was a ligature used?



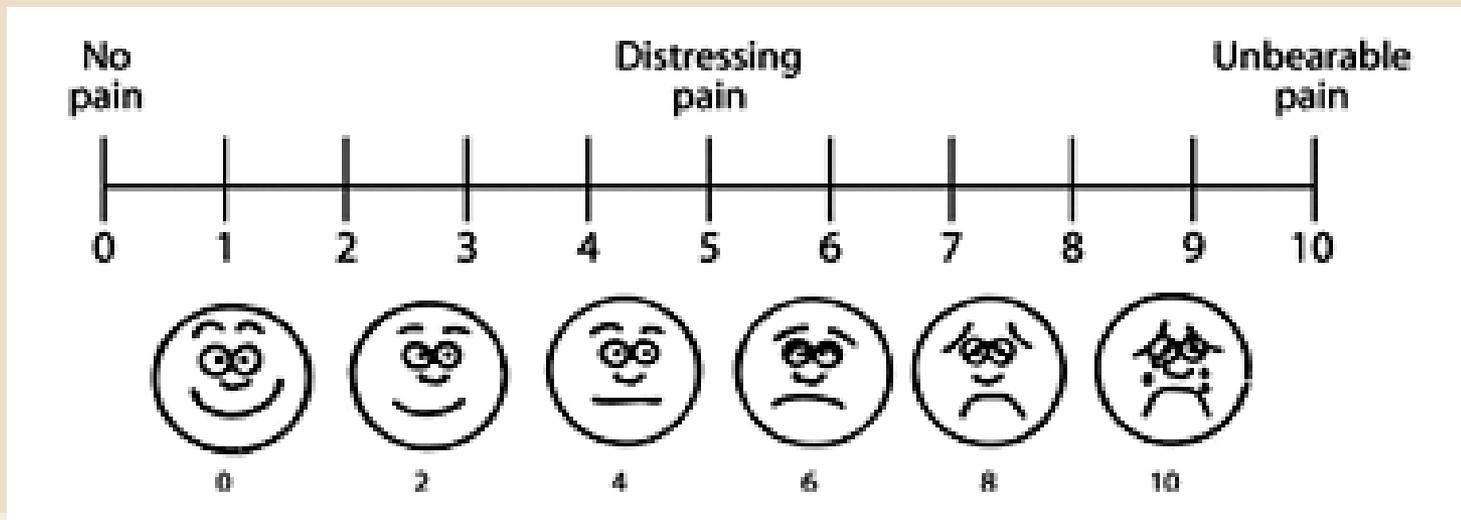
To determine intent:

- How long?
 - To avoid: “he grabbed me briefly”
 - Det. Agnew suggests to ask the victim to close her eyes and tell you “when” to indicate how long the defendant applied pressure to her neck. The officer then monitors the time.
- How hard, on a scale from 1 to 10 with 10 being the hardest?
 - “it must have been 9, otherwise I would be dead right now.”



How Painful?

- Use the scale below to better estimate the level of the pain you are experiencing:





RESTRA

Ask the victim to remove her blouse

- Remember injuries can be at different locations:
 - Chest
 - Shoulder
 - Back of the neck



How did you feel?

- “fuzzy,” “dizzy”
- “head rush”
- “I saw stars.”
- “I saw black and white.”
- “I couldn’t breathe”
- “I passed out”
- “I vomited several times”
- “I had trouble swallowing”
- “I felt like my head was going to explode”
- “I felt a rush of blood to my head”



Questions

- What were you wearing at the time of the incident?
- Have you changed your clothes?
- Thrown them away?
- Put them in the washing machine?
- Put them in laundry basket?
- Make it normal.
- Sometimes victims who have been strangled report they have urinated or defecated. Did that happen to you?



Did the victim suffer a possible concussion? www.cdc.gov

- A blow or jolt to the head can cause a type of mild brain injury called a concussion.
- Sometimes whiplash can cause a concussion.
- The signs can be subtle and missed.



What did he say?



- “I’m going to kill you, you fucking bitch”
- “Die Bitch die”
- “No judge, no cop, no attorney will keep you safe”
- “I’m going to pop your neck”
- “I’m going to do an OJ and leave no evidence”
- “I didn’t mean to squeeze so tight”
- “I don’t need a fucking gun to kill you”



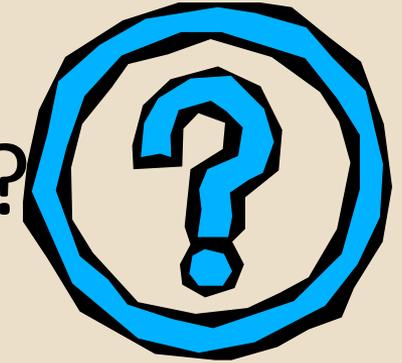
What did you see?



- “I saw anger, madness and hatred in his eyes.”
- “He had the eyes of a demon. They were full of hate. He was my husband.”
- “He seemed possessed”



What did you think was going to happen?



- “I thought I was going to die.”
- “I was afraid he would kill me. He wouldn’t mean to kill me, but it was getting worse, he wouldn’t know when to stop.”
- “I began saying “Hail Mary’s” ... I thought I was going to be seeing my mother who died two weeks ago”



How did it stop?

- I escaped.
- I passed out
- My kids started screaming.
- Police arrived.
- What did you say?
 - I can't breathe.
 - Let me go.
 - Stop, you're killing me.



Any swelling or lumps to neck?

- Look for neck swelling or lumps especially if victim reported multiple attacks or prior strangulation assaults.
- Ask victim to look in the mirror.
- Ask victim if her neck looks swollen?
- Ask victim to gently feel her neck and if there are any lumps that were not there before?
- If so, call paramedics immediately and insist on medical attention immediately. Do not ask.



Documentation Chart for Attempted Strangulation Cases

Use this chart when a victim reports being "choked" or strangled

Symptoms and/or Internal Injury:

Breathing Changes	Voice Changes	Swallowing Changes	Behavioral Changes	OTHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty Breathing • Hyperventilation • Unable to breathe Other: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raspy voice • Hoarse voice • Coughing • Unable to speak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble swallowing • Painful to swallow • Neck Pain • Nausea • Vomiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agitation • Amnesia • PTSD • Hallucinations • Combattiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dizzy • Headaches • Fainted • Urination • Defecation

Use face & neck diagrams to mark visible injuries:



Face	Eyes & Eyelids	Nose	Ear	Mouth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red or flushed • Pinpoint red spots (petechiae) • Scratch marks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petechiae to R and/or L eyeball (circle one) • Petechiae to R and/or L eyelid (circle one) • Bloody red eyeball(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bloody nose • Broken nose (ancillary finding) • Petechiae 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petechiae (external and/or ear canal) • Bleeding from ear canal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruising • Swollen tongue • Swollen lips • Cuts/abrasions (ancillary finding)
Under Chin	Chest	Shoulders	Neck	Head
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redness • Scratch marks • Bruise(s) • Abrasions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redness • Scratch marks • Bruise(s) • Abrasions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redness • Scratch marks • Bruise(s) • Abrasions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redness • Scratch marks • Finger nail impressions • Bruise(s) • Swelling • Ligature mark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petechiae (on scalp) Ancillary findings: • Hair pulled • Bump • Skull fracture • Concussion

Please take photos and indicate the number of Photos taken: _____

Copyright: San Diego City Attorney's Office 2001. All rights reserved.



Take Photos of the Neck

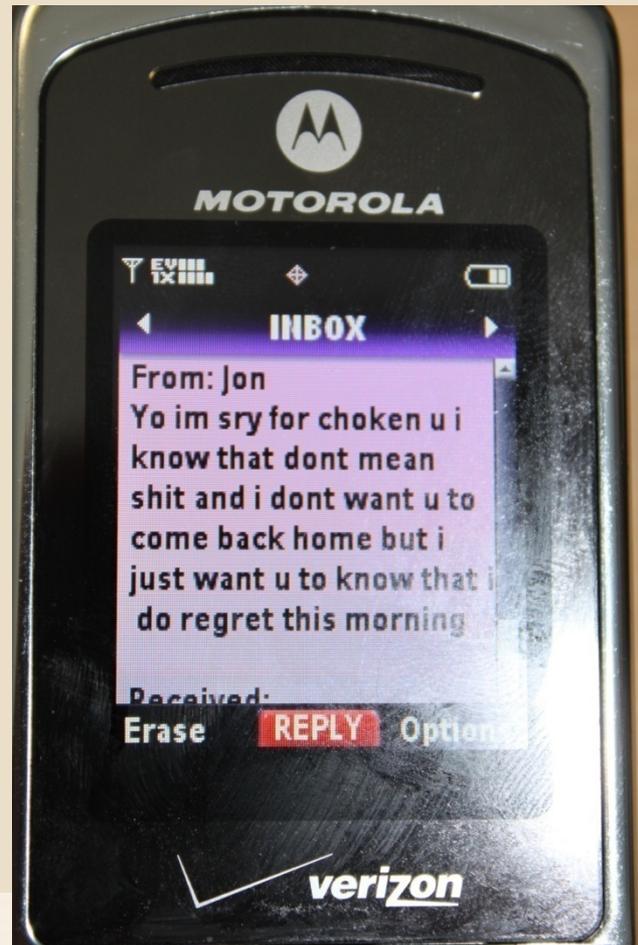


Spex Handscope

- (In the photo by The Sun's Kim Hairston, Angela Primeau, a forensic nurse examiner at Mercy Medical Center, shows off the Spex forensics handscope, which uses light of different wavelengths to reveal bruising in domestic violence cases).



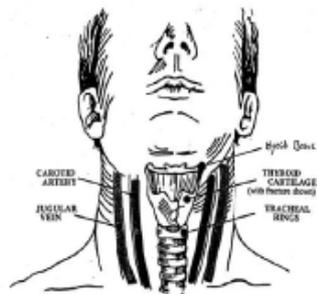
Ask Victim about Text Messages



Advocacy: Victim Brochure 2

Strangulation has only recently been identified as one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence: **unconsciousness may occur within seconds and death within minutes.** When domestic violence perpetrators choke (strangle) their victims, not only is this a felonious assault, but it may be an attempted homicide. Strangulation is an *ultimate form of power and control* where the batterer can demonstrate control over the victim's next breath; having devastating psychological effects or a potentially fatal outcome.

Sober and conscious victims of strangulation will first feel terror and severe pain. *If strangulation persists, unconsciousness will follow.* Before lapsing into unconsciousness, a strangulation victim will usually resist violently, often producing injuries of their own neck in an effort to claw off the assailant, and frequently also producing injury on the face or hands to their assailant. These defensive injuries may not be present if the victim is physically or chemically restrained before the assault.



Losing Consciousness

Victims may lose consciousness by any one or all of the following methods: blocking of the carotid arteries in the neck (depriving the brain of oxygen), blocking of the jugular veins (preventing deoxygenated blood from exiting the brain), and closing off the airway, making breathing impossible.

Very little pressure on both the carotid arteries and/or veins for ten seconds is necessary to cause unconsciousness. However, if the pressure is immediately released, consciousness will be regained within ten seconds. To completely close off the trachea (windpipe), three times as much pressure (33 lbs.) is required. Brain death will occur in 4 to 5 minutes, if strangulation persists.

Observing Changes

Observation of the changes in these signs over time can greatly facilitate determination of the nature and scope of internal damage produced

during the assault, and lend credibility to witness accounts of the force and duration of the assault.

Documentation by photographs sequentially for a period of days after the assault is very helpful in establishing a journal of physical evidence.

Victims should also seek medical attention if they experience difficulty breathing, speaking, swallowing or experience nausea, vomiting, light headedness, headache, involuntary urination and/or defecation.

Although most victims may suffer no visible injuries whatsoever and many fully recover from being strangled, *all victims, especially pregnant victims, should be encouraged to seek immediate medical attention.* A medical evaluation may be crucial in detecting internal injuries and saving a life.

Use face and neck diagrams to mark visible injuries:



The Results After Training

The beginning of a new era



The Results from Detective

- “She had small red spots on her forehead and around her eyes that appeared to be small broken capillaries. This has been described to me in the past by Dr. George McClane during training. The condition has been described as petechiae spots and are caused by tiny capillaries bursting from pressure of a chokehold. She also complained of a sore throat and a hoarse voice. I encouraged her to seek medical attention. This was the first time he choked her”.



Implementation – Making all this Training Matter



2014 International Family Justice Conference – San Diego April 2-4, 2014



Join us at the San Diego Hilton Bayfront Hotel!

Go to www.familyjusticecenter.com to

Register!



FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
ALLIANCE

Thank you!

www.familyjusticecenter.com



FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
ALLIANCE