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From:

To: chas@novelholiday.com

Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2015 5:49 PM

Subject: A Near-Death Compression Asphyxia Survivor's Story

Dear Ms. Miller,

I nearly died of compression asphyxia when I was placed in a prone restraint position by a police officer.

The incident occurred on the night of September 5, 2009, located at my residence. I have two front yards divided by a walkway. Looking from the street view in the right side yard, a police officer was with my hubby and in the left side yard. I was standing alone as I watched and waited for the police to leave.

I noticed police officers in the street when one police officer in the street ran up to me. Without saying a word he picked up my 5-foot 1-inch body and raised me up about three feet from the ground to the level of his waist. I was now 8 feet in the air with my bare feet on his waist. He took time to balance me and slid his hands down from my shoulder to my fingertips to insure my hands were lying flat against my sides. He turned me sideways and threw me onto my driveway.

I fell prone onto the concrete pavement injuring my face with a bump appearing on my forehead. My reaction was he is trying to kill me, but I survived the fall. Then he dragged me by my arms back into the left yard. Since I was wearing a tank top scrapes and blood appeared onto my bare shoulders, arm, face and ear from the dragging.

Afterward he placed my hands by my sides in the prone restraint position. Then he sat down on my back with his legs resting on my thighs. He tucked in my hands a bit so that I was lying down on my hands. His body weight was heavy on my thin frame body, resulting in bruises on my thigh from his shoe. I was unable to inhale and exhale.

In my distress I shouted repeatedly, "I can't breathe!" and kicked my legs up and down like a baby in panic knowing that I was dying. I was puzzled. My mind wondered, "What is he waiting for? When will he get off of my back?" The police officer ignored me as I shouted continuously "I can't breathe!" He responded once, "Stop screaming!" But I refused to listen to him because I was dying and I wanted anyone who could hear my voice to know the reason for my death is because "I can't breathe!"

When the officer saw a K9 officer arrive on the scene he yelled out to him and the K9 officer approached us with his police canine on a leash. His presence actually saved my life at that moment because the officer got off of my back to speak with the K9 officer. It was a relief. I could successfully breathe again without pressure on my back. I thought my near-death experience was finally over but it was not over yet.

With weak arms I struggled to get up. I turned sideways but the officer grabbed my left arm. He said, "You pushed the officer," referring to the officer in the right yard with my hubby which I did not do. Holding my arm he slid his knee onto my shoulder blades and onto my back to force me down to the prone restraint position. Then for the second time he takes a seat on my back.

Now I worried not only that I was restrained unable to breathe in the prone position but also that my attention was distracted by a canine near my legs which were exposed since my pant legs fell down when I raised my legs up. In my distress I kicked my legs up and down as I did the first time I was in the prone position. I shouted, "Get the dog away!" but the K9 officer did not remove the canine.

The officer sitting on my back then grabbed a handcuff dangling off of my right wrist to attach it to my left wrist. That came as a surprise to me because I was unaware there was a handcuff placed on my right wrist. I realized then that the officer must have put the handcuff on me before he sat on my back the first time. This leaves me with the lingering unanswered questions: Why did he only handcuff one hand? Why didn't he handcuff both hands when he had the opportunity to do so before he sat on my back?

With both hands handcuffed behind my back he placed my hands into his lap and shouted, "Stop resisting!" He was holding down my hands and signaled to the K9 officer saying, "She's resisting arrest." Even though the K9 officer witnessed that I was already handcuffed he walked the police canine up to my legs to bite me. I did not kick the dog. In my distress I continued to move my legs up and down as before hoping now it would prevent the canine from grabbing a hold of my legs. Unfortunately that didn't work.

The canine grabbed onto my right leg as it was raised and held on tight. Even though I shouted, "Get the dog off!" the K9 officer did not comply. The canine continued holding his grip. When the canine released his canine teeth from my right leg the K9 officer proceeded to walk the canine to my left leg for a repeat performance. After the canine did his duty as ordered by the K9 officer the brutal officer stood up and both officers left.

Subsequently, a large group surrounded me eager to see the injuries on my legs so my pants were cut up to my rear. Unable to walk, I was placed into an ambulance stretcher and taken by AMR to Kaiser Permanente Hospital Emergency Department with a police officer guarding my room.

I received 43 stitches but I still was unable to walk. Sitting up made me feel sick. I retched in embarrassment as the police officer observed me. He kindly got me a wheelchair and took me to get prescription pain medication at the Kaiser pharmacy. Then he drove me to Santa Rita Jail where I spent a few days there in a wheelchair.

Afterward the court dropped all false charges against me. That is the good news. But the bad news is that I sustained permanent injuries of physical scars and disfigurement on my legs and pain when I stretch my left leg due to the canine bites on my muscle.

They are daily reminders that will last a lifetime along with the emotional scars of the panic, pain, and suffering I endured during my near-death compression asphyxia experience.