



Strangulation....what you thought you knew

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&

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DISCLOSURE

WARNING

**This gallery contains graphic
images that some viewers
may find disturbing**



“Men use strangulation for control and power over women. Once they learn it, they don’t stop.”

Dr. Ellen Taliaferro

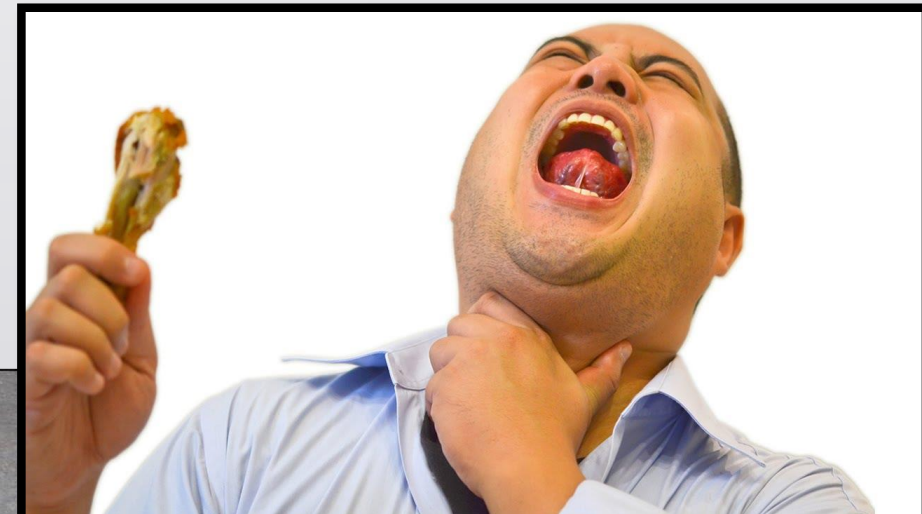



It is unmistakably understood that the act of placing pressure around someone's neck and impeding the flow of blood and oxygen is one of the most lethal forms of IPV

(Montgomery et al., 2015; Shields et al., 2010; Sorenson et al., 2014; Strack & Gwinn, 2011).

Strangulation is NOT choking

- Choking happens when the windpipe is blocked entirely or partly by a foreign object, such as food.
- Victims typically use the term “choked,” but we must use the term “strangled” in reports.
- It is important to educate victims about the difference.





Intimate partner homicide is the ultimate form
of IPV

14% of all murders and 70% of
those victims being women in the
United States



DEATH

- Strangulation accounts for 10 to 20% of all violent intimate partner deaths in the United States.
- The risk of homicide in intimate partner NFS is a major risk factor for women.
- Women who had sustained a NFS event previously had a seven-fold risk of becoming a victim of a homicide in the future.

(Armstrong & Strack, 2016; Glass et al., 2008; Shields, Corey, Weakley-Jones, & Stewart, 2010; Suffla & Seedat, 2015).



What is strangulation?

- Application of pressure and/or objects around the neck and upper chest region
- Strangulation obstructs the flow of blood and decreases the flow of air. The constriction on the neck region results in venous obstruction with subsequent loss of consciousness due to the lack of oxygen and blood reaching the brain (Shields et al., 2010).
- The increased pressure may lead to arterial blockage and airway collapse leading to death (Shields, Corey, Weakley-Jones, & Stewart, 2010). Sorenson, et al., (2014) reported that the symptoms experienced are immediate.

Dominic Camacho, 10-18-1974
Johnson county case 12CR00535

- Murder 2nd Degree (DV)
- Victim, wife, mother of 3
- **23 years, 7 months (2012 case)**
- Earliest release 2032
- Home Sweet Home: Lansing Prison



Jason Cott, 12-04-1979
Johnson County case 10CR00195

- Murder 1st Degree
- Victim, pregnant wife
- **LIFE (2010 case)**
- Home Sweet Home: El Dorado



Date	Class	Location	Type of report
Mar 04, 2015	2	El Dorado Correctional Fac. - Central	Insub/Disrespect Officer/Other
Apr 26, 2013	1	El Dorado Correctional Fac. - Central	Threaten or Intim Any Person
Apr 26, 2013	2	El Dorado Correctional Fac. - Central	Insub/Disrespect Officer/Other
Apr 25, 2013	1	El Dorado Correctional Fac. - Central	Dangerous Contraband
Dec 18, 2012	1	El Dorado Correctional Fac. - Central	Dangerous Contraband
Dec 17, 2012	2	El Dorado Correctional Fac. - Central	Unauthorized Dealing or Trade
Sep 11, 2012	2	El Dorado Correctional Fac. - Central	Mail
Sep 11, 2012	2	El Dorado Correctional Fac. - Central	Mail
Aug 22, 2012	2	El Dorado Correctional Fac. - Central	Mail
Mar 15, 2012	1	Lansing Correctional Facility - Central	Dangerous Contraband
Mar 15, 2012	1	Lansing Correctional Facility - Central	Viol Statutes (Felony Crime)
Feb 27, 2012	1	Lansing Correctional Facility - Central	Battery
Feb 27, 2012	1	Lansing Correctional Facility - Central	Dangerous Contraband
Feb 27, 2012	3	Lansing Correctional Facility - Central	Restr Area/Unauthor Presence
Feb 19, 2012	2	Lansing Correctional Facility - Central	Restr Area/Unauth Presence
Feb 18, 2012	2	Lansing Correctional Facility - Central	Taking W/O Permission
Feb 18, 2012	1	Lansing Correctional Facility - Central	Battery
Feb 18, 2012	2	Lansing Correctional Facility - Central	Insub/Disrespect Officer/Other
Jan 06, 2012	2	Lansing Correctional Facility - Central	Insub/Disrespect Officer/Other
Nov 10, 2011	1	Lansing Correctional Facility - Central	Threaten or Intim Any Person
Jul 27, 2011	1	Hutchinson Correctional Fac. - Central	Battery
May 26, 2011	1	Hutchinson Correctional Fac. - Central	Interfering W/Official Duties
Apr 19, 2011	1	Hutchinson Correctional Fac. - Central	Dangerous Contraband
Feb 25, 2011	1	Hutchinson Correctional Fac. - Central	Disobeying Orders
Feb 25, 2011	1	Hutchinson Correctional Fac. - Central	Violation of Published Orders
Nov 25, 2010	2	El Dorado Correctional Fac. - RDU	Unauthorized Dealing or Trade

“He only choked me...”

- Regardless of visible injury, the following questions should be asked.
 - How strangled: One hand or two hands, forearm, object, etc.
 - How their bodies were positioned: Standing, lying down, surface, etc.
 - How many times? The suspect may release and apply pressure repeatedly.
 - What did the suspect say before, during and after?
 - What was the victim thinking while being strangled?
 - What caused the suspect to stop?
 - Prior incidents of strangulation?





Checklist

- **S** Scene & Safety: Take in the scene. Make sure you and the victim are safe.
- **T** Trauma: Keep in mind the victim is traumatized. Be respectful and patient.
- **R** Reassure & Resources: Reassure the victim and provide resources.
- **A** Assess: Assess the victim for signs and symptoms of strangulation and TBI.
- **N** Notes: Document your observations. Victim statements in quotes.
- **G** Give: Give the victim an advisory about delayed consequences.
- **L** Loss of Consciousness: Lapse of memory? Change in location? Urination?
- **E Encourage: Encourage medical attention**, provide transportation

Transport If...



It is imperative that EMS & Law Enforcement transport to a medical facility

Medical providers must provide a thorough examination and assessment to prevent subsequent death

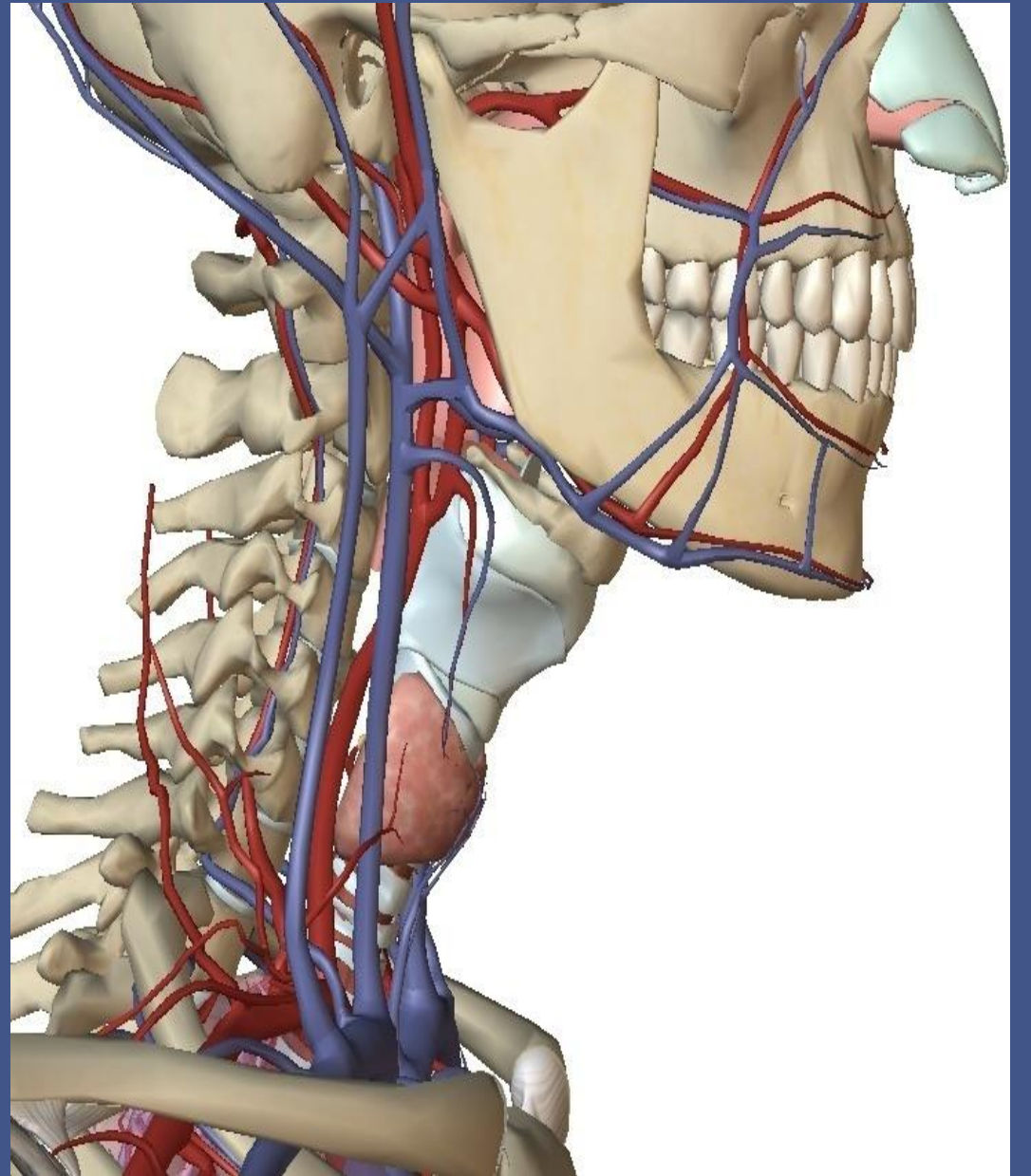
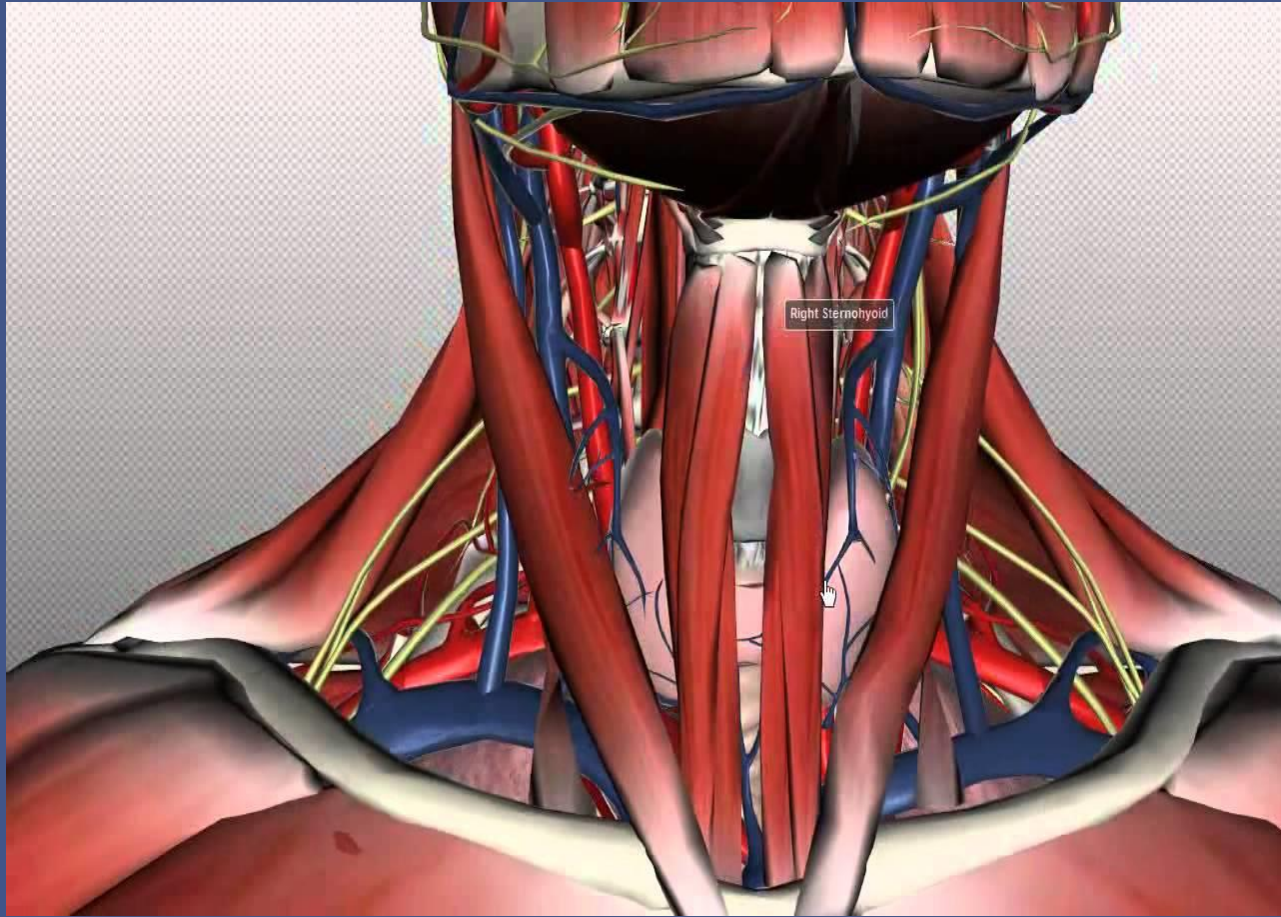
Armstrong & Strack, 2016

Your Training and Experience



Narrative example:

“I have been a patrol officer for 3 years. During that time, I have investigated over 100 domestic violence cases. In some of those cases, victims reported being strangled. I have received training about domestic violence and, in particular, the medical signs and symptoms of strangulation. Based on my training and experience, I know strangulation can cause serious injury. Unconsciousness can occur within seconds. Death can occur within minutes. The symptoms and injuries as reflected in this investigation are consistent with someone who has been strangled. The elements of a felony, aggravated batter are present.”



The Clinical Sequence

Carotid artery occlusion-deprives the brain of Oxygen

- Anterior neck
- 11 pounds of pressure for 10 seconds

**Closing off
the
airway**



Jugular vein occlusion-preventing deoxygenated blood from exiting the brain

- Lateral neck
- 4.4 pounds of pressure for 10 seconds

UNCONSCIOUSNESS

Brain Death



4
Minutes ...

Signs of Strangulation

Behavioral Changes

- Amnesia
- Fainted
- Dizzy
- Urination
- Headaches
- Defecation

Face

- Red or flushed
- Pinpoint red spots (petechiae)
- Scratch marks

Eyes & Eyelids

- Petechiae to eyeball
- Petechiae to eyelid
- Bloody red eyeball(s)

Voice and Throat Changes

- Raspy or hoarse voice
- Coughing
- Unable to speak
- Trouble swallowing
- Painful to swallow
- Nausea
- Drooling

Mouth

- Bruising
- Swollen tongue
- Swollen lips
- Cuts/abrasions

Chest

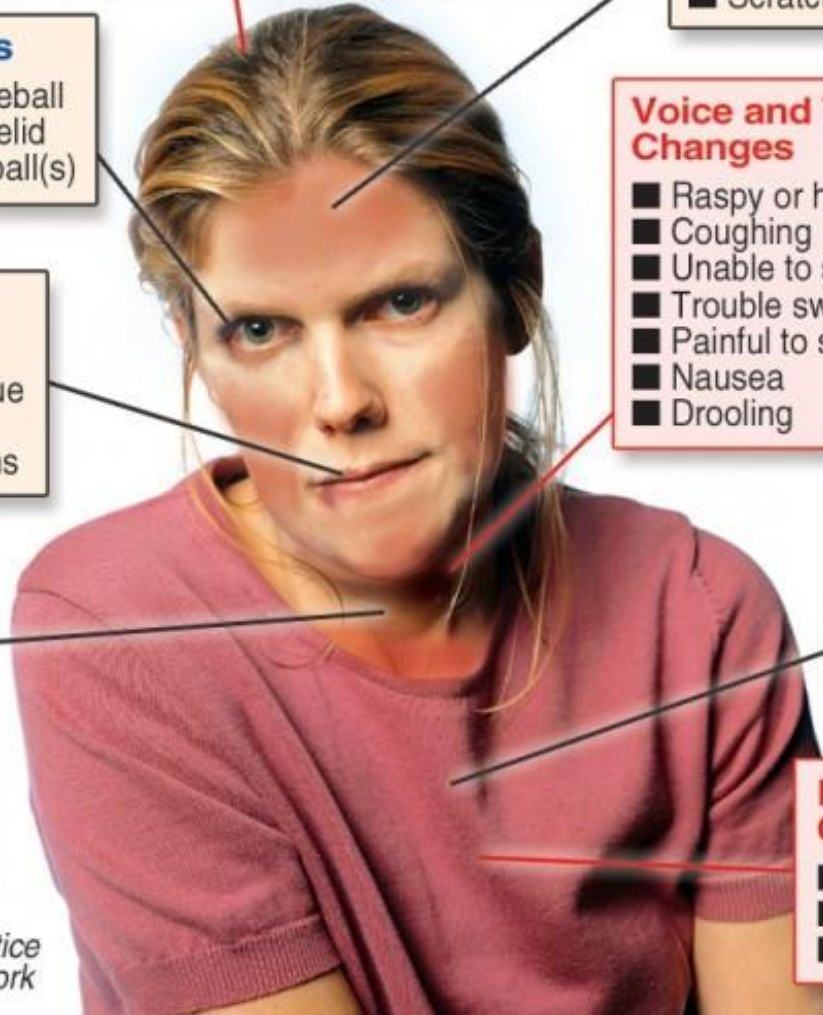
- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Bruise(s)
- Abrasions

Neck

- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Finger nail impressions
- Bruise(s)
- Swelling
- Ligature marks

Breathing Changes

- Difficulty breathing
- Hyperventilation
- Unable to breath



Source: Family Justice Center Legal Network



The Injuries.....

Strangulation produces many different types of injuries: minor injury, bodily injury, and or immediate or prolonged death.

According to Armstrong and Stack (2016), clinical evaluation is deemed imperative as most survivors of NFS as most have no symptoms after the event based on their study, approximately

- 18% reported pain,
- 2% reported dysphagia and only
- 1% had a raspy or hoarse voice (Armstrong & Strack, 2016).

Symptoms can appear hours later and include petechiae, but even days after the NFS bruising may become evident, prolonged neurological changes, bleeding from the ears, and possible a cerebrovascular injury

It is imperative that EMS, Law Enforcement transport to a medical facility & medical providers provide a thorough examination and assessment to prevent subsequent death in this vulnerable population, NFS victims

(Armstrong & Strack, 2016; Sorenson et al., 2014)

Visible Injuries



Petechiae

In strangulation, the jugular vein requires compression for approximately 15 to 30 seconds for petechial hemorrhages to occur

(Armstrong & Strack, 2016; Stapczynski, 2010)





The physical presentation, or the lack thereof

San Diego Attorney's Office 1995 study

300 Attempted Strangulation Cases

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

Vs

- **The FACT Program: 412 NFS patients**
- Visible Presentation (bruising, circumferential marks) **134 32.5%**
- Petechiae **46 11%**
- NO Visible injury **109 26.4%**
- Neck pain **207 50.2%**
- Scratch marks to Neck **93 22.5%**
- Loss of consciousness **48 12%**
- Incontinence **10 0.02%**

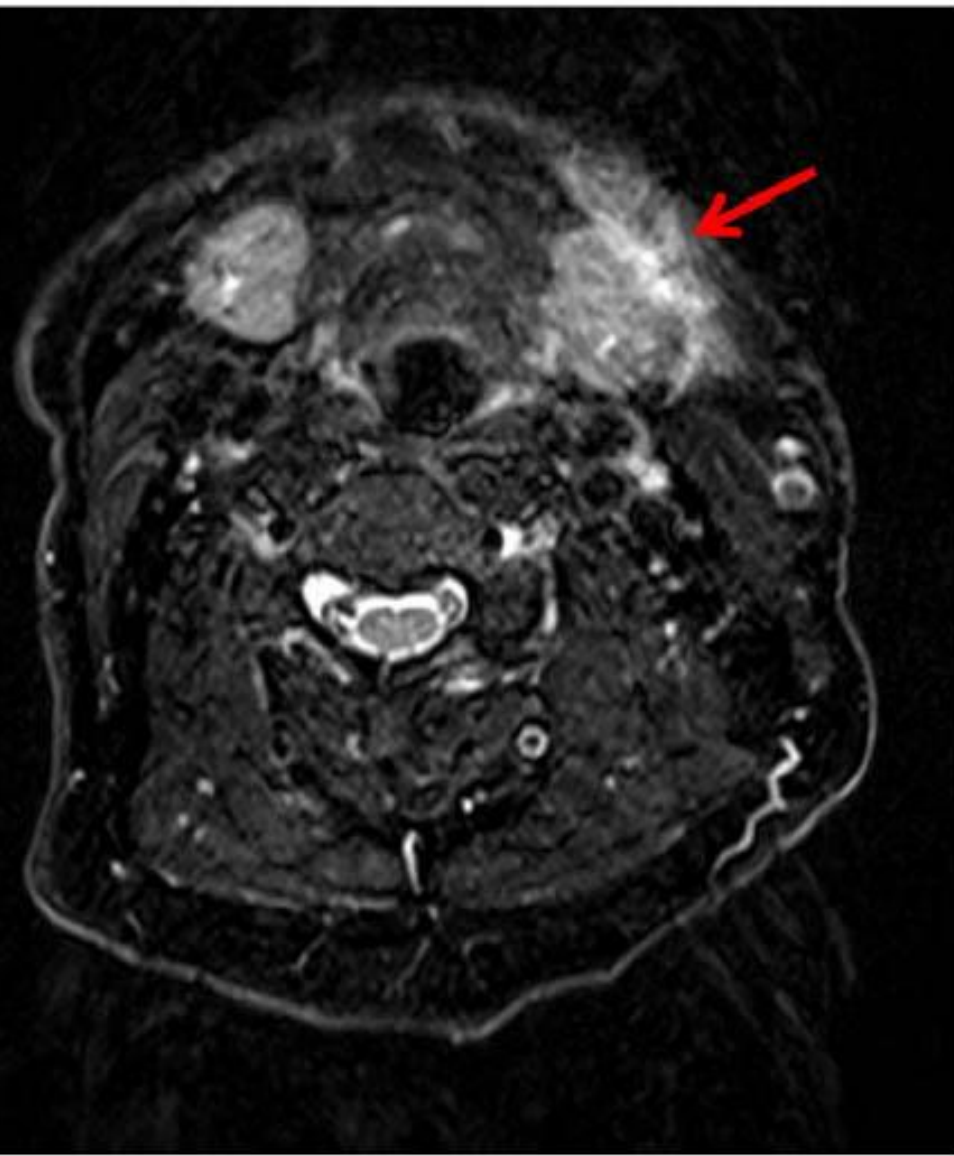


Not just fractures...but something worse

Silent but DEADLY

- Cervical artery dissection (CAeD) from strangulation can go undiagnosed is a serious modality.
- The onset can be evident a few hours after injury or months later .
- Dissection may include one or both of the structures and symptoms:
 - absence of any symptoms
 - blindness, cerebral edema,
 - cerebrovascular events or
 - subarachnoid hemorrhage
- 20-30% experience nonspecific symptomology, such as a headache and neck pain, both common complaints in the NFS patient.

(Cronlein, et al., 2015; Garcia-Zornoza, et al., 2012; Grond-Ginsbach, et al., 2013; Le Blanc-Louvry, Papin, Vaz, & Proust, 2013; Robertson & Koyfman, 2016).

A**B**

Documentation is Critical!

During the work, you have to be sure that you haven't left any holes, that you've captured everything, because afterwards it will be too late.

Henri Cartier-Bresson

- Photographic and video evidence:
 - Photos need to be taken even if visible injuries are not present.
 - Swelling of the neck may be hard to detect.
 - Take follow up photos to show the progression of healing injuries.
 - Take multiple photos and from various angles, with and without a scale
 - Don't just focus on the neck. Look for injuries behind the ears, under the chin and jaw, shoulders, chest, eyelids, cheeks, inside the mouth.
 - Check suspect for defensive injuries and document those thoroughly.
 - If possible, capture a brief, recorded interview with the victim...voice changes.

Documentation Chart for Attempted Strangulation Cases

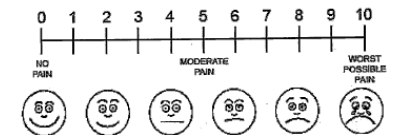
Symptoms and/or Internal Injury:

Breathing Changes	Voice Changes	Swallowing Changes	Behavioral Changes	OTHER
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty Breathing <input type="checkbox"/> Hyperventilation <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to breathe Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Raspy voice <input type="checkbox"/> Hoarse voice <input type="checkbox"/> Coughing <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to speak	<input type="checkbox"/> Trouble swallowing <input type="checkbox"/> Painful to swallow <input type="checkbox"/> Neck Pain <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea /Vomiting <input type="checkbox"/> Drooling	<input type="checkbox"/> Agitation <input type="checkbox"/> Amnesia <input type="checkbox"/> PTSD <input type="checkbox"/> Hallucinations <input type="checkbox"/> Combativeness	<input type="checkbox"/> Dizzy <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches <input type="checkbox"/> Fainted <input type="checkbox"/> Urination <input type="checkbox"/> Defecation

Use face & neck diagrams to mark visible injuries:

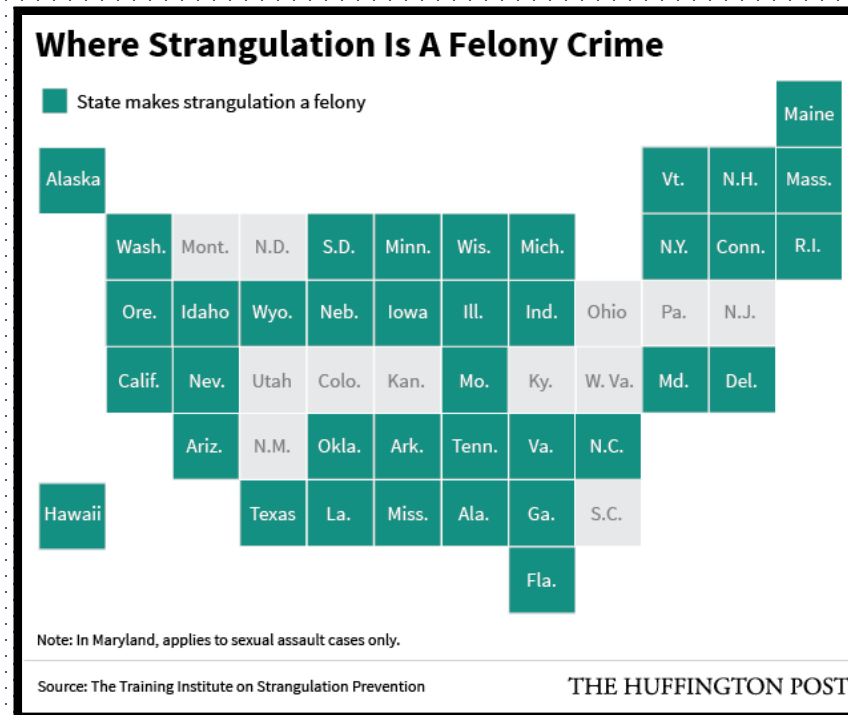


Face	Eyes & Eyelids	Nose	Ear	Mouth
<input type="checkbox"/> Red or flushed <input type="checkbox"/> Pinpoint red spots (petechiae) <input type="checkbox"/> Scratch marks	<input type="checkbox"/> Petechiae to R and/or L eyeball (circle one) <input type="checkbox"/> Petechiae to R and/or L eyelid (circle one) <input type="checkbox"/> Bloody red eyeball(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Bloody nose <input type="checkbox"/> Broken nose (ancillary finding) <input type="checkbox"/> Petechiae	<input type="checkbox"/> Petechiae (external and/or ear canal) <input type="checkbox"/> Bleeding from ear canal	<input type="checkbox"/> Bruising <input type="checkbox"/> Swollen tongue <input type="checkbox"/> Swollen lips <input type="checkbox"/> Cuts/abrasions (ancillary finding)
Under Chin	Chest	Shoulders	Neck	Head
<input type="checkbox"/> Redness <input type="checkbox"/> Scratch marks <input type="checkbox"/> Bruise(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Abrasions	<input type="checkbox"/> Redness <input type="checkbox"/> Scratch marks <input type="checkbox"/> Bruise(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Abrasions	<input type="checkbox"/> Redness <input type="checkbox"/> Scratch marks <input type="checkbox"/> Bruise(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Abrasions	<input type="checkbox"/> Redness <input type="checkbox"/> Scratch marks <input type="checkbox"/> Bruise(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Swelling <input type="checkbox"/> Ligature mark	<input type="checkbox"/> Petechiae (on scalp) <input type="checkbox"/> Swollen tongue <input type="checkbox"/> Ancillary findings: <input type="checkbox"/> Hair pulled <input type="checkbox"/> Bump <input type="checkbox"/> Skull fracture <input type="checkbox"/> Concussion



Not just Medical Evaluation but Forensic Evaluation: Support for Felony Charging

If a woman's injuries resulting from strangulation are not adequately documented, there may be an impediment of criminal charges may occur.



During the work, you have to be sure that you haven't left any holes, that you've captured everything, because afterwards it will be too late.

Henri Cartier-Bresson



Aggravated Battery – K.S.A. 21-5413

- (A) Knowingly causing great bodily harm to another person or disfigurement or another person; or (level 4, or 5 if reckless)
- (B) knowingly causing bodily harm to another person with a deadly weapon, or in any manner whereby great bodily harm, disfigurement or death can be inflicted; or (level 7, or 8 if reckless)
- (C) knowingly causing physical contact with another person when done in a rude, insulting or angry manner with a deadly weapon, or in any manner whereby great bodily harm, disfigurement or death can be inflicted; or... (level 7)

Kansas Sentencing Grid

Category→	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Severity Level ↓	3+ Person Felonies	2 Person Felonies	1 Person & 1 NonPerson Felonies	1 Person Felony	3+ NonPerson Felonies	2 NonPerson Felonies	1 NonPerson Felonies	2+ Misd.	1 Misd. No Record
I	653 620 592	618 586 554	285 272 258	267 253 240	246 234 221	226 214 203	203 195 184	186 176 166	165 155 147
II	493 467 442	460 438 416	216 205 194	200 190 181	184 174 165	168 160 152	154 146 138	138 131 123	123 117 109
III	247 233 221	228 216 206	107 102 96	100 94 89	92 89 82	83 79 74	77 72 68	71 66 61	61 59 55
IV	172 162 154	162 154 144	75 71 68	69 66 62	64 60 57	59 56 52	52 50 47	48 45 42	43 41 38
V	136 130 122	128 120 114	60 57 53	55 52 50	51 49 46	47 44 41	43 41 38	38 36 34	34 32 31
VI	46 43 40	41 39 37	38 36 34	36 34 32	32 30 28	29 27 25	26 24 22	21 20 19	19 18 17
VII	34 32 30	31 29 27	29 27 25	26 24 22	23 21 19	19 18 17	17 16 15	14 13 12	13 12 11
VIII	23 21 19	20 19 18	19 18 17	17 16 15	15 14 13	13 12 11	11 10 9	11 10 9	9 8 7
IX	17 16 15	15 14 13	13 12 11	13 12 11	11 10 9	10 9 8	9 8 7	8 7 6	7 6 5
X	13 12 11	12 11 10	11 10 9	10 9 8	9 8 7	8 7 6	7 6 5	7 6 5	7 6 5