



DEATH IN CUSTODY



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4fhUt_M4fw

ward of state

Web definitions

In law, a ward is someone placed under the protection of a legal guardian. A court may take responsibility for the legal protection of an individual, usually either a child or incapacitated person, in which case the ward is known as a ward of the court, or a ward of the state. ...

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ward_of_state

- **ALL** deaths that occur while an individual is a prisoner or ward of the state
- **INCLUDES:** any death that occurs during
 - Arrest
 - Backseat of a police car
 - In a rehab
 - In a hospital after an altercation



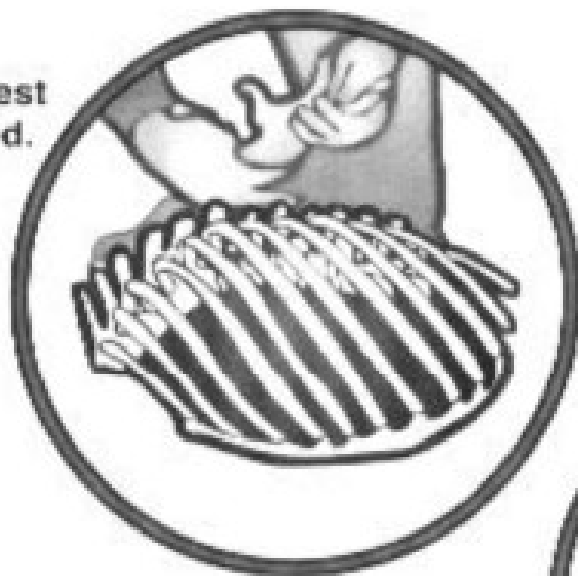


These deaths are often the result of **ASPHYXIAL PATHOLOGY** – either secondary to the position of the patient's body (**positional asphyxia**) or resulting from pressure on the patient's back, making it impossible for chest to expand (**compression asphyxia**)

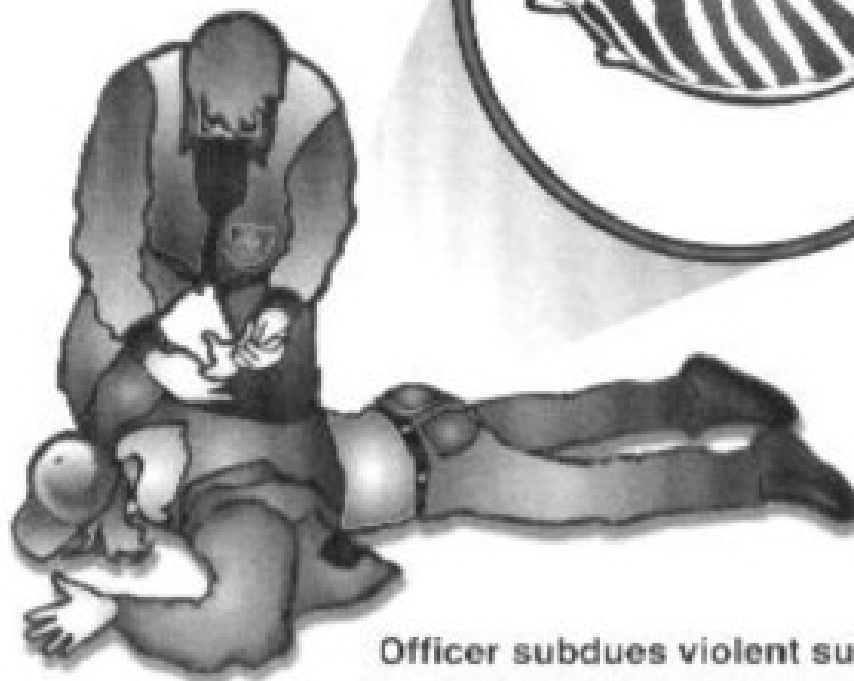
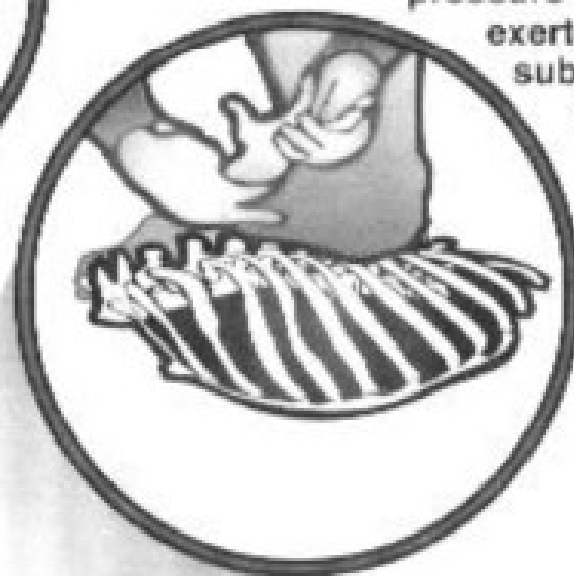


Cause of Death usually **multi-factorial**, and may be 2° to **drug toxicity, emotional stress, physical exertion, and coronary artery disease**

Subject's chest
fully extended.



Breathing becomes
labored due to
pressure being
exerted on
subject's
back.



Officer subdues violent suspect.



Before we talk about *this*

Let's talk about *this*

Bad Luck

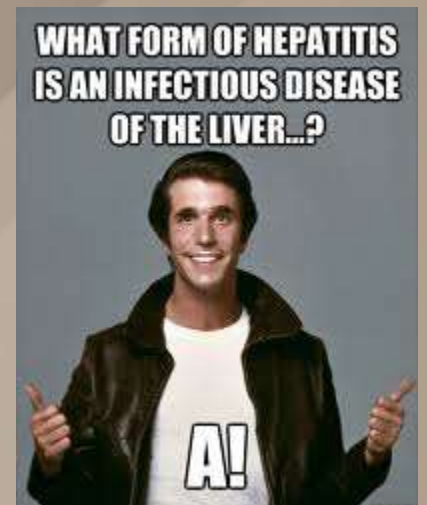


DIC — NATURAL DISEASE



Many die suddenly & unexpectedly

- **Most common:** atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease & hypertensive cardiovascular disease
- Do autopsy to see if there is an infectious disease
- Autopsy important not only to exclude unknown injury, but also to document the nature & extent of the known natural disease



DRUG RELATED DEATHS

- **Body Stuffer**: one who quickly swallows drugs to avoid detection from law
 - The toxic effects of drugs may not show up 'til hours later, while in jail
- **AT AUTOPSY**: collect toxicologic specimens
 - Look in stomach/duodenum or intestine for small plastic baggies and/or little rocks of drug





Suicide Hanging

- Suicide rate in jail = **10x** higher than “outside”
- Usually occur within **1st 24 hrs** of confinement & usually in an intoxicated person
- Most common means of suicide (followed by wrist cutting)

BFT

Ppl can sustain significant & even fatal injuries while incarcerated

- While rare, when a fatal accident has occurred, it must be thoroughly investigated
- ALSO, ppl may have injuries *BEFORE* they were arrested & may harbor these injuries silently



INCONGRUITIES

- Autopsy should **NOT** be performed w/o information on the **CIRCUMSTANCES** of death
- Need to correlate autopsy findings w/ the **given accounts** of an incident
- Correlation of CS info & autopsy findings often helps explain person's demise

DIC – AFTER A STRUGGLE

- Need to know the sequence of events of the restraint
- In many restraint-related deaths, **physiologic processes** have a prominent role in the death and probably won't be seen at autopsy

KONA MAN DIES AFTER POLICE STRUGGLE

DEATH of 39 YEAR OLD RANDALL HATORI INVESTIGATED





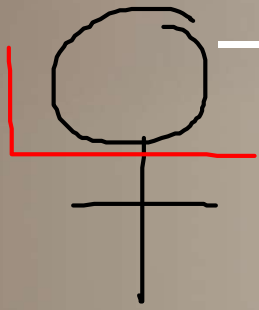
STRUGGLE - Cause & Effect

- **Struggles** arise when an agitated, excited, psychotic, or hyperactive person **resists arrest**
 - Often due to coke or meth (or just plain hating the POPO)
- **Struggle + drugs** = acute cardiac dysrhythmia & sudden cardiac death
- The physical activity of a violent struggle increases oxygen demand of the heart



DIC – NECK HOLDS

1. CHOKE HOLD: compresses & obstructs the airway



- Stand behind, wrap arm around their neck, & pull forearm onto the front of person's neck, compressing it
- Person becomes subdued b/c of **compression of trachea**, which hinders breathing





DIC – NECK HOLDS

2. LATERAL VASCULAR NECK RESTRAINT (LVNR):



– AKA “carotid sleeper”

- Stand behind and wrap arm around neck so that the neck is w/in the angle of the upper arm and forearm, & pull forearm towards upper arm
- Compresses carotid arteries & **stops blood flow to the brain; pass out w/in 6-ish seconds** & regain consciousness when removed





Restraining techniques

Here are a few ways police officers can subdue suspects.

Arm bar

An officer puts a suspect's arm behind his back to control him.



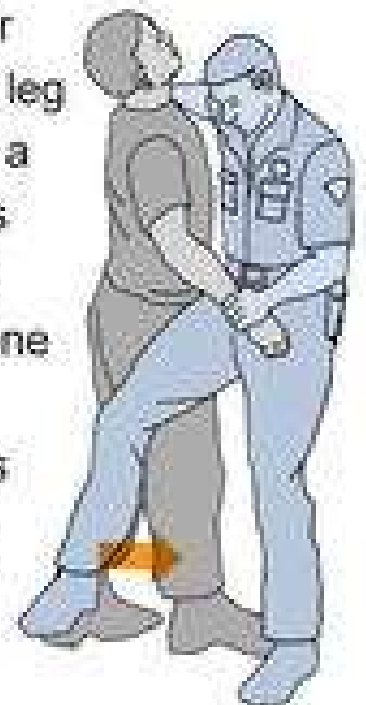
Lateral vascular neck restraint

An officer applies pressure to the arteries on the sides of the neck, causing loss of consciousness.



Leg sweep

An officer inserts a leg between a suspect's legs and knocks one of the suspect's legs out.



Javier Zarracina/ @latimesgraphics

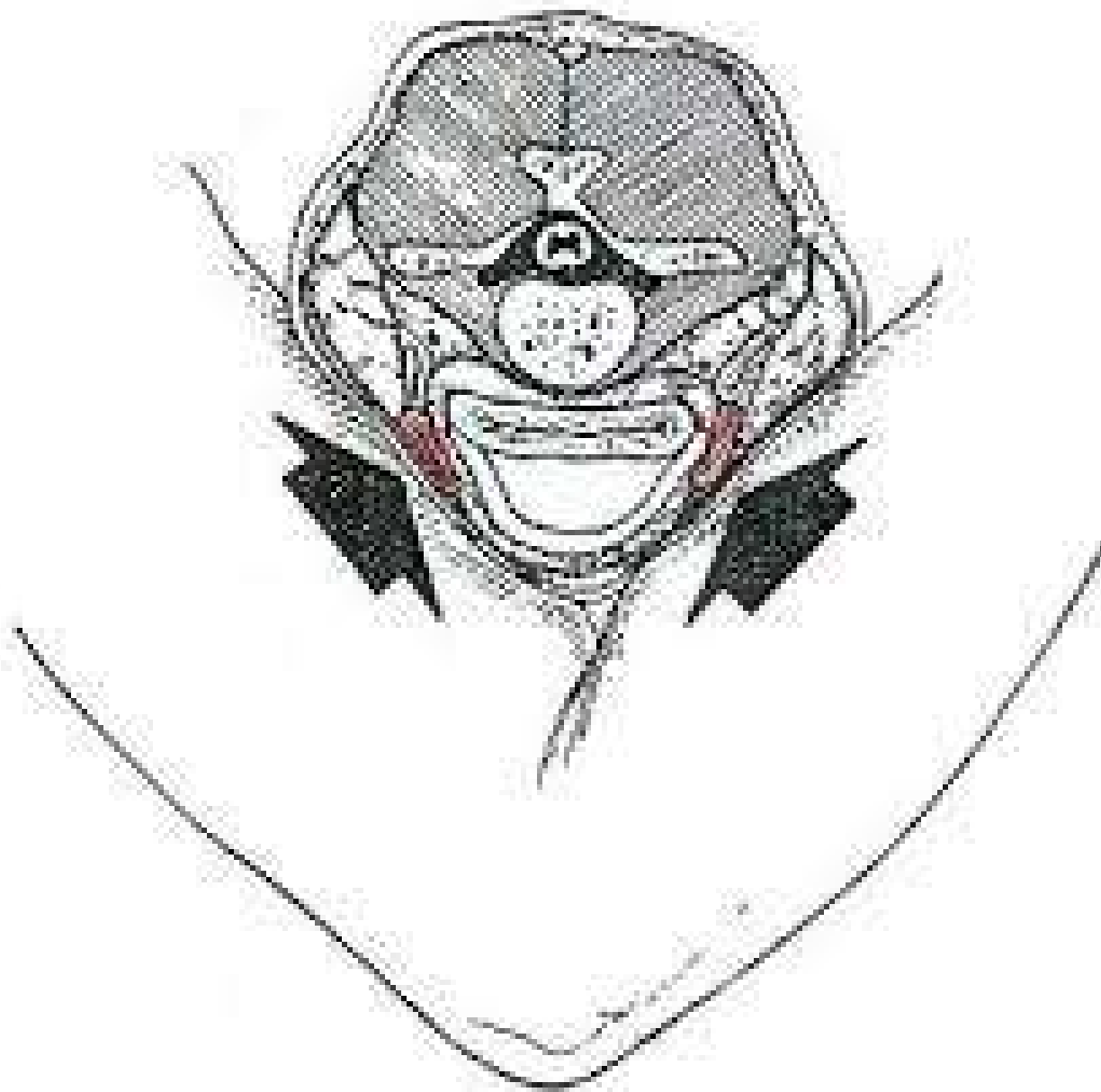


FIGURE 3
Compression of the carotid arteries with preservation of the airway during application of the carotid sleeper.



auTopsy FINDINGS

- There may be **no injury seen**
- May use “***restraint asphyxia***” to describe cause of death
- Perform detailed neck dissections, noting any hemorrhages in skeletal muscles and other soft tissues, and fractures of cartilage and/or bone
- **Petechiae & contusions** should be noted

HOMework



- Research your own Death In Custody Incident to present on Thu
- **GOAL:** Everyone does someone different