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**DETECTIVE DIVISION**

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My name is Todd Curtis. I am currently the Detective Sergeant with the Perrysburg Township Police Department. I have 29 years of law enforcement experience, with the majority of my career being spent conducting criminal investigations. I have received advanced training in criminal investigations, domestic violence and strangulation. I have received specialized training in criminal behavior traits and sexual deviant behavior. I have received advanced forensic training on the act of strangulation assault from the Institute for Strangulation Prevention in San Diego, California in February of 2016. I recently completed the advanced diploma program on criminal profiling and crime scene analysis from Forensic Criminology Institute. I completed the Master Criminal Investigator Program in 2002 through the State of Ohio Attorney General's office. I am a certified Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy instructor, having instructed academy classes for over 20 years. I am a specialized instructor for domestic violence for the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy and an instructor in investigating strangulation assaults. I have instructed domestic violence courses and strangulation training at multiple police academies, the University of Toledo, Bowling Green State University, Owens Community College and at several in service training locations throughout NW Ohio. I instruct in-service law enforcement officers twice a year through the Public Safety Consortium at Owens Community College. I have been recognized as an expert witness in Domestic Violence incidents and in investigating Strangulation Assaults (State v. Carrizales, Wood County case# 18-454, and State v. Griffin, Wood County case #19-CR428). I have previous training and experience with lateral vascular neck restraint through both the police academy and through Brazilian Jui jitsu training.

On August 16, 2020, I had been called to a scene in Perrysburg Township where a female was reported to be missing and possibly be endangered. That female was identified as Desiray Liner. The husband of Desiray Liner is Raymond Cervantes. He was the reported suspect in this incident. I issued a state wide BOLO for Desiray's vehicle. Maumee Police notified Perrysburg Township Police that Desiray was located and at St. Luke's Hospital. She had been repeatedly beaten and strangled that night by Raymond, and was being treated at St. Luke's Hospital. I responded to St. Luke's to photograph and view any injuries. Upon arrival, I was directed to the room Desiray was at. Upon pulling the curtain to enter the treatment room, I was taken back by the appearance of Desiray. Both of her eyes were already swollen and discolored. Her head was distorted from swelling on the left side. She was sitting on the hospital bed and was clearly beaten severely. Photos were taken and my observations were documented in my report for this case. Prior to leaving the hospital, I took an initial neck measurement at the hospital emergency room that evening. That measurement at the hospital was 32.6 cm.



I met with Desiray for follow up photographs and measurements. The first follow up was within three days of the incident. The visible injuries on her face and neck had progressed with swelling and bruising. Her neck and face were visibly swollen. The reference point I placed on the back of her neck at the hospital was checked and found to still be present. I conducted a measurement as Det. Slusher photographed the process. The measurement taken was 34.75 cm. This is over a two cm increase from Sunday night / Monday morning. Based on my training and experience, swelling begins within the first few hours of injury and peaks between 1 to 3 days after injury. Swelling can last for at least two weeks. Also consistent with my training and experience was the amount of discomfort Desiray described in the neck and throat. Desiray described the sides of her neck as “tender” feeling. She had pain in the front of her throat. Desiray advised her neck was stiff and had an “uncomfortable” feeling. She reported having a hard time swallowing. Desiray stated she could not chew at all without serious discomfort. She also stated she was not able to open her mouth very wide. In checking the numerous visible injuries present on Desiray, I first attempted to look in her eyes. Her eyes were so swollen she had to carefully attempt to hold her eyes open enough so I could check them. Ruptured blood vessels could be observed in the whites of Desiray’s eyes. This petechia was observed in both her right and left eyes. Grasp point impressions were observed on Desiray’s neck and ears. Bruising was showing behind the ears. The right side of Desiray’s neck in the area of the jugular vein was showing substantial bruising consistent with grasp point bruising.

I asked Desiray if I could talk to her about the details of this assault. Desiray stated she wanted to talk about it and was recalling more details. I asked Desiray if she had any visual or hearing changes she could recall while Raymond was strangling her. Desiray stated she “blacked out” and that she remembered hearing a “rushing water sound” as well as “thumping” in her ears. I asked Desiray about “blacking out”. Desiray stated when Raymond pulled her out of her vehicle at his sister’s house, Raymond strangled her to the point of unconsciousness. She stated she could not breathe and she couldn’t yell for help. I asked her if she was shaken, smothered, straddled and / or restrained while she was being strangled. Desiray stated she was shaken and that Raymond had straddled her and pinned her arms down. I asked Desiray if she was facing up or down when she was on the floor. Desiray stated it was both ways. Desiray stated she was strangled while facing Raymond and also while facing away from him. Desiray stated she was strangled with two hands, an elbow and also with a “chokehold”. I asked Desiray from one to ten with one being the lowest and ten being the highest to describe how hard the grip Raymond was applying around her neck. Desiray stated the grip was a 10. I asked Desiray from one to ten with one being the lowest and ten being the highest to describe the level of pain. Desiray stated that the pain was definitely a 10. I asked Desiray what she thought was going to happen to her while she was being strangled. Desiray stated there were several times she thought she was going to die; that Raymond was going to kill her. Desiray stated that Raymond told her she was going to die that night, and also told her that if he can’t have her then no one is going to have her.

I asked Desiray if she had urinated or defecated or vomited while being strangled. Desiray stated she did urinate on herself while being strangled. Desiray stated she was very dizzy after the strangulations and is still suffering from dizziness. I asked her during the entire incident that night how many times she thought Raymond strangled her. Desiray stated it was probably around 15. I asked Desiray if she could tell me how long she was strangled each time. Desiray stated she could not remember and added that sometimes were longer. She stated she got him to stop



one of the times when she stabbed him in the leg. I asked Desiray if she could describe the look or facial expressions of Raymond during this attack. Desiray stated “Ray looked evil – look in his eyes was hatred”. I asked Desiray if she recalled any breathing issues after the strangulation assaults. Desiray stated that it felt like there is still something on her neck and that it is more difficult to breathe.

The strangulation assaults alone on Desiray Liner are, without question, serious violent incidents. In this case there are multiple photographs clearly showing the serious injuries and trauma as a result of the strangulation. There are numerous follow up photographs to show the progression of these injuries. There are measurements taken which indicate the swelling of her neck. There are the symptoms described by Desiray as well as those witnessed by this investigator. There is the visible evidence present on Desiray.

Along with manual strangulation, meaning Raymond Cervantes used his bare hands to strangle Desiray, Raymond also used a “chokehold” to inflict strangulation on Desiray. The visible injuries from this attempted murder concern this investigator due to the multiple strangulation attempts, the repeated compression of the neck tissue, arteries, trachea and larynx in the amount of force that was applied to Desiray’s neck by Raymond.

Asphyxiation (interruption of oxygen) begins to occur during strangulation not so much from the inability to breathe but due to blood flow restrictions on the jugular vein, the carotid artery or both. The blood flow in the jugular vein can be restricted at only 4.4 pounds of pressure. The carotid artery can be restricted at around 6.6 pounds of pressure. Blood flow restrictions to these two “vital highways” of the brain cause oxygen deprivation to the brain. Deprivation of oxygenated blood to the brain leads to an anoxic event (anoxic encephalopathy) which causes brain damage or brain death. When a victim says that they cannot remember specifics of the incident, there is likely the reason why they cannot. The trachea can be compressed at 34.5 pounds of pressure. The thyroid cartilage can fracture at 34.76 pounds of pressure. The cricoid cartilage can be fractured at 45.76 pounds of pressure. Both of these injuries can happen from the application of pressure to the larynx. This can lead to as life threatening airway obstruction. In addition, the hyoid bone can be fractured during any strangulation.

Some forms of TBI (traumatic brain injury) are being found in victims of strangulation. TBI has been in the news due to the focus of it possibly being linked to contact sports. Studies are being conducted and finding that victims of intimate partner violence are at an increased risk of TBI; with repeated blows to the head and strangulation being the primary factors. TBI is being missed in many of these cases as it is not checked for during medical screening for strangulation incidents. TBI can have life altering effects on a victim including PTSD symptoms, headaches, vision problems, coordination and cognitive functions like attention and perception.

As described above, the act of strangulation causes the restriction and / or deprivation of oxygen and blood to the brain. It is obvious that oxygen and blood flow are vital to a person’s survival. The deprivation of oxygen to the brain and restriction of blood flow clearly can cause death. Both also cause incapacitation and both can cause permanent damage that can be irreversible. Desiray Liner was deprived of air flow. She could not make any noise while crying and she could not yell for help. She stated she could not breathe. Desiray was also deprived of oxygenated blood flow to the brain. She stated she did blackout and subsequently was strangled to the point of



unconsciousness. Her exact symptoms of getting the “blackout” effects with the darkness setting in from the outside in, are the same symptoms this investigator has experienced during lateral vascular neck restraint training. The thumping sound Desiray described is also a symptom this investigator recalls while having the lateral vascular neck restraint applied to him. Both are the direct result of blood flow being cutoff to the brain by occlusion of the jugular vein or the carotid artery or both.

As previously noted, this investigator has been trained in and experienced the “chokehold”. The chokehold is referred to as lateral vascular neck restraint (LVNR). It is also referred to as the “sleeper hold”. It requires proper technique by trained individuals to make sure the elbow bend is located in the front area of the throat so as not to compress the trachea. LVNR used to be taught to law enforcement and in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. This investigator had received training through both. The technique instructed was the exact same. The purpose was to block off the blood flow to the jugular vein and carotid artery for about 8-12 seconds which will cause the person the hold is being applied to fall unconscious. However, it is no longer taught in most law enforcement agencies due to the discovered dangers when instructing this technique. During trainings, there were several training accidents which resulted in serious physical harm to officers. A Kentucky police officer developed stroke symptoms during the training. This officer had “tapped” prior to going unconscious. A Florida police academy instructor developed stroke symptoms after LVNR training. In Fort Wayne, Indiana, two police officers were seriously injured during LVNR training. One suffered acute right arm paralysis from an embolic stroke. The other suffered an embolic posterior circulation stroke the day after the training. An embolic stroke is when plaque in the arteries breaks loose from the neck pressure and goes to the brain. This same event took the life of a Jiu-Jitsu practitioner. For law enforcement agencies who still allow the use of this technique, or for officers who have been trained in LVNR, use of force policies will say it is to be used only in incidents where there is a reasonable belief there is an imminent threat of serious physical harm or death to the officer or another person. Doctors Reay and Eisele who reviewed this technique stated, “use of neck holds by police officers must be viewed the same way as firearms; the potential for a fatal outcome is present each time a neck hold is applied and each time a firearm is drawn from its holster. The neck hold differs in that its fatal consequence can be totally unpredictable.”

*Reay DT, Eisele JW: Deaths from law enforcement neck holds. 1982 Am J Forens Med Pathol*

In my 29 years of law enforcement, I have not investigated a strangulation case this severe where the victim has survived. I have extensive experience investigating domestic violence as well as doing in depth research on offenders who abuse. Over time, law enforcement and advocates have developed lethality assessments for domestic violence situations. The purpose is to identify high risk domestic violence situations which could result in murder or an attempt to murder. It is also done for officer safety purposes as domestic violence remains the top call that results in officers being killed or feloniously assaulted. In conducting an assessment of Raymond Cervantes, I found that he is at the highest risk of offenders. Raymond has previous domestic violence history. In May of 2020, Raymond Cervantes killed the dog of Desiray Liner and her daughter. Animal crimes are one of the top three indicators the abuser will kill the spouse. Raymond Cervantes threatened to commit suicide. Raymond Cervantes abuses drugs and alcohol. Raymond Cervantes tried to control Desiray’s daily activities. Raymond Cervantes told Desiray, “If I can’t have you then no one can”. Raymond Cervantes has threatened to kill Desiray Liner. Raymond

Cervantes used the act of strangulation against Desiray. Raymond Cervantes did not care he was on ankle monitor through Lucas County, as it did not deter him in anyway and clearly provided no corrective behavior measures.

In summary, based on my training and experience, Desiray Liner suffered an assault that is certainly a felonious assault by definition. Felonious assault requires serious physical harm. Serious physical harm is defined by the Ohio Revised Code in part, as any physical harm that carries a substantial risk of death; any physical harm which involves some permanent incapacity, whether partial or total, or that involves some temporary, substantial incapacity; any physical harm that involves some acute pain of such duration as to result in substantial suffering or that involves any degree of prolonged or intractable pain. In the case of Desiray Liner, there were multiple assaults that were felonious with the purpose of these assaults to cause her death. Repeated acts of strangulation, beating her with his hands, a metal c-clamp and a piece of driftwood. Raymond Cervantes even became frustrated and asked Desiray, “why won’t you just die bitch”. These assaults on Desiray Liner by Raymond Cervantes could have easily resulted in her death.

Respectfully Submitted;

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