



The Hancock County Democrat

Hancock County Democratic Party

Review of “The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir” by John Bolton

Bruce Workman

DO NOT BUY THIS BOOK! No amount of mustache wax can put a sheen on this turd. The narrative is so self-congratulatory that it can appear to have been written by, if he was literate, Donald Trump. John Bolton, Captain Kangaroo had a better ‘stache, seems to believe he is the anointed savior of the country, but we all know this could not be further from the truth. He remains the same right-wing nut job we have grown to hate. In 1969 Bolton’s draft lottery number was 185, the highest number called to serve that year was 195. Rather than wait to be drafted, possibly to serve in Vietnam, Bolton received a deferment for joining the Maryland National Guard, at that time the reserves were not called up for active duty in the war. Like Private Bone Spurs, he became a Chicken Hawk. Not having seen any combat himself, he still is always eager to send American men and women in harm’s way all over the world

If you decide to read this book, please don’t buy it, you can save a lot of time and eyestrain by skipping straight to chapter 13. Other than nauseating and self-serving bullshit, there is little in the first 12 chapters you could not have already learned simply by following the news and analysis of the Trump circus. Chapter 13 contains some information that I did not previously know about Trump’s many indecisions regarding the war in Afghanistan. Chapter 14 is the dirt that Bolton should have shared at the impeachment hearings about the Ukraine debacle. Yes, Mr. Jordan, there was a quid pro quo. Bolton attempts to justify his non-testimony by blaming the Democrats for impeachment malpractice. While I do tend to agree that the impeachment team should have taken their time and called witness, even if it meant some court delays, Bolton is blatantly trying to avoid blame for

his cowardice.

I began this review with the most important point I would like you to take away from it. Do not enrich this miscreant. If you must read this book beg, borrow, or steal it. Simply do not pay for it, a mistake I was saved from at the last minute



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Letter to the Editor of the Findlay Courier John Kostyo



Tom Perez and John Kostyo

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Within the constant evolution of contemporary socio-political polarization is a distraction toward marginally relevant facts related to the prejudices of “Southern Democrats” and cultural accommodations. These distractions cloud possible optimism found in a renewed recognition and discussion of race and multiculturalism in America.

The single critical fact for each person, each of us – is that we have our own “roots” grown from unique families and ancestry. These are and should be sources of great pride; notwithstanding the possible “stories” whispered about certain “things” of one or two relatives in the past.

Recognition of our “roots” might include allowing a view that our multicultural understandings are somewhat limited. This may be the result of where we grew up, schools attended, choices of friends and those who we could chose as friends. Each of these factors are formative in contribution toward how we view and respond to ourselves, other individuals, our communities, and events. Particularly challenging events as witnessed in the past months.

A sense of great discomfort may be found in acknowledgment that our “roots” and perceptions are subject to constant challenge. This challenge is not new in either historic, social, or political terms. Whether addressed from pre-biblical origins; historically from 1619; or in view similar to the May 24, 1963 confrontation of James Baldwin with Robert Kennedy, we continue to encounter racial struggles that repeat concepts foreign to our experiences and understandings.

The May 24, 1963 meeting proposed by Robert Kennedy to “discuss race relations” was not pleasant. That confrontation with Baldwin, actress Lorraine Hansberry, Harry

Belafonte, Lena Horne and other noted individuals exceeded politics to address the long denied moral humanity necessary to fulfill the “promise” of democracy. Kennedy ended the meeting in anger – described as “seething” – and spend days afterward “fuming.”

Until that day, Bobby Kennedy, saw civil rights as a political movement, not much different that steps of social integration endured over the years by Irish, Italian, and other immigrants. Bobbie felt that he and the President should be commended because they were seeking to politely address the matter. He knew the struggle of Irish immigrants to climb out of prejudice. His guests’ families had been in the country for years longer than Kennedy’s and were still challenged by segregated, discrimination, poverty and prejudice. His guests presented a shocking revelation of racial pain from slavery, lynching’s, Jim Crow laws and “fighting words.” They also identified judges appointed by the Kennedy administration who had openly avowed flagrant segregationist views prior to appointment who were charged with enforcing civil rights.

After May 1963, Bobbie Kennedy eventually came to terms with the criticism. The discomfort of the racial encounter exceeded politics then as is the demand that the same moral humanity confronting us today. It is a stark reality that must create a sense of internal discomfort in our souls. That confrontation made Robert Kennedy a better person. That choice remains for us.

The real question for each of us is not found in convenient political distraction. The question is to seek a level of moral humanity beyond ourselves. We are challenged to move ourselves forward with our friends, neighbors, and those yet to become friends and neighbors. That choice remains for us each day.

Ignorance Breeds Confidence

Bruce Workman

In 1999 two social psychologists, David Dunning and Justin Kruger published the results of their research in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. After extensive study of the cognitive skills of their subjects and the subjects' perceptions of those same skills, they concluded that incompetent people have no awareness of their incompetence. In other words, it takes the same set of skills to be good at something as it does to realize one is not good at that thing. Or even more bluntly, stupid people believe they are smart. You have probably met one of these individuals at a social event or even a family gathering. They expound with much confidence on a subject while everyone else in the room is convinced, they do not know what they are talking about. As John Cleese has stated, "This explains not just Hollywood, but almost the entirety of Fox News."

"Why do you bring this up now?," you may ask. Well, I was faced with some questions of my own and discovered the answer within the research of Dr. Dunning and Dr. Kruger. One of those questions is: "When writing

unhinged and factless rants to the Courier, don't these people know how stupid they appear?" The answer is no, they do not. These individuals continue to believe that they are astute and well-informed. Another question is, "How can anyone still believe and support Donald Trump?" Again, these people believe that have the skills to research pertinent information sources and form well-reasoned opinions when it is obvious to us that they do not.

When an individual combines narcissism and pathological lying with the Dunning-Kruger Effect, a dangerous trifecta is made. Donald Trump had no idea how unfit he was to be President of the United States and his narcissism boosted his confidence to the point where he believed he would immediately know what to do in any situation. You will never hear him admit to any error or misjudgment. He is just not wired that way. I believe the House should write new articles of impeachment. He has proven that he cares nothing about this nation or its people and he can do a lot of damage in the next 6 months, regardless of the outcome of the election.



"This explains not just Hollywood, but almost the entirety of Fox News."

Thoughts from the Chair

Nancy Stephani

Greetings area Democrats and Friends,

We are still trying to figure out what a major political campaign looks like in these days of physical distancing and mask wearing. We do not yet have any specifics from our state party or from the Biden campaign but we do have a few hints:

It is likely there will be no local campaign office. Many of the activities conducted at an office can be done remotely or from volunteers' homes. Phone banking can be done from anywhere and organized online. Stay tuned.

We have already been contacted about having a virtual Blue Cocktail Hour...details in mid August.

Judge Jennifer Brunner will be attending our next Central and Executive Committee Meeting June 13th. See details about how to attend virtually in this newsletter.

attend virtually in this newsletter.

We need to reorganize our by-laws and handbooks for officers and precinct representatives. (continued on page 4)

Thoughts from the Chair (continued)

We currently have no presence on Twitter or Instagram or any of the other social media platforms that I don't know about. We are on Facebook and we do have a website. We do have the beginnings of a technology team. We need more.

I hope to have a major discussion and sharing of ideas at that June 13th meeting so please try to attend and share your thoughts. We need to figure out how to register voters and then how to remind them to vote. We need to figure our yard signs and bumper stickers and buttons. We have a button making machine, supplies and the media from the Biden campaign. The Biden campaign has also shared some coloring sheets for children. Do we want to consider

a coloring contest? What about organizing phone banking? Though I hope our state party will assist with this, Hancock County is different. We need to reach out to Independents and Republicans – there are already many who have indicated they want to cross over – witness The Lincoln Project.

We need organizational ideas and volunteers for all of the above and more. Our country is in big trouble. But we are Americans. We can get through this and come out stronger, more caring and more inclusive of all on the other side. Will you please join me?

Let's Get Busy!

Cathy Weygandt

After the murder of George Floyd, with his haunting words “I can't breathe”, “Mama” and “Please”, I could not remain silent. Hundreds of Findlay citizens felt the same and on those early days in June, we took to the streets. There were energized peaceful demonstrations. There were leaders speaking at Dorney Plaza. There was an awesome prayer gathering of churches with their ministers. We marched around the city and from the courthouse to the University and back.

There were many people, young and old, different skin colors, different genders, all gathering for the same indignation that we witnessed for those agonizing 8 minutes and 46 seconds. Such fervor and response was felt. It was good to be a part of this new collective voice in Findlay..

A month later, signs are put away, the police tape removed from around the courthouse, and life is returning to the new “normal” of Covid times. The racial unrest has been tucked away, once again. Wait, does it have

to be this way? Have we met the challenges that face our community? The recent racial incident with Findlay high school students reminds us that we cannot let our new voice down.

The Black Heritage Library and Multicultural Center has always been a great resource in our community, and now we have A Cultural Humility Group, composed of a cross representation formed after the 2018 Health Department Report, with areas concerning race and diversity. We also have the new group “Stand- Up Stay-Up”, led by Trent Williams (found on Facebook). There have been community events with these groups, followed by The Courier. We will have had our second collective Zoom forum sponsored by the Hancock County Democrats and The Black Heritage Library that all can view on their Facebook sites.

We have a new Mayor, a new school superintendent and a new police chief.
(continued on page 5)

Let's Get Busy (continued)

With the strong community voice that I witnessed and the racial inequities that are apparent in our community, we must not let our guard down. We must stay aware, register to vote, and keep up on the local news. Stay involved!

The above words I sent to The Courier, but I follow with this addition. As Democrats, I observe time and time again, that although our platform concerns social ideologies, our collective actions do not seem to follow so much in our community. Each group goes off in their own certain support of their own group, and maybe not so much for the other groups.

My challenge to Hancock County Democrats is to see and understand that when any group of people are oppressed, we

do not have the free and equitable society that we all yearn for. I challenge you to take the next step and *take action*. Write a letter, to the paper and to your elected officials. Make phone calls to those who make decisions. Follow Social Media to read the ugly behaviors that seem to be hidden from our local printed news. Physically attend a "Stand-Up Stay-Up" town hall, and hear firsthand experiences of racial injustices. Yes, even come out and join with a sign, peacefully in front of the school or courthouse.

I have heard at Pride events and in the "Stand-Up Stay-Up" events, that some do not want to make it political. After our president was elected, he made these social issues very political. He has oppressed so many different groups of people. The time is now, we can make a difference. We cannot let this be swept away, as usual. *Let's get busy!*

We have a new Mayor, a new school superintendent and a new police chief. With the strong community voice that I witnessed and the racial inequities that are apparent in our community, we must not let our guard down. We must stay aware, register to vote, and keep up on the local news. Stay involved!

Are They Sociopaths

What is the difference, if any, between a psychopath and a sociopath? Perhaps it is the difficulty in answering this question that is the reason that psychologist has combined the two under the designation "antisocial personality disorder". Web MD states the difference is the absence of a conscience. "A sociopath typically has a conscience, but it's weak. He may know that taking your money is wrong, and he might feel some guilt or remorse, but that won't stop his behavior." Both lack empathy, but psychopaths view others as a means to an end and nothing

Bruce Workman

more. The cartoon angel and devil whispering in the ear are completely missing from a psychopath where on a sociopath they are merely extremely ill.

"What got you wondering about these semantics?", you may ask. It is an issue I have been pondering since the prevention guidelines were issued by the CDC and infectious disease experts. I knew the president was spouting self-serving crap right from the beginning. (continued on page 6)



Are They Sociopaths (continued)

There was some early confusion about masks, due mostly to forecasted shortages for first responders and health workers, but the need for social distancing was made clear early on. At first, it seemed that nearly all people were following the current guidelines. Then the natives became restless. Maskless people began to crowd others in groceries and seemed indifferent to directional arrows. Some of this can be attributed to stupidity, of which there seems to be an ample supply, but much of it was indifference to the effects on the vulnerable. Even though the courts have been consistent on behavior that endangers others, some began to view restrictions as a violation of their civil rights. I am sure we can all remember the photos of the zombie apocalypse-like mobs and gun-toting imbeciles at the statehouse

What truly started me thinking about sociopathy were more recent events. I wrote a letter to the editor of the Courier explaining that I was grateful for the governor’s early lockdown efforts because I was in a high-risk group and contracting

COVID-19 would likely prove fatal for me. I received a reply that completely ignored my personal health concerns and ranted about those same measures and Democrats in general. My initial reaction was, “What is wrong with this guy?”. According to the aforementioned WebMD definition, he must be a sociopath. He at least went to the trouble of including unfactual statements to justify his indifference.

Lately, I have noticed people acting as if the whole pandemic was all a dream. People, around Findlay and elsewhere, are arguing about their right to not wear a mask or to attend gatherings or events without any social distancing. They appear to believe the resurgence of infections is either “fake news” or totally unrelated to their activities. I can only surmise they are stupid or suffer from an antisocial personality disorder. There certainly seems to be a lot of both going around. It makes me wonder if stupidity and sociopathy are contagious. We certainly seem to be experiencing pandemics of both.



“I am sure we can all remember the photos of the zombie apocalypse-like mobs and gun-toting imbeciles at the statehouse “

Three Words. 70 Cases. The Tragic History of ‘I Can’t Breathe.’ Mike Baker, Jennifer Valentino-DeVries, Manny Fernandez and Michael LaForgia New York Times June 29, 2020

The deaths of Eric Garner in New York and George Floyd in Minnesota created national outrage over the use of deadly police restraints. There were many others you didn’t hear about.

As the sun began to rise on a sweltering summer morning in Las Vegas last year, a police officer spotted Byron Williams

bicycling along a road west of downtown.

The bike did not have a light on it, so officers flipped on their siren and shouted for him to stop. Mr. Williams fled through a vacant lot and over a wall before complying with orders to drop face down in the dirt, where officers used their hands and knees to pin him down. “I can’t breathe,” he gasped. He repeated it 17 times before he later lapsed into unconsciousness and died (continued on page 7)

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“Please. I can’t breathe. I can’t relax. You gotta take this mask off, dude. Please.”

“I can’t take it off, sir. I’m sorry.”

“Please. I already told you earlier, I have [expletive] problems, dude.”

“That’s what the medication is for. It’s gonna help calm you down.”

“All right, well, I can’t chill like this. Please take it off, take it off. Aww man, dude. Dude, please take it off, take it off, take it off!”

“Please take the mask off! I cannot breathe. Please.”

James Brown died in custody on July 15, 2012.

Three Words. 70 Cases. The Tragic History of ‘I Can’t Breathe.’ (continued from page 6)

[Eric Garner](#), another black man, had said the same three anguished words in 2014 after a police officer who had stopped him for selling untaxed cigarettes held him in a chokehold on a New York sidewalk. “I can’t breathe,” George Floyd pleaded in May, appealing to the Minneapolis police officer who responded to reports of a phony \$20 bill and planted a knee in the back of his neck until his life had slipped away.

Mr. Floyd’s dying words have prompted a national outcry over law enforcement’s deadly toll on African-American people, and they have united much of the country in a sense of outrage that a police officer would not heed a man’s appeal for something as basic as air.

But while the cases of Mr. Garner and Mr. Floyd shocked the nation, dozens of other incidents with a remarkable common denominator have gone widely unacknowledged. Over the past decade, The New York Times found, at least 70 people have died in law enforcement custody after saying the same words — “I can’t breathe.” The dead ranged in age from [19](#) to [65](#). The majority of them had been stopped or held over nonviolent infractions, 911 calls about suspicious behavior, or concerns about their mental health. More than half were black.

Dozens of videos, court documents, autopsies and police reports reviewed in these cases — involving a range of people who died in confrontations with officers on the street, in local jails or in their homes — show a pattern of aggressive tactics that ignored prevailing safety precautions while embracing dubious science that suggested that people pleading for air do not need urgent intervention.

In some of the “I can’t breathe” cases, officers restrained detainees by the neck, hogtied them, Tased them multiple times or covered their heads with mesh hoods designed to prevent spitting or biting. Most frequently, officers pushed them face down on the ground and held them prone with their body weight.

Not all of the cases involved police restraints. Some were deaths that occurred after detainees’ protests that they could not breathe — perhaps because of a medical problem or drug intoxication — were discounted or ignored. Some people pleaded for hours for help before they died.

Among those who died after declaring “I can’t breathe” were a chemical engineer in Mississippi, a former real estate agent in California, a meat salesman in Florida and a drummer at a church in Washington State. One was an active-duty soldier who had survived two tours in Iraq. One was a registered nurse. One was a doctor.

In nearly half of the cases The Times reviewed, the people who died after being restrained, including Mr. Williams, were already at risk as a result of drug intoxication. Others were having a mental health episode or medical issues such as pneumonia or heart failure. Some of them presented a significant challenge to officers, fleeing or fighting.

Departments across the United States have banned some of the most dangerous restraint techniques, such as hogtying, and restricted the use of others, including chokeholds, to only the most extreme circumstances — those moments when officers are in fear for their lives. They have for years warned officers about the risks of moves such as facedown compression holds. But the restraints continue to be used as a result of poor training, gaps in policies or the reality that officers sometimes struggle with people who fight hard and threaten to overpower them.

Many of the cases suggest a widespread belief that persists in departments across the country that a person being detained who says “I can’t breathe” is lying or exaggerating, even if multiple officers are using pressure to restrain the person.

(continued ON page 8)

Three Words. 70 Cases. The Tragic History of ‘I Can’t Breathe.’ (continued from page 7)

. Police officers, who for generations have been taught that a person who can talk can also breathe, regularly cited that bit of conventional wisdom to dismiss complaints of arrestees who were dying in front of them, records and interviews show.

That dubious claim was photocopied and posted on a bulletin board at the Montgomery County Jail in Dayton, Ohio, in 2018. “If you can talk then you obviously can [expletive] breathe,” [the sign said](#).

Federal officials have long warned about factors that can cause suffocations in custody, and for the past five years, a federal law has required local police agencies to report all in-custody deaths to the Justice Department or face the loss of federal law enforcement funding.

But the Justice Department, under both President Barack Obama and President Trump, has been slow to enforce the law, the agency’s inspector general found in a 2018 report. Though there has been only scattershot reporting by departments, not a single dollar has been withheld.

Autopsies have repeatedly identified links between the actions of officers and the deaths of detainees who struggled for air, even when other medical issues such as heart disease and drug use were contributing or primary factors. But government investigations often found that the detainees were acting erratically or aggressively and that the officers were therefore justified in their actions.

Only a small fraction of officers have faced criminal charges, and almost none have been convicted.

In the case of Mr. Williams in Las Vegas last year, Police Department investigators determined that the officers did not violate the law. But the death triggered immediate changes, said Lt. Erik Lloyd of the Las

Vegas Metropolitan Police Department’s force investigations team.

Officers are not medical doctors and may believe that someone who says “I can’t breathe” may be trying to escape, he said.

To alleviate potential dangers, officers are told now to promptly get detainees off their stomachs and onto their sides — or up to a sitting or standing position. They are also told to call for medical help if someone has distressed breathing.

“Since the death of Mr. Williams, our department has been extremely aware of someone saying, ‘I can’t breathe,’” Lieutenant Lloyd said. “We have changed the attitude of patrol officers.”

For the relatives of many of the men and women who died under similar circumstances in police custody, watching the video of Mr. Floyd’s arrest in Minneapolis has felt painfully familiar. Silvia Soto’s husband, [Marshall Miles](#), died in 2018 in Sacramento County, Calif., after being pinned down by sheriff’s deputies at a jail. She said she had been feeling both heartbroken and comforted amid the national outrage.

“I don’t feel alone anymore,” Ms. Soto said.

‘You want to kill me?’

While there have been dozens of “I can’t breathe” deaths over the past decade, the emergence of body cameras and surveillance footage has eliminated the invisibility that once shrouded many of these deaths.

Videos from Mr. Garner’s death galvanized changes in neck restraint policies around the country, but problematic techniques for restraining people did not go away. In the six years since then, more than 40 people have died after warning, “I can’t breathe.” (continued on page 9)



“Willie. Willie. Stop!”

[mumbles]

“No, sir.”

“I can’t breathe.”

“OK.”

“I can’t breathe!”

“You can breathe.”

“If you’re talkin’, you’re breathin’. I don’t want to hear it.”

Willie Ray Banks died in custody on Dec. 29, 2011.

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“Get cuffs, I got his hands. Get cuffs. Get cuffs.”

“I can’t breathe. I can’t breathe.”

“Yeah, ‘cause you’re [expletive] tired of running.”

“OK, I can’t breathe. I can’t breathe. I can’t breathe.”

“We’re on VC-71. Code 4. Lift the red. One in custody.”

“I can’t breathe. I can’t breathe. I can’t breathe. I can’t breathe. I can’t breathe.”

Byron Williams died in custody on Sept. 5, 2019.

Three Words. 70 Cases. The Tragic History of ‘I Can’t Breathe.’ (continued from page 8)

Less than three months after Mr. Garner died, police officers went out to a tidy stucco home near Glendale, Ariz., to investigate a report of a couple arguing.

The officers found [Balantine Mbegbu](#) seated in a leather chair with his dinner. Both Mr. Mbegbu and his wife assured them that no argument had taken place. According to police reports, Mr. Mbegbu became indignant when they refused to leave.

“Why are you guys here?” he said, his voice rising. “You want to kill me?”

As his wife, Ngozi Mbegbu, watched them pile on top of her husband, she heard him say, “I can’t breathe. I’m dying,” according to a sworn statement she made. Records show he vomited, began foaming at the mouth, stopped breathing and was pronounced dead.

The county prosecutor’s office determined that “the officers did not commit any act that warrants criminal prosecution.”

Cases in which detainees protested that they could not breathe, before dying, continued to occur. Their words could be heard on audio or video recordings, or were otherwise documented in official witness statements or reports.

In 2015, [Calvon Reid](#) died in Coconut Creek, Fla., after officers fired 10 shots at him with a Taser.

In 2016, [Fermin Vincent Valenzuela](#) was asphyxiated after police officers in Anaheim, Calif., put him in a neck hold while trying to arrest him. His family won a \$13 million jury verdict.

In 2017, [Hector Arreola](#) died in Columbus, Ga., after officers forced him to the ground, cuffed his hands behind him and leaned on his back, with one officer brushing off his complaints: “He’s fine,” he said.

In 2018, [Cristobal Solano](#) was arrested in Tustin, Calif., and then died after at least

seven deputies worked together to subdue him on the floor of a holding cell, some with their knees on his back.

In 2019, [Vicente Villela](#) died in an Albuquerque jail after telling guards who were holding him down with their knees that he could not breathe. “Right, because they’re having to hold you down,” one of the guards said.

Then last week, the Police Department in Tucson, Ariz., released video of an encounter on April 21 with [Carlos Ingram Lopez](#), who was naked and behaving erratically when officers forced him to lie face down on the floor of a garage with his hands handcuffed behind his back. Part of the time, Mr. Lopez’s head was covered with a blanket and a hood. He was held down for 12 minutes, crying for air, for water and for his grandmother. Then he, too, died.

‘If you can talk you can breathe’

One of the reasons such cases keep occurring may be the persistent belief on the part of police officers that a detainee who is complaining that he cannot breathe is breathing enough to talk.

Edward Flynn, the former police chief in Milwaukee, said in a deposition in 2014 that this idea was once part of training for officers there and persisted as a “common understanding” even if it was wrong. Other departments have told their officers the same thing, records show, and the notion shows up often in interactions with detainees.

“If you’re talking, you’re breathing — I don’t want to hear it,” a sheriff’s deputy told [Willie Ray Banks](#), who was struggling for air after officers in Granite Shoals, Texas, restrained and Tased him in 2011.

But the medical facts are more complicated.

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Three Words. 70 Cases. The Tragic History of ‘I Can’t Breathe.’ (continued from page 9)

While it may technically be true that someone speaking is passing air through the windpipe, Dr. Carl Wigren, an independent pathologist, said that even someone able to mutter a phrase such as “I can’t breathe” may not be able to take the full breaths needed to take in sufficient oxygen to maintain life.

The “if you can talk” notion has persisted even in places like the jail in Montgomery County, Ohio, which had to pay a \$3.5 million settlement last year in connection with the 2012 death of an inmate named [Robert Richardson](#), who had been jailed for failing to show up for a child support hearing.

A fellow inmate called for help after Mr. Richardson, 28, had what was described as a possible seizure. Sheriff’s deputies cuffed his hands behind his back and restrained him face down on the floor, pushing on his back and shoulders, and eventually on his head and neck, according to court documents.

Witnesses said Mr. Richardson repeatedly told deputies he could not breathe, until, after 22 minutes, he stopped moving. He was pronounced dead less than an hour later.

It was that jail facility where, six years later, the photocopied sign about being able to breathe if you could talk was posted on the bulletin board.

‘We literally had to sit there and watch my brother die’

Police officers often failed to seek prompt medical attention when a detainee expressed problems breathing, and that has proved to be a factor in several deaths. In some of these cases, the person in custody had recently been Tased or restrained, but other times they were suffering from acute disorders, such as lung infections, and languished for hours. Often, this appeared to be because officers did not take the detainees’ claims seriously.

When 40-year-old [Rodney Brown](#) told police officers in Cleveland he could not breathe after being Tased multiple times during a struggle in 2010, one of them responded: “So? Who gives a [expletive]?”

One of the police officers radioed for paramedics but later said he did so only because it was a required procedure when someone had been Tased; he did not convey that Mr. Brown had claimed he could not breathe.

A lawyer for the city in that case told a panel of judges that the officers did not have the medical expertise to know when someone was in a medical crisis or simply exhausted from a vigorous fight, according to an [audio recording](#).

[Another troubling case](#) occurred in March 2019 when the police in Montebello, Calif., were called to the home of David Minassian, 39, a former vice president at a property management firm who had suffered a heroin overdose.

His older sister, Maro Minassian, a certified emergency medical technician, had given her brother a dose of naloxone, a medication that reverses the effects of opiate overdoses. He jolted awake but still appeared to have fluid in his lungs, and she dialed 911, anxious to get him to a hospital.

But it was the police, not paramedics, who arrived next. Ms. Minassian said three Montebello officers entered her family’s home as her brother was flailing on the floor.

At least two of the officers slammed him to the ground and put their knees into his back as they tried to cuff him, Ms. Minassian said, and remained on top of him until he stopped talking. “I told them, ‘My brother can’t breathe,’” Ms. Minassian said through tears. “We literally had to sit there and watch my brother die.”

Despite years of concerns about some of the potentially dangerous techniques used to subdue people in custody, law enforcement agents have continued to use them.

In the 2018 case involving Ms. Soto’s husband, Marshall Miles, officers struggled to get him into jail after arresting him on suspicion of vandalism and public intoxication.

The Sheriff’s Department had produced [training materials](#) as early as 2004 warning about the dangers of suffocation when people were restrained face down or hogtied with their hands and feet linked behind their backs.

But those warnings apparently went unheeded. Mr. Miles, 36, was hogtied while being brought in by the California Highway Patrol, even though the Sheriff’s Department, which runs the jail, no longer allowed the restraint. (continued on page 11)

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“Deputies removed him from the hogtie but held him face down for more than 15 minutes as he repeatedly said, ‘I can’t breathe.’ They then carried him handcuffed and shackled to a cell, where at least three deputies put their weight on his facedown body while he groaned ever more faintly. About two minutes later, he fell silent and then stopped breathing, according to video of the death”

Deputies removed him from the hogtie but held him face down for more than 15 minutes as he repeatedly said, “I can’t breathe.” They then carried him handcuffed and shackled to a cell, where at least three deputies put their weight on his facedown body while he groaned ever more faintly. About two minutes later, he fell silent and then stopped breathing, according to video of the death.

[An autopsy concluded](#) that he died from a combination of physical exertion, mixed drug intoxication and restraint by law enforcement. Hogtie restraints were used in four other deaths over the past decade that were examined by The Times.

Another technique used in a series of cases with fatal outcomes, including at least two this year, has been the use of hoods or masks designed to prevent people from spitting on or biting officers. Law enforcement agencies around the world have grappled with whether to use them to protect officers despite concerns about whether the masks are safe.

Video from 2012 shows how one of the masks was used on James W. Brown, an Army sergeant stationed at Fort Bliss in El Paso who had a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder. Sergeant Brown, 26, was supposed to serve a two-day

sentence at the county jail for a drunken-driving conviction, but officials said he became aggressive after learning he would be jailed longer.

With his hands cuffed behind him, Sergeant Brown can be seen in a video seated in a chair, surrounded by guards in riot gear holding him down. Deputies had placed a mesh-style mask over the lower half of his face, and he wore it for more than five minutes before telling the guards and a medical worker that he could not breathe.

“Please take the mask off,” Sergeant Brown pleads. “I cannot breathe. Please!”

He passed out shortly afterward, and he was pronounced dead the next day. A county autopsy ruled that his death was caused by a sickle-cell crisis — natural causes — but a forensic pathologist later hired by the county concluded that his blood condition had been exacerbated by the restraint procedures.

Sergeant Brown’s relatives sued El Paso County, the jail and 10 officers for wrongful death and other claims. The case was later settled.

“I feel like they treated him like he was less than an animal,” said Sergeant Brown’s mother, Dinetta Scott. “Who treats somebody like that?”

Next Week's Events

- Saturday July 4, 2020 Elect Melissa Kritzell Hancock County Commissioner Online Event
10am— No other details were provided,
Nick Rubando 4th of July parade Kunkle Elementary School (cancelled)
- Sunday July 5, 2020 Elect Melissa Kritzell Hancock County Commissioner Online Event
-8 pm No other details were provided,
- Monday July 6, 2020
- Tuesday July 7, 2020
- Wednesday July 8, 2020
- Thursday July 9 2020
- Friday July 10, 2020

Just For Fun

If your kids ever ask why education is important



show them an Obama speech and then a Trump speech.



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This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served.

It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.

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