



PS Diver Monthly

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Suicide by Drowning

By Mark Phillips

NEWS

DIVING MEDICINE

EVENTS

CONTINUING EDUCATION

AND MORE!



Greetings,

Recently a few events came to my notice and they triggered an “Ah Ha” moment. A man sitting in the ferry line moved out of position as if to turn around and when he reached the head of the line, he veered off and gunned the motor. His car launched off the ferry loading ramp and into the bay. He was not able to be rescued and there was no question that he intentionally ran off into the water.

The other incident was more recent. A young woman decided she did not want to live anymore and drank antifreeze. She wrote a detailed set of instructions that forbade medical interference. Even though she called for an ambulance to take her to the hospital, she explained in her note that she just did not want to die alone and that she was fully aware of what she was doing. The doctors would not or could not violate her wishes and she died.

The “Ah Ha” moment came when I thought about my experiences in the fire service and as a long time member of our Water Response Team. How often are the incidents we respond to exactly as they appear? I realized that many incidents we have responded to might have been assumed to be an accidental drowning when it is possible they could have been suicides. As a firefighter I am sworn to protect life and property. As a diver, I am trained to recover everything from a firearm to a vehicle from zero visibility waters. We rarely give thought to why something or someone is in the water.

Over the years I have had to respond to a number of incidents where we arrived after the suicide attempt was successful. We have pulled a few cars out of the water that were still occupied. We have also recovered a few

folks who just drowned “accidentally”. In thirty years, I can only remember responding to two potential suicides.

One was an emotionally disturbed woman who attacked her doctor and was cutting herself with a letter opener. My crew was first to arrive and I subdued her and took the letter opener from her. The second occurrence was when we discovered a young man trying to drown himself by continually submerging himself and trying not to come up to breathe. Our team was planning a strategy to forcibly rescue him while others talked him out of the water.

In each instance, the risk to our team members or me was acceptable. Could either event have gone bad? Sure – I think about that sometimes and wonder what I would do if faced with a worse set of circumstances. I wonder what our team would do if faced with the situation.

As First Responders, we have the opportunity to arrive on the scene of a potential suicide before anyone else. In thirty years, I can not recall ever having any training related to this kind of incident. When I interviewed various police officers and ambulance crews, they had not either. The only thing that was suggested was that the local LE could send a crisis negotiator to the scene. How long before they get there? What ever that time is, it is probably too long.

We know what a successful suicide is. Most of us have responded to a few of them. When looking at the statistics and various methods concerning suicide it is disturbing to see the numbers. When separating the methods, it is surprising to see how many people die as a result of intentional drowning.

An occupied vehicle found in a canal does not prove suicide nor does it rule it out. Statistically it will likely be ruled as an accidental drowning. A drunk teenager who is unsuccessful in an attempt to swim across a creek and drowns will likely be ruled an accidental drowning. But how do we know it was not intentional? Teens are high risk for depression related suicide. Fortunately it is not up to us to prove or disprove, only to do the recovery.

But what if we get there before the attempt?

There are issues that are not open for debate here. Suicide is a choice. It is one that is personal and can be final. If asked, most everyone has an opinion about suicide but few will have a standing argument for or against it. Whatever your opinion is, as a First Responder, we should not let religion, social pressure, political or moral influence determine what we do or how we act when and if we are faced with a potential suicide victim.

A potential suicide victim is a person we have an opportunity to try to save. It is our job, if not our duty, to try to save them even if it is saving them from themselves. We cannot allow personal belief or feelings to guide our actions; our only goal should be to save a life. That is our primary purpose.

Within our field, we train constantly for the variety of potential incidents we might face. We prepare ourselves to go into dangerous situations in order to protect or rescue someone in trouble. A person standing on the outside rail of a bridge and contemplating ending their life does not represent much of a danger to us but does represent a potentially fatal danger to their self.

How prepared are we to help them?

When we discuss procedures, techniques or even new technologies we often times refer to them as additional tools in our tool box. This issue of PSDiver Monthly is skewed towards offering you another tool. The information offered is not definitive nor does it provide a rigid guideline for dealing with potential suicide victims.

In our news section, I have included a number of related news articles. These articles offer some information regarding suicide attempts that were both successful and failed. Reading the stories and applying the experiences of other teams to your own experiences should help you recognize where your training might be falling short.

There are a number of institutions that can offer you assistance. If you agree with me and find that you or your team is under prepared for a potential suicide, look to the mental health professionals in your area. You will probably find them to be more than willing to help. Larger communities usually have a crisis center with a suicide help line. These institutions can offer a great deal of information and assistance.

A big consideration for our teams is critical incident stress. If your team is able to make contact with a potential suicide victim and are unsuccessful in preventing the suicide, your team and those involved will need attention. Counseling and debriefing by a professional counselor should be mandatory in these instances.

If you would like to discuss this topic or any other, join our discussion group at: [CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)

Stay Safe,
Mark Phillips
Editor / Publisher

Special to PSDiver Monthly

Suicide by Drowning First Responder - Rescue or Recovery

By Mark Phillips

There is a problem-

Suicide, Assisted Suicide, DNRs (Do No Resuscitate orders), Living Wills and the obligation of First Responders to perform life saving skills do not always mesh well. When encountering a seemingly unstable patient, mental health issues can allow a First Responder to ignore instructions given by the patient. Despite a patient's desire and instructions, if a DNR document is not immediately presented, a First Responder is obligated to perform life saving techniques and once started they cannot be stopped even if a DNR is later presented by a family member.

There are moral, ethical, religious and social issues that can be argued regarding suicide. First Responders are required to put those aside and concentrate on preserving life. One of the principal duties that Fire, Law Enforcement and EMS personnel share is that we are duty bound to protect life. When faced with incidents that we are familiar with we know what to do and probably have a book somewhere of Operation Guidelines that even spell out approved processes. When faced with a person threatening to commit suicide, the incident falls outside of the norm for the vast majority of us.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov), suicide is the 11th leading cause of death of Americans. In 2006, the CDC indicates that there were

[4279 drownings](#). Of these, 3,579 are listed as unintentional, 402 as suicide, 43 as homicide and 255 as undetermined.

Of those listed as unintentional, the greatest numbers occurred in the age groups between age 15 and 85. Males outnumbered females about 3 to 1. Suicide rates are high among middle aged and older adults. Females reported attempting suicide three times more often than men.

When examining the variety of drowning fatality statistics that are available, some of the statistics do identify suicides in their number. It seems to be a common thought that these numbers are not totally accurate. In some instances, there is no way to know for sure if the victim committed suicide, was involved in an accident or even if the victim was murdered.

As First Responders, how we approach the challenges of either rescue or recovery will be difficult. Most of us are



Fire, Law Enforcement or EMS and are used to dealing with medical calls in one form or another. On occasion we respond to incidents where the victim is more emotionally disturbed than physically injured. These folks are often times unconscious. Do we have the ability to rescue them? Is there current? How deep is the water? If, while we watch, the victim is successful and their body is later recovered, do we still treat the incident as a crime scene?

Victims who use a vehicle as a means to enter the water have proven the success of the method. While most vehicles will float for a while on the surface, they all sink eventually. If the doors are locked and windows are up, it is almost impossible to rescue a suicidal person inside the vehicle. Even the attempt to rescue will place the rescuer at great risk. If the windows are broken out to reach the victim, the pressure release will cause the vehicle to sink faster. If the doors are opened, the car is either already sinking or just about to sink and the rescuer risks being snagged and dragged down with the car. Even if the rescuer was successful in breaking out a window and reaching the victim, if the person is wearing a seatbelt or fights, the rescuer risks going down with the victim.

Suicide by drowning may be more popular than the numbers show. Drowning victims who are assumed to have drowned by accident may be misrepresented in some instances. Witnessed drownings that are reported by family members may not always be as accurate as they should be. Families will not always accept the idea that a loved one would or could commit suicide. Vehicles found in the water with occupants inside are not always there as a result of an accident. But without a means to verify or prove otherwise, the reports may indicate only that a person drowned.

Anchors Away

Tony is having a bad day. He got fired today. Yesterday he found out his wife was having an affair with his brother and now suspects that his newborn son is not his. He was late on the mortgage and the bank is sending threatening letters. The car his wife had been using was repossessed and his work truck just turned over two hundred thousands miles.

Tony liked to fish out of his 12' jon boat. He threw it into the back of his truck, packed some fishing gear that included a case of beer, grabbed a box from his garage and left to go to the pond.

When he got there he unloaded his boat, pushed it off into the pond and spent what was left of the day drinking beer and fishing. He caught a few fish but threw them all back. He timed the day perfectly. Just as it started to get dark, he ran out of beer. As he finished the last one, he opened the box he had brought from the garage. It had a small length of chain and a pair of old handcuffs.



Tony ran the chain through the eye of his boat anchor then wrapped the chain around his ankles. He attached one of the handcuffs to his left wrist making sure it was firmly locked. Tony threaded the open end of the other cuff through the ends of the chain then forced the cuff closed on his right hand and without hesitation, rolled out of his boat.

Jumpers

Almost every high bridge spanning water has recorded suicides. Since its construction in 1937, The Golden Gate Bridge has become the world's leading suicide location and averages a suicide about once every two weeks. Some estimates place the number of suicides off the bridge to date around 2,000. The first suicide was recorded just ten weeks after the bridge opened. Those who jump from the Golden Gate Bridge will impact the water at 75 miles per hour and at that speed, the impact is not much different than landing on concrete. Bones are shattered, internal organs burst and death is almost instant. The numbers of those who survive the attempt are very few. Those who do survive are often as surprised as their rescuers and sometimes even grateful. Some remark that they changed their mind just at the moment of no return while others are just surprised that they lived.



Sinkers

Suicidal individuals who are determined to take their own life and plan to do it by drowning will sometimes take the ability to escape or change their minds away from themselves. Unlike the rare jumper who survives and may voice regret, one who truly wants to drown may take away the ability to change his mind. The individuals may tie a weight to themselves and either jump, fall or wade into a body of water and allow the weight to secure their demise. Depending on the depth of the water, even if they do change their minds, they will probably not have the ability to free

Shoes on the Bridge

A family from Florida visiting San Francisco for the first time is impressed with the Golden Gate Bridge. They discover that they can catch a cab from their hotel to the bridge and walk across it. They get up the next morning, have breakfast at the hotel and make the cab ride to the bridge.



The weather is clear, the sun is out and they feel like they can see forever from the bridge. As they walk, taking in the beauty of the day, they notice signs about jumping from the bridge and comment that you would really have to be determined to do something like that. They even joke that you would have to pick a good spot to make sure you hit the water and not one of the supports. They even contemplate about where the best spot to jump from would be.



When they get almost to the middle of the bridge they notice a pair of shoes set neatly together by the railing.

themselves. Jumpers who plunge too deep may not be able to swim back to the surface even if they wanted to.

In some instances, an individual will be determined enough to submerge themselves and forcibly stay underwater until they lose consciousness. Once they pass out, the likelihood of them surfacing face up and having the ability to breathe is almost nil.

Vehicles

All too often we see recoveries made where vehicles are involved. The unfortunate thing is we become complacent about recovering them. Many are in the water as an aftermath of an auto theft joy ride or even insurance fraud. But all too frequently we read about a vehicle being found that contains human remains. We often assume it is a suicide. How do we know the vehicle wasn't dumped on purpose as a way to disguise a homicide? How do we know it was not forced off the road by another vehicle or driven off the road by the occupant? Unless we are able to witness the submersion event ourselves, we can only guess how the vehicle came to be in the water.



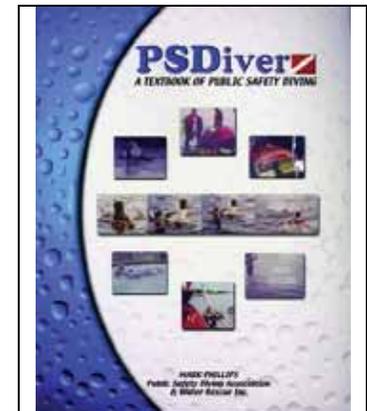
What We Can Do ...

If the person was successful, there is little we can do other than recover a body. But in doing so, we need to be ever more aware of the potential of pathological contamination. An approach from upstream would be preferred over a downstream approach for example. The ability to use a boat instead of a swimmer would be even better. We need to treat a body recovery the same way we would in any other potential crime scene recovery and employ all of the same collection and documentation techniques.

But our real job is not recovering bodies. Our real job is preserving and protecting life.

On those rare occasions where we have a live but suicidal person and we are the first to arrive, what do we do?

As First Responders, having identified a suicidal individual we must consider a number of things. The first is admitting we are not prepared for this kind of incident and immediately call for additional help and resources. The threat of suicide is a sign of anything from desperation to a terminally ill person wishing to pick their own time of death. The moral issues that can be implied or the judgments that one could make regarding suicide are not for us to argue. Our immediate goal is to preserve life in the



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short term.

A typical 911 response will bring many more people to the scene. A first arriving crew will need to split up and allow just one person to approach and talk with the person threatening suicide. The others will need to stay back and assume supportive roles. The individual making the initial contact should turn off or turn down their radio, show their hands, walk slow, introduce themselves and try to get the person to talk.

While this is taking place, the other crew members or officers who arrived first on scene need to assume other roles. Someone needs to make radio contact with their dispatch or incoming units. Initial information about the person, their location, position relative to danger and apparent mental status or injuries should be transmitted as soon as possible. Open radio systems like those on a fire engine should be turned down or off so that the person is unable to hear the radio traffic.

Incoming units should consider slowing down and turning off lights and sirens. The added stress of flashing emergency lights and sirens may hamper the initial contact that is being made, or worse. While 10 codes are still in common use, they are not always uniform from department to department or agency to agency. "Plain English" is becoming the preferred standard and the national Incident Command System (ICS) specifically prohibits the use of 10 codes. Sometimes plain English may not be as preferable to a code when communicating suicide attempts or successful suicides. Your agency should have its own policy in place for this situation and what ever is used "10-44 unsuccessful / successful / in progress", "Suicide in Progress", "Person down at _____" or something else, all regular or expected

agencies responding to that particular situation need to use the same code or terminology.

While one first responder is talking to the person and another is updating incoming units, all other personnel on scene should begin to secure the immediate area. This may mean working to shut down a freeway overpass or just asking bystanders to back up. If the incident has the possibility to change locations and endanger others below, efforts to secure the area below should be taken as well. If incoming crews include a marine unit on a boat, for example, rescue personnel can secure the area below the victim and prepare for a possible rescue or immediate recovery.

First Contact

If the person will talk, we need to be able to engage them in conversation and then let them talk. We need to listen. We need to respond with empathy and compassion. One of the survivors who jumped from the Golden Gate Bridge commented that if just one single person had smiled at him while he was walking to the bridge he would not have jumped. Another said he stood there for 45 minutes in obvious distress and no one stopped to ask if he was OK. Their feeling of self worth was less than nothing and they both took the lack of attention as a sign and jumped.

We cannot accept any argument that suicide "makes sense," or serves a high moral purpose. And we certainly cannot go to the other extreme and suggest that they just go ahead and get it over with if they are so determined to kill themselves.

Once engaged in conversation you will become either the last person to talk to them before they die or will facilitate a resolution that includes them living to see another day.

How that resolution comes about cannot be foretold. All you can do is your best and hope you are successful or someone arrives who can help the victim.

The Fisherman

An elderly man is fishing from a bridge that crosses an irrigation canal. It is an out of the way place and even though fishing is not allowed from the bridge, he has been doing it for so long, it is his spot. He rarely catches anything but he loves to be outdoors and he loves to fish. When his wife was alive, she used to playfully accuse him of having an affair. It became a joke with them and he would pick up his fishing pole and tell her he was going to go visit his girlfriend for a while.

After the car accident that killed his wife and partially paralyzed him, he rarely went to the bridge anymore. It was really difficult for him to get around and even though he had strong pain killers, they didn't seem to help a lot. But he managed. He figured out how to drive again and even how to use his crutches while carrying his fishing pole and a pocketful of bait. A little bag he made was big enough to sling over his shoulder and carry a bottle of water, some extra fishing stuff and a filet knife – just in case.

A buddy of his drove by the bridge one day and saw his car parked off to the side in the shade and decided to stop and visit with his old friend. He was not in his car. He walked over to the bridge and saw his shoulder bag, fishing pole and crutches lying neatly on the ground.



If the person is in the water and is threatening to kill their self, you will need to determine if they are capable of actually doing it with the tools available to them, the body of water they are in or if they have more than one method in mind. If the water is just deep enough for them to submerge, it is unlikely that they would be successful if they tried to hold their breath and stay submerged. If they did, the shallow depth would probably allow your team to rescue them before they drowned. If the water is deep and they are getting tired, you should be prepared to help them if they begin to struggle and change their mind.

WE must keep in mind that the person may have more than one suicide method available to them. They could have an edged weapon or gun on their person that you will not be able to see. You should not make a water approach unless or until you are sure they do not have a weapon. Murky or muddy water will not allow you or members of your team to see below the water and it will be difficult, if not impossible to be 100% sure.

Talk and listen. Consider your surroundings. Is there so much ambient noise that it is interfering with your conversation? If you are not able to communicate you eliminate the one thing you can do to postpone a suicidal action. Can you move to a better location without alarming the victim? Can you safely move closer to the victim without sacrificing personal safety? If a water approach is necessary, is there any additional equipment needed?

We do not want to rush at the victim nor do we want to be so distant as to appear unconcerned. Be close enough to establish communication. Pay attention to what they say. A lot of suicide survivors remark that they felt

invisible, unimportant and too insignificant to live. Until they are safely removed from danger, they need your undivided attention. It is possible that you will be able to establish a rapport with them. If you are able, the victim will probably not want to talk to anyone else and will feel threatened by someone new coming into the conversation. Talk with sincerity. If you are not genuine and sincere you will just reinforce their feeling of insignificance. Your job is saving lives and this situation offers you a one-on-one opportunity to do just that.

We cannot condemn them for what they are doing and we certainly cannot condone the act either. We can respect their need for feeling self worth and be empathetic to their situation. Suicide is a choice. While we need to engage them in conversation, do something more than have a normal conversation. If you can get them to talk and answer questions, you gain information, establish a line of communication and delay them from acting. This delay, even if it is minimal, could mean the difference between them jumping off a bridge or having time and a reason to reconsider.

When talking with them, speak the truth. When asking leading questions, use judgment but ask hard and explicit questions like "What happened today that caused you to make this decision? "

Do not try to trick them or talk in abstracts. Ask specific questions like "Why do you want to die?", "Who will you be leaving behind?", "Why did you pick this method to kill yourself?" or "What made you decide to do this today?" And then ...

Listen

IF You Are Successful

If you are faced with the responsibility of being the First Responder and are successful in talking down a potential suicide victim, never leave them alone. If they have a weapon, drugs etc, take control of them as soon as possible and render them safe or at least secure. If a firearm is involved, before you place yourself at risk, have them set it down on the ground and kick it away from them. Try not to let them just drop it; dropping an armed firearm could cause an accidental discharge.

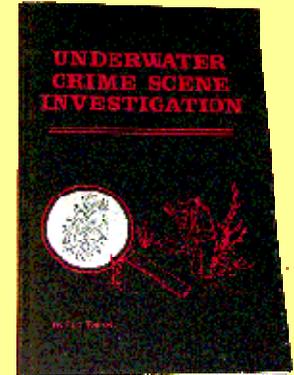
Maintain your personal contact with them as long as possible. Your ability to calm them down to this point and your continued presence should offer them reinforcement. If they have injured themselves or are injured they will need to be transported to an emergency room as soon as possible. Regardless, they will need to go to a medical facility of some sort to get whatever help they need.

If You Are NOT Successful

Watching someone die, knowing you were unable to save them, is hard. There is no way to describe the feeling. The job stress EMS, Fire Fighters and Law Enforcement personnel deal with on a daily basis is already high. These emergency service people already deal with life and death

"Underwater Crime Scene Investigation"

By Eric Tackett



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situations and personal risk. But when faced with someone threatening suicide and failing to save them, the emotional toll is devastating. This same group of men and women usually make it a point to keep their emotions under wraps and are usually very reluctant to share their weight with coworkers. For these individuals, failure is not an option and being unable to save a life, regardless of the circumstances or situation, will have a negative effect on them

Critical Incident Stress or Post-Traumatic Stress are just two of the potential psychological problems that First Responders could experience. While it may be policy to offer counseling or assistance for other work related issues, it should be mandatory for a First Responder who is unsuccessful in preventing a suicide. Most municipalities have an Employee Assistance Program and this could be the first avenue of relief.

Conclusion

There is no cut and dried way to prepare the First Responder for a potential suicide. In a water environment, the issues can be even greater for the victim who survives the initial attempt. Personal risk to the First Responder or Water Response Team may be increased and close attention to details will help prevent additional injuries. Teams should



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become more aware of the potential locations for water related suicides and prepare themselves for the occasion. Ultimately, the team and the individual team members must protect themselves first and work towards helping a potential suicide victim second. This can only be accomplished through training and experience. Being aware and preparing for the possibility will go a long way to helping an incident end on a good note.

Not every incident will be successful and at the end of the day we need to be able to go home and know that we did our best to save a life. While we do not like it, we must also accept that those who are truly determined to die will probably be successful no matter what we do.

Additional Information and Resources:

American Association of Suicidology

<http://www.suicideology.org/index.aspx>

Bridge of Death - Controversial Film Documents Suicides in Their Final Moments on the Golden Gate Bridge

<http://abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=2592841&page=1>

Suicides by Location on the Golden Gate Bridge

<http://flowingdata.com/2009/07/28/suicides-by-location-on-the-golden-gate-bridge/>

Very Rarely, A Jumper Lives - Meet One

<http://www.bridgerail.org/meetasurvivor.html>

Man Survives Suicide Jump From Golden Gate Bridge

<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=1900628&page=1>

Suicide Jumpers: An EDP Police Officers Must Train For

<http://www.bluesheepdog.com/2007/10/12/suicide-jumpers-an-edp-police-officers-must-train-for/>

Recognizing Emotionally Disturbed Persons

<http://www.bluesheepdog.com/2007/09/18/recognizing-emotionally-disturbed-persons/>

Tips For Dealing With EDPs

<http://www.bluesheepdog.com/2007/09/11/tips-for-dealing-with-edps/>

LIFE AFTER THE FALL - SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE ATTEMPTS OFF AURORA BRIDGE SHARE THEIR SCARS AND A ZEAL FOR LIVING

<http://www.seattlepi.com/archives/1996/9603060095.asp>

Committing Suicide by Drowning

http://organizedwisdom.com/Committing_Suicide_by_Drowning

Suicide by Drowning Statistics

<http://www.suicidemethods.net/tables/drwnyrsx.htm>

Jumpers - The fatal grandeur of the Golden Gate Bridge

http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2003/10/13/031013fa_fact?currentPage=all

The Role of First Responders in Preventing Suicide

https://rlsh-manual.com/First_Responder_Pt_III.html

NEWS

More drown by suicide than by accident

<http://www.irishhealth.com/article.html?id=5399>

20/11/2003 By Deborah Condon

The number of people who commit suicide by drowning every year now 'eclipses' the number of accidental drownings, Irish Water Safety (IWS) has warned. Furthermore



with this type of suicide, the use of alcohol or drugs is rarely involved.

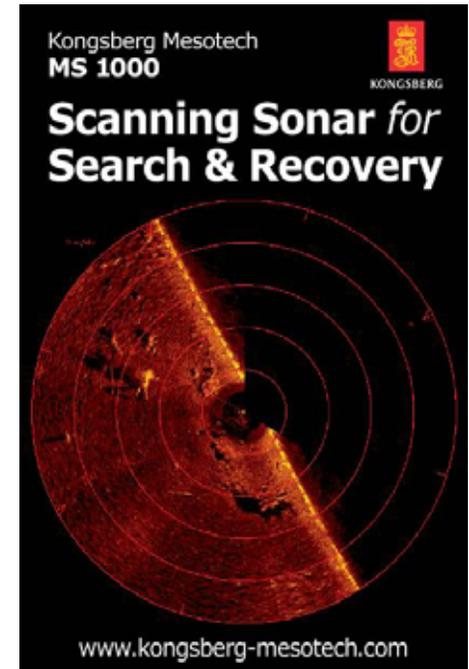
Figures show that between 1992 and 2002, there were 968 drownings by suicide, compared to 713 accidental drownings and a further 119, which were undetermined.

"We average 95 suicides by drowning every year, which eclipses the average accidental drowning figure of 71. For every 100,000 people who live in this country, two die from suicide by drowning every year", said Roger Sweeney of IWS.

The vast majority of people who commit suicide by drowning are men. Of the 968 drownings over the 10-year period, 703 were male. The single biggest age-group affected was the 30 - 34 age group, with 81 drownings among this group.

The 265 women who drowned by suicide during the same period, the largest age group affected was the 45 - 49 age group, with 38 drownings.

"The vast majority of deaths from suicide by drowning occur far more frequently in fresh water than at sea and involve no intoxication whatsoever", Mr Sweeney added.



The figures were released at the Irish Association of Suicidology Conference in the Gleneagle Hotel in Killarney, Co Kerry. Irish Water Safety is the statutory body established to promote water safety in Ireland.

Hero firefighter catches suicide jumper

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-450371/Hero-firefighter-catches-suicide-jumper.html>

Last updated at 13:09 24 April 2007

Below are the dramatic moments when firefighters rescued a man as he tried to commit suicide by throwing himself off the Millennium Bridge.



The man resists rescue attempts

More than 100 people gathered on the banks of the Thames to watch the two-hour ordeal as police tried to talk the man back from the edge.

But when the man, described as Middle-Eastern and in his thirties, refused to climb down he was grabbed by firefighter Khalid Obadele. Mr Obadele was tied to the would-be jumper with a safety rope and the pair were lowered off the bridge and on to a fireboat below.

One witness said: "The man was screaming 'London is s**t' and waving for the firefighter to get back." But the firefighter didn't panic.

He went straight out to him and pinned him down. He wrapped his legs round the man and rolled him off the

bridge. It was quite a move ... The firefighter was a bit of a hero."

Mr. Obadele, who is based at Euston, said: "We had to talk to him all the while to make sure it was okay to go out and secure him. It was quite hairy."

The alarm was raised at 2.44pm yesterday when the man climbed over the safety rails and on to the bridge's edge. Witnesses said he was shouting and screaming. A team of 16 firefighters, plus police and paramedics, were at the scene within minutes.

One City worker who watched from the side of the Thames said: "The firefighter was very cool and did his job. There was a cheer from the crowd as he was rescued." The rescued man has since been arrested for immigration offences.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-450371/Hero-firefighter-catches-suicide-jumper.html#ixzz0Rwzi1PD5>



Firefighter Khalid Obadele grabs the man and rolls him off the edge of the Millennium Bridge



Mission accomplished as the rescued man is lowered to safety

Woman, 43, survives jump from top of Sunshine Skyway bridge

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/publicsafety/article830880.ece>

September 29, 2008 Rita Farlow, Times staff writer

ST. PETERSBURG, FL. —

A woman jumped off the highest portion of the Sunshine Skyway bridge and lived Sunday evening.

Gina Rue, 43, fell the 197 feet from the center span above Tampa Bay at 5:15 p.m.

Boaters alerted a nearby U.S. Coast Guard unit, which pulled Rue out of the water and brought her ashore.



She was taken to Bayfront Medical Center with serious injuries, including back pain and facial lacerations. But Rue was expected to survive, said St. Petersburg Fire and Rescue Lt. Joel Granata.

The Coast Guard unit was only about 200 yards away from where Rue splashed into the water. They were preparing to board another vessel at the time. "We just happened to be at the right place at the right time," said Shawn Fitchko,



29, a boatswain's mate second class on the unit.

Fitchko said Rue was clutching a floating seat cushion that a boater had tossed to her when the Coast Guard vessel

reached her. He said Rue, who was wearing jeans and a T-shirt, was alert and was able to move her fingers and toes. He talked to her to try to keep her conscious. "She was wondering why she was alive, actually," he said.

People don't often survive a jump from the high span of the bridge, but it has happened on rare occasions.

Updated statistics weren't available Sunday, but a *St. Petersburg Times* article in 2003 reported that at least 127 people had died jumping from the bridge since it opened in April 1987, making it one of the most-used bridges for suicide in the nation.

A *Times* article a year earlier stated that only about a half-dozen people had survived the fall. Famously, a Rottweiler named Shasta also survived the jump in 1998 when she was either carried by or followed her suicidal owner over the edge. The man died.

People who make the jump hit the water in about 3.5 seconds going about 75 mph. The impact typically breaks bones and ruptures organs. Even if the impact doesn't kill them, people are knocked unconscious and drown.



Over the last decade, the *Times* has interviewed two people who survived the jump. Both said they regretted the decision to jump just before they hit the water. The impact was so violent that it ripped off of their clothes. One survivor, whose bowels were ruptured and back broken, described the feeling as like crashing through a wooden deck. A nearby boater rescued her.

The other survivor suffered a collapsed lung, broken ribs, ruptured spleen and fractured vertebra in his neck. He swam to nearby rocks and was rescued.

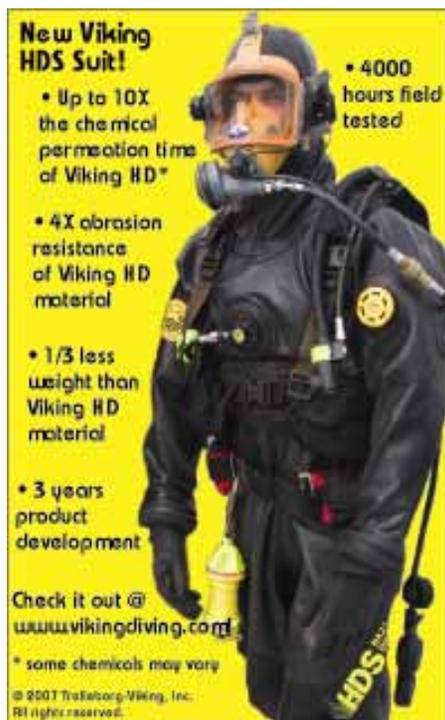
Over the years, state officials have taken steps to try to prevent people from jumping, including installing crisis phones and assigning Florida Highway Patrol troopers to patrol the bridge for potential jumpers.

“Miraculous” Brooklyn Bridge Jump

<http://brooklynheightsblog.com/archives/11995>

August 4th, 2009

A distraught man kept police at bay for over 30 minutes last night as he threatened to jump from the Brooklyn



Bridge. The drama unfolded shortly after 10:30 p.m. with reports of a man, armed with a knife, threatening to commit suicide. Police responded, and found the man clinging to the outside edge of the bridgework, west of the Brooklyn tower, along the Manhattan-bound lanes of traffic.



Photo by Marc Hermann/BHB

Cops from the Emergency Service Squad secured themselves to the bridge, and attempted to initiate conversation, as police and fire boats circled nearby. The officers encountered difficulty communicating with the subject, as he could only speak Arabic. An Arabic-speaking officer, assigned to the Transit Bureau, was located and hurried to the scene.

The distraught man, still apparently armed with the knife, was now clinging to the bridge by two fingers, and he plummeted to the water seconds later.

The Fireboat Kevin C. Kane of



Photo by Marc Hermann/BHB

FDNY Marine Co. 6 and its crew sprang into action, pulling the man aboard. One firefighter who entered the water had to be taken to Long Island College Hospital and treated for exposure. Meanwhile, other firefighters helped pull the man to the area beneath the Brooklyn tower of the bridge, and then carried him to New Dock and Water Sts. to await an ambulance.

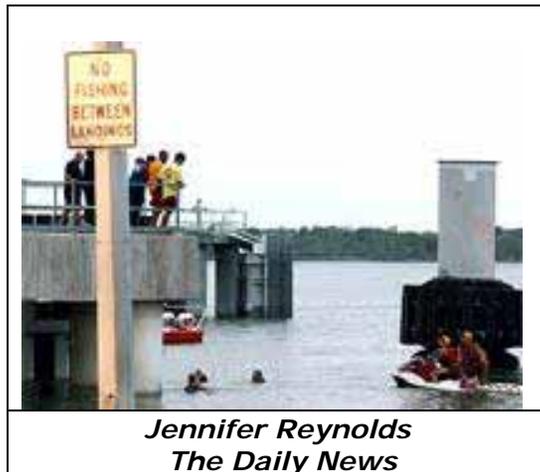
Through it all, the victim never lost consciousness. One firefighter encouraged him by saying “hold on, buddy, you did it! You survived the Brooklyn Bridge!” A police official summed up the job by stating that the jumper was transported to Lutheran Medical Center, “miraculously with minor injuries.”

Body pulled from water after car plunges from ferry landing

http://www.khou.com/news/local/stories/khou090920_nlc_car-plunges-off-galveston-ferry.19d02b680.html

09/21/09T.J. Aulds & Chris Paschenko / Daily News

GALVESTON, Texas — A car accelerated over a ferryboat ramp and plunged into the water Sunday, forcing ferry operators to halt trips between Galveston and the Bolivar Peninsula. Divers pulled an



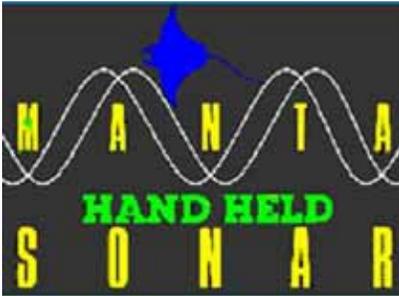
Asian man’s body from the submerged Toyota but found no one else in a search of the vehicle and water, Galveston police Lt. D.J. Alvarez said. The man was believed to have drowned. Despite reports that a child was in the car, divers found no other bodies, police said.

“When the divers got to the vehicle, it was approximately 30 feet beneath the surface,” Alvarez said. “The vehicle was intact, all the windows were up, and the front and rear windshields were intact, which cuts down the thought of someone being ejected from the vehicle.”

The man’s body was taken to the Galveston County Medical Examiner’s Office. Police declined to identify him, pending notification of relatives. The car is registered to a College Station resident.

The car plunged into the water at the Galveston side of the Galveston-Port Bolivar ferry about 5 p.m., and wreckers removed the car from the water at 7:45 p.m. as hundreds of bystanders looked on.

Witnesses waiting to board the Robert C. Lanier ferry said the car waited in line, then sped past them and ran over an orange emergency cone before cascading off the No. 2 ramp where no ferryboat was docked.



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Leah Griffin, of Port O'Connor, was driving up the coast with relatives and was next in line to board the ferry.

"The car whipped in front of us, and I thought it was going to make a U-turn," Griffin said. "It went over the cone and they gunned it and went right over the ramp."

The car collided with the raised metal ramp, then plunged into the water. "It was obviously deliberate," Griffin said. "At least it seemed that way to me, but only God knows that."

The car's front was damaged, but it floated in the water for several minutes, other witnesses said. Ferry security workers thwarted rescue efforts, witnesses said. D.J. Page, of Port O'Connor, was preparing to board the Lanier when he saw the car plunge into the Gulf. "One guy in an Escalade was peeling off his clothes, and ferry operators wouldn't let him in the water," Page said. "They just sat there and watched it. Everyone with a badge was just like, 'Get away! Get away!'"

Texas Department of Transportation policies and procedures do not allow people who aren't employees to go into the water or cross over the ferry landings or edges of the boats, agency spokeswoman Raquel Lewis said.



The car floated for several minutes before sinking nose first. Page snapped a picture of the car's rear end floating in the water. "This was our first trip to Galveston since (Hurricane) Ike," Page said. "We went cruising around to see what it was like and ended up seeing this."

With ferry operations shut down, hundreds of bystanders swatted misquotes and watched as wreckers pulled the car from the water. Ferry operations resumed about 8 p.m. officials said.

This story is available through KHOU, Ch. 11's partnership with [The Galveston County Daily News](#).

More:

CS Car Plunges Off Galveston Ferry Landing

<http://www.kbtx.com/home/headlines/59952172.html>

Driver Dies After Driving Car Off Ferry Ramp Into Water

<http://www.firstcoastnews.com/news/strange/news-article.aspx?storyid=145360&catid=82>

And A Similar Incident!

Man Trapped In Submerged Car Refuses Rescue

<http://www.wftv.com/countybycounty/21039809/detail.html>

Video on Site

A man was trapped inside a submerged vehicle Monday after witnesses say he drove it into a lake. Eyewitnesses called 911 when they saw the man

drive into Border Lake on Line Drive (see map), which dead-ends into SR-436 on the Apopka-Seminole County border.

The eyewitnesses also said the driver floored it just as he got to the Milan Apartments entrance. He flew cross the street and landed in the water, about 20 feet from the road. Deputies said the driver made no attempt to escape.

It was a sheriff's deputy who rescued the man behind the wheel and it was no easy task. According to eyewitnesses, the driver of the submerged mini-van didn't want to be saved.

"It was just beginning to go in the water. It was bobbing up and down, but he wasn't attempting to get out," eyewitness Heidi said. Heidi, who didn't want to give her last name, saw the man unbuckle his seat belt. A nearby maintenance worker dove in to help, but the driver either couldn't or wouldn't unlock his car doors.

Heidi and other eyewitnesses immediately called 911 (listen to call). "Somebody's going to see if the guy in the water is hurt," Heidi said.

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"Okay, so there's someone actually in the water?" the 911 dispatcher asked.

"There's somebody actually in the vehicle. But, I can see, all I can see from here is the windshield is shattered," she replied.

A Seminole County sheriff's deputy had to break the van's window, swim inside and pull the 44-year-old driver to safety. "He was suffering from depression and he talked about wanting to end it," resident Larry Heard said.

Residents told Eyewitness News that the driver, who is a resident of the Milan condos, wasn't in the best state-of-mind. The driver was critically injured in the wreck and investigators must now determine if that was his intent.

Late Monday afternoon, a tow truck pulled the flooded Dodge mini-van from the bottom of the lake. A sheriff's office contractor towed the wrecked car.

The owner will have to pay the bill if he wants it back, but in its current condition the sheriff's office says the mini-van might be better off scrapped.



Divers search Pasquotank River after an unusual catch

<http://hamptonroads.com/2009/08/divers-search-pasquotank-river-after-unusual-catch>

August 23, 2009By [Lauren King](#) The Virginian-Pilot

ELIZABETH CITY, N.C. Police divers spent the afternoon in the Pasquotank River off Riverside Avenue searching the water after a resident snagged some hair on his fishing line this morning.

The resident called police to his home in the 1100 block of Riverside Ave. when he caught the hair, said Elizabeth City Police Chief Charles Crudup.

Divers from Norfolk police were called to help search the water to determine if the hair had come from a body in the river.

Divers stopped searching at about 5:30 p.m. finding nothing suspicious, Crudup said.

The hair that was caught earlier today will be analyzed to determine if it's human.



60 Stolen Motorcycles Frames Found In Lake

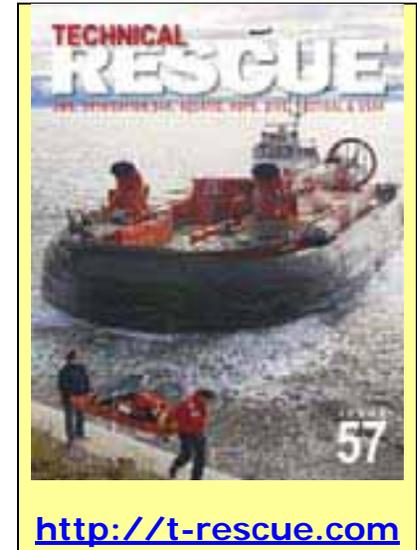
<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=436479>

PETALING JAYA, Aug 28 (Bernama) -- Police on Friday scooped out of a lake in Kundang near Rawang more than 60 frames of stolen motorcycles which had been stripped of their parts and dumped there by a suspected motorcycle theft syndicate.

The frames were found in Tasik Biru after police questioned three men in their early 20's believed to be members of the syndicate who were arrested in Kota Damansara on Aug 22 while attempting to steal a motorcycle, said Petaling Jaya police deputy chief Supt Mohd Shukor Sulong.

Members of the syndicate stole motorcycles, stripped them of the parts and dumped the frames in the lake to conceal any evidence of the thefts, he told reporters here. He said that from the number of motorcycle frames recovered, the syndicate was believed to have been in operation for more than three years.

The three men were being remanded for a week and police were looking for the remaining members of the syndicate, he said. At the lake, four police divers were seen looking for more motorcycle frames.



At least 22 dead as tourist boat capsizes in Macedonia

http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/europe/news/article_1499438.php/At-least-22-dead-as-tourist-boat-capsizes-in-Macedonia

Sep 5, 2009 Europe News

Skopje - At least 22 people died when a tourist boat sank Saturday in Ohrid Lake in southwest Macedonia, local media reports said.

Initial reports said 12 drowned and another five were missing, but Macedonian A1 television later reported that 22 bodies had been recovered. The television also reported that there were 74 people on board - 62 of them Bulgarian tourists on their way to the medieval monastery St. Naum. The vessel was licensed for only 43 people. The vessel, the Ilinden, was constructed in 1924 in Regensburg, [Germany](#), and had recently undergone a technical checkup.



Special police divers search the area where a boat 'Ilinden' sank in Ohrid Lake in Macedonia, 05 September 2009. At least 15 people are reported dead when the tour boat 'Ilinden' capsized in Ohrid Lake, whereas it is feared that number of victims could rise. Big part of tourists on the boat were from Bulgaria.
EPA/GEORGI LICOVSKI

Witnesses told local media the vessel broke in two parts and sank within one minute. First on the scene were people from a shoreside camping site.

Police boats

with diving equipment later arrived.

Local media reported that the Bulgarian government will send a special plane to Ohrid to collect victims and survivors.

Macedonian Minister of Transport Mile Janakievski has resigned on 'moral grounds' over the accident, reports said.

Lake Ohrid, the deepest in the Balkans, is Macedonia's most popular tourist [destination](#), drawing tens of thousands of local and foreign tourists every year. UNESCO declared both the lake and the town Ohrid as World heritage site in 1980.

North Miami Beach detective dives into depths of dirty work

[HTTP://WWW.MIAMIHERALD.COM/NEWS/MIAMI_DADE/NORTHEAST/STORY/1217144.HTML](http://www.miamiherald.com/news/miami_dade/northeast/story/1217144.html)

09/05/2009 By CARLI TEPROFF



On one of North Miami Beach Detective Jim Randazzo's first recovery missions as a police diver, he made a rookie mistake. He found a plastic bag, its contents a mystery, and lifted it above his head to carry over to the canal bank. Before he made it, the bottom of the bag fell open and the



Police diver Jim Randazzo gets out of the water with a couple souvenirs hanging from his Scuba gear during a training exercise at a canal in North Miami Beach. CHRIS CUTRO / FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

decomposed body of a dog -- and the water it had been sitting in -- spilled all over him. "I've never done that again," said Randazzo, who lives in Sunrise and is part of the North Miami Beach's nine-member dive team.

That's just one of the situations police divers encounter every time they splash into one of South Florida's murky, animal-infested canals. "When we are done with some of the dives, you can't get to a bar of soap fast enough," said Randazzo, 48, who is married with two daughters. He also works on the city's SWAT team.

A North Miami Beach police detective's salary ranges from \$78,000 to \$83,000, not including benefits. Randazzo makes an additional \$10 a week as a

diver. In order to become a police diver, a person must be a sworn officer and have advanced scuba certification. They must also take an 80-hour course to hone their skills: how to tow cars out of canals; rescue passengers after a plane crashes into water; and examine ship hulls for bombs, drugs and contraband.



It is not uncommon for them to come face-to-face -- or face-to-tail -- with snakes, crabs and the occasional alligator. Divers often swim right into fluids that leak from vehicles dumped or accidentally driven into Miami-Dade waterways. "Diesel is the worst," said Randazzo, noting the stomach pains that follow. "It's like drinking an entire pitcher of water in Mexico."

Randazzo acknowledges the job often yields tragic discoveries: Divers sometimes stumble upon victims when performing routine searches.

Innovative Dive Equipment Inc.



Even wearing a mouthpiece, Randazzo said such discoveries have an unmistakable effect on his senses. "It's like a pungent, sweet chocolaty taste that you will never forget. Never," he said. "Once it

gets in your mouth, it never leaves."

On a recent Monday, Randazzo donned his flippers, 80-pound tank and wet suit and carefully jumped into North Miami Beach's Snake Creek Canal as part of a training exercise.

When Randazzo surfaced, he was covered in green weeds and algae, carrying a rusted 'No Parking' sign. "It's actually pretty clean today," he said, "When you can see your hand, that's a good day."

Peterson grant benefits police divers

Modesto scuba team gets \$2,356

<http://www.modbee.com/crime/story/850045.html>

09/10/2009 Bee Staff Reports

A fund honoring murder victims Laci and Conner Peterson has awarded another grant to the Modesto Police Department's developing scuba team. Divers from the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department and other agencies helped police search for the pregnant woman after her Christmas Eve 2002 disappearance.

The remains of mother and unborn son washed ashore nearly four months later and Scott Peterson remains on death row



awaiting appeals of a death sentence.

Police formed their own dive team in 2005, the year that Sharon Rocha, Laci Peterson's mother, founded the Laci and Conner Search and Rescue Fund with proceeds from Rocha's national best seller, "For Laci." Since then, the fund has provided more than \$219,000 in grants to 44 search organizations in 11 states.

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Recipients include the Merced County Sheriff's Department dive team, which accepted \$8,000 in July, and the Modesto police dive team, which received \$5,100 for scuba gear in November and \$2,356 more this week. The team has mobilized six times this year to recover evidence in waterways. "Many people spent countless hours helping in the search for my daughter," Rocha said in a release. "I believe that every missing person deserves to be found and returned to their loved ones."

Lobster fishing area closed after discovery of unexploded bombs in the water

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/outposts/2009/09/unexploded-bombs.html>
September 17, 2009 Kelly Burgess

Access has been barred to an area popular with lobster fishermen after the discovery of unexploded munitions on the sea floor. The U.S. Coast Guard has established a safety zone around Seal



Island, located about 20 miles off the coast of Maine, after a recent discovery of unexploded ordnance in the shallow waters surrounding the remote island. The island was used by the U.S. Navy as an aerial bombing range from the 1940s to the 1960s.

"An urchin diver recently spotted what he described as thousands of shell fragments and shells on the bottom," Chief Petty Officer Jeff Hall told the Associated Press. "Even though we don't have a good handle on what the threat level is, we want to err on the side of caution when it comes to public safety." Lobstermen are upset with the



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decision to close the area, arguing that traps have been hauled there for decades without any problems. The interim ruling went into effect last week. The Coast Guard is taking comments on the measure until Dec. 7, after which a decision will be made on what sort of permanent rule might be necessary.

Seal Island is now managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with the National Audubon Society and is a national wildlife refuge for nesting seabirds. At least 30 fishermen tend to hundreds of traps in the lobster-rich shallows surrounding the island.

Honeymoon Killer Update

<http://honeymoons.about.com/b/2009/09/20/alleged-honeymoon-killer-returns-to-the-scene-of-the-crime.htm>
Sunday September 20, 2009

Even after David Gabriel "Gabe" Watson, aka "the honeymoon killer," completes his sentence in an Australian prison for the underwater murder of his bride, he still won't be off the hook. Alabama's Attorney General announced he'll be waiting for the murderer when he gets home — and plans to bring him to trial in the US and ask for the death penalty. Find out more in the [Birmingham News](#).



Background: Honeymoon Killer Sentenced

[People](#) magazine reported that on June 5, 2009 Watson was sentenced by an Australian judge to 4.5 years in prison for the manslaughter of his wife of 11 days, Tina Watson. The judge then suspended the sentence after 12 months, so Watson will only serve one year in prison.

The Story:

Expert scuba diver Watson of Birmingham, Alabama set off with his wife Tina for an Australia honeymoon in 2003. Eleven days into their trip, Tina drowned on the first day of their scuba-diving expedition on the Great Barrier Reef. "The groom, an experienced diver who had completed a dive rescue course, was acting as a so-called dive buddy for his less-experienced wife. He told police he decided to go for help rather than following her to the sea floor and attempting a rescue," the [Associated Press](#) reported.

According to Australia's [Courier-Mail](#), "In mid-2008, coroner David Glasgow found that it was likely Watson killed his 26-year-old wife by holding her under water and turning off her air supply." Further, it was determined that the bride had no pre-existing medical condition. Additionally, her scuba diving equipment was examined and found to be in proper working order. The coroner concluded, according to *The Times of London*, "Gabe had held Tina under water, turned the valve off on her



oxygen cylinder, bear-hugged her until she suffocated, switched the oxygen back on, and let her sink as he slowly surfaced to raise the alarm."

A certified rescue diver, Watson had fought extradition, then voluntarily returned to Queensland, Australia earlier this month to face the murder charge. He was arrested at Brisbane International Airport and was taken into custody, where he remains awaiting trial.

The lawyer of the alleged honeymoon killer claims there was no motive. However, Mrs. Watson's father told the coroner that before they married, Watson asked his fiancée to increase her life insurance and make him the sole beneficiary. He attempted to collect, and then dropped the claim after being charged with the murder of his first wife. Watson has since remarried.

More Details About the Case

["Tina Watson: The Bride at the Bottom of the Sea" \(Times of London\)](#)

["Gabe Watson Returns to Australia to Face Trial" \(Times of London\)](#)

[Transcript of Watson's Interview by the Police 10/27/08](#)



Drowning Mom Pleads, 'Come Help Me!'

<http://news.aol.com/article/seydi-burciaga-drowns-in-atlanta-floods/682900?cid=main|main|dl1|link4|http%3A%2F%2Fnews.aol.com%2Farticle%2Fseydi-burciaga-drowns-in-atlanta-floods%2F682900>

By Wayne Drash and Emanuella Grinberg **CNN VIDEO and PHOTO GALLERY on SITE**

ATLANTA, (Sept. 23) -- Seydi Burciaga just finished her overnight shift at Sam's Club, where she worked for the past 10 years. She made her way through the pouring rain in her minivan and turned onto her cul-de-sac in suburban Atlanta. She was three-tenths of a mile from home. The mother of two young children never made it.

Also See: [Floodwaters Begin to Recede in Southeast](#)

Floodwaters from a swollen creek swept her Nissan Quest from Desiree Drive around 5 a.m. Monday. On a normal day, the creek is only a few a feet wide.

But days of nonstop rain turned the seemingly harmless waterway into a raging river. It sits at the bottom of a steep hill on a street with no lights. It would've been nearly impossible to see the swift-moving water or how deep it was in the pre-dawn darkness.

Her car was picked up and carried behind an elementary school and lodged in trees. Water was coming in fast, she told a 911 dispatcher.

"Please, come help me," she says, her voice cracking.

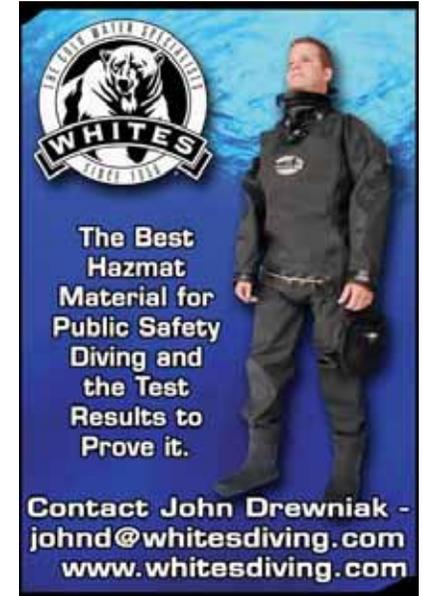
"Please."

The 911 dispatcher draws silent for a moment. "Alright, ma'am. Just stay as calm as possible." During the next 12 minutes, the dispatcher would try to reassure Burciaga as she elicited clues as to the caller's exact whereabouts.

Seydi Burciaga, a 39-year-old mother of two, drowned early Monday near her suburban Atlanta home as her minivan was swept up by the flood waters that have devastated the Southeast. In a newly released 911 tape, she's

heard pleading for help as rescuers try to find her.

Seydi Burciaga, a 39-year-old mother of two, drowned early Monday near her suburban Atlanta home as her minivan was swept up by the flood waters that have devastated the Southeast. In a newly released 911 tape, she's heard pleading for help as rescuers try to find her. It was a neighborhood Burciaga knew well. She'd lived there for the past decade. She was known as the neighborhood mom who would take anyone who needed help to the dentist or the doctor. Fluent in Spanish, she would often act as translator. "She was a very loving mother, a good wife, a strong woman," said Pedro Burciaga, her husband of 14 years. "She liked helping everyone, and overall she worked



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very hard. ... She always had a smile for everyone."

As her life teetered in the balance, she described being near a yellow house and tried to give other details of where her vehicle was. The 911 call was one of more than 400 before daybreak Monday that sent rescue crews through the floodwaters of Gwinnett County, a sprawling region in metro Atlanta. "My car is turning. Now the wheels is getting up, and I'm going to drown," Burciaga says.

A fire rescue team was at the scene by 5:09 a.m. Police arrived at 5:13 a.m. She was still on the phone with dispatch. The entire roadway was submerged by 5 or 6 feet of water. Nearby parked vehicles were nearly covered by the rushing water. An outbuilding had been carried from its foundation. "Listen to me. You're not going to drown. Roll down your windows, if you're able to, and get out of your vehicle," the 911 dispatcher says. "I'm in the back of my car. I don't know if I can break it," Burciaga says.

"Ma'am, if you can break it, break it. Do whatever you can to get out of your vehicle." "Yes, please, but my car is --" "It doesn't matter about your car," the dispatcher says. "What matters is your life. We're going to save your life."

A few moments later, the waters intensify. "It's taking me down now," Burciaga says, crying. "It's taking you down," the dispatcher repeats. "Just stay on the phone with me. I'm right here. I'm gonna stay with you."

"Please! It's going to drown -"

"OK, listen, you're not going to drown. We're going to be there for you. Just stay with me, OK?" "OK, OK," Burciaga says. Moments later, she shrieks, "Oh my God!"

Her voice grows more concerned. Her cell phone goes out at 5:16 a.m. According to a police report, rescue crews tried to swim into the water to find her, but the waters were moving too fast, and they couldn't spot her.

After about an hour, the waters receded. Her vehicle was 300 yards away. She was found across the back seats of her minivan. She was dressed in blue jeans, a green shirt and gray tennis shoes. Burciaga, a Mexican immigrant, was to turn 40 on November 18. She was the mother of a 9-year-old son and a 4-year-old daughter. Her ritual every night was to tuck them in bed before heading off to work. "She would give them a blessing, a kiss," her husband told CNN.

Burciaga's death was one of at least eight in severe flooding that has shut down roads across north Georgia and caused gridlock on Atlanta's already congested highways. Her death troubled even the most veteran

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law enforcement personnel.

"There's really no words to describe it," said Gwinnett County police spokesman David Shiralli.

"We're here to save lives when we can. When we do everything in our power and we still fail at it, it makes us feel bad."

On the quiet street where Burciaga lived, residents made a makeshift memorial at the small bridge over the creek. Flowers were placed at the foot of the street; an angel figurine stood with her hands clasped in prayer.

Nearby, shrubbery was flattened, possibly from her vehicle. The creek was back to being a tiny waterway. Residents said it floods often during rainstorms, but they'd never seen anything like Monday. "At night when it's dark and water is covering the road, you can't really see it. It's not the first time it has overran, but it's never been that high before," said Nathaniel Knight, who lived next door to Burciaga for the past five years.

Knight was still shaken by her death. "She's just a really nice person, a woman that works the night shift. Just so nice." He said he felt for her husband: "This just has to be horrible, just devastating for him."



A viewing for friends and relatives was held Tuesday evening. In nearby Duluth, her colleagues at Sam's Club were beginning their night shift, minus their colleague of the past decade. "We've lost a valued member of our family, and we will always remember her smile," said store manager Annette Gillespie. "She was an outstanding associate and hard worker, but most importantly, she was our friend."

Her husband struggled for words. His favorite memory: "Her smile, how she was with my children. She loved them a lot. She gave them lots of love." How so? "With kisses, hugs," he said, gently. "Now I'm destroyed because I'm going to miss her a lot."

Wauconda man's drowning death ruled a suicide

http://www.suburbanchicagonews.com/newssun/news/1787851_5_1_WA24_SUICIDE_S1-090924.article

September 24, 2009 By KENDRICK MARSHALL

WAUCONDA -- Just days before his death, authorities said Robert Jonak was despondent over some recent health and family related issues.

Although those problems might not have led the 70-year-old Wauconda man to committing suicide in Pistakee Lake, it could have been a clue into the mind of a person who sought answers to recent developments in his life.

According to one of Jonak's neighbors Wednesday, he and his wife were recently involved in a car accident. Lake County Coroner Dr. Richard Keller said Jonak's wife was undergoing rehab at a nursing home due to injuries sustained in the accident. He ruled Robert Jonak's death a suicide. "If he had any problems, we never would have known about it because he kept to himself," his next door neighbor said. "He was usually quiet."



On Tuesday, Jonak's body was discovered by boaters from nearby Famous Freddie's Roadhouse, Fox Lake, around 5:30 p.m. The group contacted the Lake County sheriff's office, and the sheriff's marine unit and Fox Lake Fire Department were dispatched to the scene near Great Lakes Yacht Sales, 100 N. Route 12, Fox Lake.

Jonak was then taken out of the lake along a bridge between routes 12 and 134, near the 400 block of Kings Road. Investigators say there was no sign of foul play, but rocks were found in Jonak's pants pockets. Authorities suspect the body had been in the lake for 24 hours before it was found. Fagan also said the Jonak's vehicle was found in the parking lot of a nearby train station.

Investigators said Wauconda police were contacted Tuesday morning by the man's family to report him

missing. Police said the family last saw Jonak on Monday. "Our hearts go out to Mr. Jonak's family," said Lake County Sheriff Mark Curran. "We wish them comfort in this time of sorrow."

Lifetime Movie Bio Subject..leaves suicide note & jumps off N.Y. Tappan Zee Bridge

<http://www.examiner.com/x-21347-West-Palm-Beach-Depression-Examiner-y2009m9d28-Lifetime-Movie-Bio-Subjectleaves-suicide-note--jumps-off-NY-Tappan-Zee-Bridge>
September 28, 2009 Lisa Rinaldi-Kohl

Anne Morell Petrillo, daughter of slain Scripp's heiress Anne Scripps Douglas, jumped to her death on Thursday night, off of the Tappan Zee Bridge in N.Y. She had been suffering from major depression & left a suicide note to her family. She was 38 years old.



In an ironic twist, the Lifetime movie that chronicles her mother's murder, "Our Mother's Murder," aired on television this past week. Her stepfather also committed suicide by jumping from the Tappan Zee Bridge, 16 years ago, after beating her mother to death with a hammer.

Family & friends say that Anne never recovered from the death of her mother. She threatened suicide in the past, but no one ever thought that she would go through with it. She left a suicide note stating: "I love everyone, but this is what I want." Her older sister Alexandra Morell, said that the approaching holiday season was always hard for Anne, because it reminded her of the horrific New Year's Eve when her mother was killed.

Petrillo was 22 years old when her mother was killed at the family's Bronxville home in 1993.

Scott Douglas, her stepfather, fled the scene of the homicide he committed & drove his BMW to the Tappan Zee Bridge & jumped into the icy waters. His body was found three months later. The couple had a daughter Victoria, who was three years old when this occurred.

Anne is survived by her 13 year old son, Michael. Divers are still searching for the remains.

Searchers find plane crash remains 16 years later

September 29, 2009 CBC News

Police divers will plunge into the Saint Lawrence River east of Montreal on Tuesday to recover the remains of two people killed in a plane crash nearly 16 years ago.

They died when their light plane collided with another small aircraft near Saint-Sulpice on Oct. 30, 1993. Police conducted a six-day search for the aircraft but were unsuccessful.

On Monday, provincial police search teams were able to find the crash site in just four hours, using newly



Divers search for the remains of a small plane in the St. Lawrence River near Saint Sulpice. (CBC)

purchased lateral sonar, technology that did not exist when the plane crashed.

The pilot of the second plane plane involved in the accident was able to land in a field in L'Assomption, less than 10 kilometres away. The pilot was unhurt.

Despite clear skies on the day of the crash, a report by the Transportation Safety Board concluded the two pilots may not have seen each other. If one did see the other, the report suggested, it was probably already too late to avoid the collision.

Police divers sell Ike DVD to replace equipment

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/ap/tx/6648695.html>

Oct. 2, 2009

GALVESTON, Texas — Galveston police dive team members want the public to know their particular view of devastating Hurricane Ike. A DVD, being sold by police for \$10 to raise money to replace dive equipment, is called: "Hurricane Ike On the Front Line."

Sgt. Renaye Ochoa told The Associated Press on Friday that pretty much all of the dive team's equipment was lost in the September 2008 hurricane.

Ochoa says the police department's dive locker, on the low side of the island, "got swamped." She says the 15 police divers currently use a lot of their personal gear on rescue calls.

The DVD produced by police includes 750 images, mainly by officers but also including some civilian shots, that document Ike's approach and aftermath.

INFORMATION YOU CAN USE

Who Says You Can't Do That? Crime Scene Photography: Capturing the Scene

By: Dick Warrington Issue: August/September 2009

As a crime scene officer working a traffic fatality, homicide, theft, assault, or any other kind of case, you must capture an accurate record of the scene and the evidence collected. In order to provide a complete record of each scene, you need field notes and diagrams, along with relevant still photographs that correlate with those notes and diagrams. While you do not need to be a photography expert to take crime scene photographs or testify in court about these photographs, you do need to have a solid understanding of the proper way to photograph a scene.

[Click HERE to go to the rest of the article!](#)

FBI building system that blows away fingerprinting - Advanced biometrics system blends DNA, palm, face and voice prints

By [Ellen Messmer](#) , Network World , 09/23/2009

TAMPA – The Federal Bureau of Investigation is expanding beyond its traditional fingerprint-focused collection practices to develop a new [biometrics system](#) that will include DNA records, 3-D facial imaging, palm prints and voice scans, blended to create what's known as

"multi-modal biometrics." "The FBI today is announcing a rapid DNA initiative," said Louis Grever, executive assistant director of the FBI's science and technology branch, during his keynote presentation at the Biometric Consortium Conference in Tampa.

The FBI plans to begin migrating from its IAFIS database, established in the mid-1990s to hold its vast fingerprint data, to a next-generation system that's expected to be in prototype early next year. This multi-modal NGI biometrics database system will hold DNA records and more.

Grever said that fingerprints and DNA appear to be the most mature and searchable biometrics possibilities, but the FBI is working to include iris-scan records among newer biometrics technologies to identify criminals and terrorists. The plan is to share this data with authorized U.S. and international investigative partners, as the agency does today.

[Click HERE to go to the rest of the article!](#)

Forensic Archeology in Criminal and Civil Cases

By: *Micaela N. Obledo*

Issue: August/September 2009

Should it be performed meticulously by professionals with proper tools or hurriedly by trustees with shovels?



Forensic archeology is the application of archeological principles and methodologies to locate and recover evidence within the boundaries of the criminal justice system or for use in civil lawsuits. Individuals qualified to conduct forensic archeological investigations are trained in traditional archeological techniques, but are flexible enough in their approach to adapt these methods to the diverse forensic contexts they may be presented with in criminal or civil cases. Integral skills and considerations outside of the parameters of traditional archeology include: possessing a basic knowledge of law enforcement and legal procedures (as well as the ability to productively cooperate with law enforcement personnel); the capacity to efficiently conduct investigations under severe time constraints and media attention; as well as the ability to skillfully navigate situations that deviate from conventional archeological experience, such as contending with an interment that includes remains retaining soft tissue.



Photographic documentation of the excavation and recovery process is essential. Often a trowel is used to indicate north, as in this photo.

[Click HERE to go to the rest of the article!](#)



Diving Medicine Online

Comprehensive information about diving and undersea medicine for the non-medical diver, the non-diving physician and the specialist.

<http://www.scuba-doc.com>

Tinnitus and Diving

<http://www.scuba-doc.com/entprobs.html#Tinnitus>

Ring in the ears or 'tinnitus' (pronounced with the accent on the 'tin') is one of the most prevalent and bothersome of symptoms related to diving. Tinnitus may be caused by damage or disease, anywhere along the path of the auditory system.

Tinnitus is the perceptions of sound when no external sound is present; and is often referred to as "ringing in the ears." It can also take the form of hissing, roaring, whistling, chirping or clicking. The noise can be intermittent or constant, with single or multiple tones; it can be subtle or at a life-shattering level. It can strike people of all ages and, for most, it is difficult to treat.

It is estimated that over 50 million Americans are affected by tinnitus to some degree. Of these, about 12 million suffer severely enough to seek medical attention. And, about one million sufferers are so seriously debilitated that they cannot function on a "normal," day-to-day basis. In diving, it is a symptom of serious changes that have occurred because of the effects of pressure, either [barotrauma](#), excessive attempts to equalize or to a [decompression accident](#).

In divers, it also can be related to [TM joint pressure](#) from clamping down on the mouthpiece, wax buildup in the ear canal with tympanic membrane irritation, barotrauma to the middle and inner ear, decompression illness involving the inner ear, or rupture of the round window with [perilymph fistula](#). With the latter, it most often found in association with vertigo and there is usually some deafness.

It may also be caused by physical trauma, infections of the ears, long standing exposure to very noisy environments, scarring and rigidity of the small bones in the middle ear (otosclerosis), toxic damage by medications (e.g. Streptomycin), and tumors of the brain or the auditory (hearing) nerve.

Tinnitus is still a phenomenon about which we know little and which has few effective treatments. During the last two decades, hyperbaric oxygenation therapy (HBO) has been used in the treatment of sudden deafness and chronic distressing tinnitus, with mixed results. Other therapies include non specific prescription medicines, non-traditional medical treatments, such as acupuncture, stress reduction and relaxation therapy, hearing aids and biofeedback therapy.

It should be emphasized that the newer methods of treatment are still under evaluation and that at this time there is no universal, symptomatic or specific treatment for tinnitus.

Things that divers can do:

1. Get a good examination by a diving oriented ENT doctor. The tinnitus may not be from diving at all!
2. Check out your regulator mouthpiece for fit. Consciously avoid clamping down on the

mouthpiece. (Try this yourself--clamp down on your teeth and hear the high-pitched whine!)

3. Avoid the use of nerve stimulants, i.e, excessive amounts of coffee (caffeine) and smoking (nicotine).
4. Learn as quickly as possible to accept the existence of the head noise as an annoying reality and then promptly and completely ignore it as much as possible.
5. Tinnitus is usually more marked at bedtime, when one's surroundings become quiet. Use any kind of masking sound-maker.

How to Treat Tinnitus: There is not a cure for tinnitus. However, a variety of treatment options exist that offer varying levels of relief to many sufferers. Treatment options include:

- **Biofeedback**
- **hearing aids**
- **medication**
- **masking**
- **Tinnitus Retraining Therapy**
- **TMJ treatment**

More About Tinnitus Related to Diving

This information is provided only as a background for becoming an informed diver. It should never substitute for the expertise of a diving physician or ENT specialist. Tinnitus can be described as "ringing" ears and other head noises that are perceived in the absence of any external noise source. It is estimated that 1 out of every 5 people experience some degree of tinnitus. Tinnitus is classified into two types: objective (what can be heard by

someone else) and subjective (what can be felt).

Objective Tinnitus (Actually audible or observable)

The rarer form consists of head noises audible to other people in addition to the sufferer. The noises are usually caused by vascular anomalies, repetitive muscle contractions, or inner ear structural defects. The sounds are heard by the sufferer and are generally external to the auditory system. This form of tinnitus means that an examiner can hear the sound heard by the sufferer by using a stethoscope. Benign causes, such as noise from TMJ, openings of the eustachian tubes, or repetitive muscle contractions may be the cause of objective tinnitus. The sufferer might hear the pulsatile flow of the carotid artery or the continuous hum of normal venous outflow through the jugular vein when in a quiet setting. It can also be an early sign of increased intracranial pressure and is often overshadowed by other neurologic abnormalities. The sounds may arise from a turbulent flow through compressed venous structures at the base of the brain.

Subjective Tinnitus (Inaudible to an observer)

This form of tinnitus may occur anywhere in the auditory system and is much less understood, with the causes being many and open to debate. Anything from the ear canal to the brain may be involved. The sounds can range from a metallic ringing, buzzing, blowing, roaring, or sometimes similar to a clanging, popping, or nonrhythmic beating. It can be accompanied by audiometric evidence of deafness which occurs in association with both conductive and sensorineural hearing loss. Other conditions and syndromes which may have tinnitus in

conjunction with the condition or syndrome are otosclerosis, Meniere's syndrome, and cochlear or auditory nerve lesions.

Hearing loss, hyperacusis (excessive loudness), recruitment, and balance problems may or may not be present in conjunction with tinnitus.

Many sufferers report that their tinnitus sounds like the high-pitched background squeal emitted by some computer monitors or television sets. Others report noises like hissing steam, rushing water, chirping crickets, bells, breaking glass, or even chainsaws. Some report that their tinnitus temporarily spikes in volume with sudden head motions during aerobic exercise, or with each footfall while jogging.

Objective tinnitus sufferers may hear a rhythmic rushing noise caused by their own pulse. This form is known as pulsatile tinnitus.

In a database of 1544 tinnitus patients, 79% characterized the sound as "tonal" with an average loudness of 7.5 (on a subjective scale of 1-10). The other 21% characterized the sound as "noise" with an average loudness of 5.5. When compared to an externally generated noise source, the average loudness was 7.5dB above threshold. 68% of patients were able to have their tinnitus masked by sounds 14dB or less above threshold. The internal origination of the tinnitus sounds was perceived by 56% of the patients to be in both ears, 24% from somewhere inside the head, 11% from the left ear, and 9% from the right ear.

In another database of 1687 tinnitus patients, no known cause was identified for 43% of the cases, and noise exposure was the cause for 24% of the cases.

Diving Causes of Tinnitus

- **Noise**
- **TMJ syndrome** (Clenching of teeth on the regulator)
- **Middle ear barotrauma** (Due to pressure/volume changes)
- **Inner ear barotrauma.** (Due to pressure/volume changes)
- **Round window rupture** (Due to elevated pressure blowing this window out into the middle ear)
- **Inner ear decompression accident** (Due to bubbles damaging the inner ear tissues)

Finally, advice from an otolaryngologist familiar with the damage that can occur from diving should be obtained. Self -diagnosis and treatment has no place in the management of tinnitus from diving injuries.

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*** EVENTS ***

If you have an event to share, email us the information!

20TH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON HUMAN IDENTIFICATION THE REAL DEAL • OCT. 09

**International Symposium on Human Identification
October 12-15, 2009**
Las Vegas, NV
www.promega.com www.ishi20.com

SARCon 09 Oct. 15-18, 2009

<http://www.clackamas.us/sheriff/sarcon/z>

Northwest SARCon is a search and rescue conference developed for emergency responders and their supervisors, including: sheriff's deputies, SAR team members, SAR volunteers, police officers from state and municipal agencies, firefighters, military and national guard personnel and Emergency Medical Services crews. At the conclusion of the conference, participants will have received hands-on training and participated in discussions on topics related directly to the conduct of search and rescue missions.

DAN Offers Training for PSDivers Diving First Aid for Professional Divers to be offered at select DUI events

DURHAM, NC – For the past few years, Divers Alert Network[®] ([DAN](#)[®]) has joined Diving Unlimited International

(DUI) on the road for several DUI DOG Rally and Demo Days events. DAN hits the road with DUI once again in 2009, with a special offering added for Public Safety Divers.

At DUI events that include a special day for Public Safety Divers, DAN will offer training in its [Diving First Aid for Professional Divers](#) program. The course will be offered the day before the DUI event starts.

Designed for professionals who dive as part of their job description, Diving First Aid for Professional Divers includes the three required elements of the DEMP course (Oxygen First Aid for Scuba Diving Injuries, AEDs for Scuba Diving and First Aid for Hazardous Marine Life Injuries), along with workplace CPR and first aid (based on guidelines provided by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration).

Participation in the Diving First Aid for Professional Divers course requires an affiliation with a public safety or scientific diving organization, commercial diving company or an aquarium. As proof of affiliation, participants will also be asked to provide a letter from the qualifying entity, outlining their diving role. The cost to complete the course at the DAN-DUI Public Safety Day events is \$100, and registration is required.

"We're looking forward to the chance to get together with Public Safety Divers," says Eric Douglas, DAN Director of Training. "Not only to conduct training that can be of value to them, but also to tell them about all the resources they have available through DAN. We know a lot of these guys are funding themselves, and so comprehensive courses like the Professional Divers course and learning about resources like the [Oxygen Grant Program](#) can be a great opportunity for them."

DAN will be offering the Diving First Aid for Professional Divers course at the following DUI Demo Days events:

Manatee Springs, FL November 12 (deadline: October 23)

For information on Diving First Aid for Professional Divers, or to register for any of the DAN-DUI events, please visit www.diversalertnetwork.org or call (800) 446-2671 ext.555.



DEMA SHOW

November 4-7 2009
Orlando Florida
Orange County Convention Center
DEMA Show is the ONLY international trade-only event for the diving, action water sports and travel industries

<http://www.demashow.com>



If you have an event or know of an event that might be of interest to PSDiver Monthly subscribers, send the information to <mailto:PSDiverMonthly@aol.com>

PSDiver Monthly Continuing Education

PSDM-CE-66

DRY SUITS

- 1) A DRY suit
 - a. Does not get wet during a dive.
 - b. Keeps the diver dry during a dive
 - c. Is a machine to dry a diver's diving suit
 - d. Is not really a dry suit but a wet suit.

- 2) The most common failure of a dry suit is?
 - a. The neck seal
 - b. The wrist seal
 - c. The zipper
 - d. Cutting of fabric

- 3) Dry suits are all the same in manufacturing process
 - a. True
 - b. False

- 4) You should only dive a dry suit when temperatures are below 70 degrees F.
 - a. True
 - b. False

- 5) A dry suit protects the diver from?
 - a. Cold
 - b. Chemicals
 - c. Bacteria
 - d. All of the above

- 6) Failure to _____ the zipper is the most common issue with zipper leaks.
- Lubricate
 - Close
 - Glue seams
 - Not heating the suit prior to diving
- 7) Permability is the _____.
- Ability of the suit to breathe
 - The process of sealing the suit seams
 - The designation of a chemical to break the suit fabric barrier
 - Length of time a suit is to be in service
- 8) Dry suits only come in one type of material, it is the manufacture that makes the difference.
- True
 - False
- 9) A dry suit
- Generally is customized to the diver
 - Fits all divers
 - Fits all divers in a given size
 - Can be shared amongst the team members
- 10) Dry suits, like wet suits, do not need special training for use.
- True
 - False
- 11) Because dry suits are immersed in water they clean themselves during the dive.

- True
- False

- 12) Dry suits maintain buoyancy by
- Burping the suit when it expands
 - Applying weights at the surface to establish neutral buoyancy
 - Uses the BCD to control buoyancy
 - Inflating or deflating thru hose and valve attachments

TEAM DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- Discuss and perform the maintenance procedure for your team's dry suits.**
- Describe the procedure used to fit test the diver/suit.**
- Discuss the type(s) of suit(s) your team has and the environments for their use.**
- Review your diving environment and ensure your suits meet the needs.**

Join our PSDiver and Water Rescue Discussion Group at:

(Just click the link or copy and paste the url into your browser.)

Public Safety Divers Forum

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PSDivers-PublicSafetyDiversForum>

* EXTRA CREDIT TRAINING *

Roy and Helen

Roy and Helen celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary with a few friends and family. Everyone had always teased Roy about robbing the cradle when he married Helen but that long ago, folks married young. From the day Roy met Helen, he was hopelessly in love and after 62 years of marriage, friends commented that if anything he adored her even more.

Roy and Helen had been staying in an assisted living center for the past five years. Her cancer had returned and the doctors said that the chemo treatments would probably be more harmful to her frail frame than the cancer. Roy had come to accept the inevitable years ago and was thankful for each day he was able to spend with Helen. He confided to one of his friends that he had not expected Helen to live as long as she had and felt like 62 was his lucky number.

Roy would spend hours just holding her hand while they watched TV or, on rare occasions, when they went outside to the gazebo. His eyesight was failing and even though he still owned a car, driving was difficult for him. Driving at night was almost impossible for him. He began to have a pain in his stomach and the doctors told him that he too had cancer. Roy refused to have any treatment or even medications to help with the pain.

On a beautiful fall day two months after the anniversary party, Roy was having a good day. His pain was minimal and Helen was more alert than she had been in awhile. He packed a small ice chest with two ham and cheese

sandwiches and a couple of diet sodas and loaded the chest in the back seat of their car. Roy went back to their room and helped Helen into a wheelchair. He wheeled her outside and helped her into the car. He even placed a pillow at the small of her back to make her more comfortable. Roy walked around to the driver's side, got in, started the car and they drove off.

That was the last time anyone saw Roy and Helen.

Six years later, a local fire department dive team is called to recover a car in a canal. They remove the vehicle and find the driver side door open. The driver, a 24 year old female, was not in the car. She had left a party the previous night and was reported to have been very intoxicated and upset. She had just found out she was pregnant and when told, her boyfriend walked out on her. No one had seen her since she left the party. Since she was reported missing, the dive



team began setting up to do a secondary search, just in case she had been thrown from the car and was in the water.

While setting up an exit ladder, one of the divers felt something solid underwater that should not have been there – it was a second car. PD was notified and the search for the girl began. After a short time one of the divers located the young lady and a recovery was made.

The police wanted the second car removed but only wanted the divers to hook up the wrecker cable. They did not want or ask for the team to do anything more. As the car is brought out, it is obvious that it has been in the water for quite awhile. The doors are all shut but all the windows are down. It is full of mud and level of the gunk is almost to the window line. One of the officers reaches in and unlocks the door and tries the handle. Amazingly enough, the door opens and a rush of mud, water and goo flood out onto the ground. When the rush stops, in the mess on the ground one of the divers notices what looks like a bone. The attitude of those on scene changes dramatically as they realize the lump barely visible on the passenger seat contains more.

After a lengthy investigation, it was eventually determined that the remains found in the car belonged to Roy and Helen. They found a small ice chest in the back seat that contained two empty diet soda cans. Both Roy and Helen had been wearing their seatbelts but both of the latches had been jammed with coins making them impossible to unlatch. The day they were found would have been Roy and Helens 68th wedding anniversary.



- 1. Discuss this incident. How does it compare to incidents your team has handled?**
- 2. If it had been your team, how would you have set up the initial diver operation?**
- 3. What type of pattern would you use in a canal to find both a body and a vehicle?**
- 4. Discuss the procedures you have in place now and determine if they are adequate for both an accidental drowning and a potential suicide drowning.**
- 5. What might your team have done differently?**

Headlights in the Water

It is just after midnight. It has been raining steadily for over a week and the river is near flood stage levels and moving pretty fast. A young woman finds her friends at the river park and tells them that her boyfriend has just broken up with her. As she tells the story she just gets more upset. Her friends, knowing she has a tendency to be overly melodramatic, talk with her until she has calmed down. This is a normal routine for them and they know what words to say to keep the conversation short. They talk awhile about nothing in particular and after a time, she says she is going home. She gathers her purse and shoes and walks back up the hill to the parking lot.

As she leaves, her friends whisper to themselves about how much a drama queen she is and quietly share a laugh.

A car flashes past them. It hits the chain that edges the boardwalk with such force that the chain breaks and the hardware that secured it to the pilings splinters the top of the piling as it explodes outward into the water.

The car flies twenty feet or so in the air before splashing into the water. The lights on the pier barely illuminate the car as it settles in the water but there is just enough light for the two startled teens to recognize their friend in the front seat.

As the current pushes the car downstream one of the teens calls 911 on her cell phone while her boyfriend strips off his shoes and pants and dives into the water to attempt to rescue their friend.

He is a decent swimmer and swimming with the current he is able to catch up to the car. Since the headlights are

on and still working, he has no trouble seeing it in the darkness. When he reaches the car and screams to his friend to open the door, she rolls up her window and pushes the lock down. He moves to the back door but before he can maneuver into a position to try to open it, she has reached back and locked it. While he watches, she locks the passenger side doors also.



He beats on the window pleading with his friend to open the door and get out of the car. Five minutes after being dispatched on the 911 call, a patrol officer arrives in time to see the headlights of the car as it disappears into the depths. He runs to the waters edge to find the boy struggling to get out of the water and helps him back to dry land.

- 1. Discuss this incident. In your area do you have moving bodies of water that reach flood stage? If this incident occurred in that body of water, what would your team do?**
- 2. What type of safety measures would you put in place for your divers?**

3. **When does this incident become too dangerous and how would you determine if the water was too swift to dive?**
4. **Can this dive be made safely with your normal equipment and personnel or will you need additional support?**
5. **If you do need additional support and equipment, what do you need and where will get it?**

High on Meth – Low on Life

A group of young men scored a small stash of meth and brought it with them on a camping trip on the bayou. The party started around dusk on Friday night and some of their friends came by to hang out. Everyone brought beer and the night was spent playing drinking games until one by one all the visitors left and two of the campers had passed out.

Saturday morning was rainy and gloomy. What beer that was left was warm and neither of the two friends who had stayed up all night were in any mood or shape to fix breakfast. So they did the next best thing and found the stash of meth. Robby took a hit and as the meth coursed through his system his demeanor became more hostile and eventually he began to threaten AJ with



an “ass whooping” if he didn’t go to the store and get some more beer.

When AJ got back from the beer run, whoop ass boy was gone. Worried that he may have overdosed, or worse, he tried to wake up his other two friends. He was unsuccessful. As he looked around, he heard water splashing down at the bayou. He walked toward the noise thinking that his buddy had gone for a swim. What he found confused him.

Robby had managed to get in front of the closed discharge wall of an irrigation canal and was holding onto a rope that was tied to a railing twenty five feet above him. He was talking to himself and every few seconds would blow out hard, throw his hands up over his head and sink. Each time he would surface and grab the rope again. He watched for awhile without being seen, wondering what was going on. Robby kept repeating the maneuver and seemed to be getting angry. Finally he couldn’t stand it and hollered over asking what he was doing. Startled, Robby began to yell profanities at him and told him just to let him die. It was then that AJ realized his friend was trying to drown himself. He ran for a phone and called 911.

Because it was reported as an active drowning, Fire, Police and EMS were all dispatched. When they arrived they discovered the young man in the water, and located in such a place that no easy approach could be made. They were able to walk out on the railing overlooking the water and talk to him but there was no way to reach him without either swimming to him or approaching him in a boat. He was a big guy, strong and determined that no one was going to get near him.

The brown bayou water prevented the officers from seeing most of the young mans body or clothing. He threatened to cut anyone who got next to him. No one could see and he would not show anyone his knife. When told a Swat team would come get him if he didn't get out of the water, he said he would kill them all.

1. If your team was faced with the incident and you were asked to get the person out of the water what would you do?
2. A potential suicide incident offers the possibility of rescue. Discuss and compare the various bridges in your area and consider the survivability of a fall.
3. What resources does your team need on site in order to make this rescue attempt?
4. Can the attempt be done without risk to your team?
5. Discuss options that could improve safety and still offer a successful rescue.
6. Discuss your team debriefing processes. Are they adequate? What alternatives can you come up with?
7. What does your team have in place for critical incident stress?

These training agencies have recognized PSDiver Monthly as a valued addition to their programs and Continuing Education requirements.

<p><u>Public Safety Diving Association</u>(PSDA) recognizes and approves the PSDiver CE program. Each month's Q&A program credits 1 CEU for renewal up to a maximum of 3 CEUs from this source for each year's renewal.</p>	
	<p><u>ERDI</u> Recognizes and supports the PSDiver Monthly CE Program. Contact your ERDI Instructor for details.</p>

We welcome all training agencies and organizations to participate.

For details, email
PSDiverMonthly@aol.com

PRODUCT RECALL

NEWS from CPSC

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml10/10002.html>

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

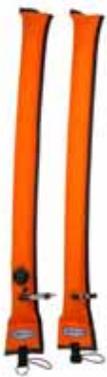
Office of Information and Public Affairs Washington, DC
20207

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE
October 1, 2009
Release # 10-002**

**Firm's Recall Hotline: (800)
425-2966**
CPSC Recall Hotline: (800) 638-
2772
CPSC Media Contact: (301) 504-
7908

Diving Equipment Recalled by Halcyon Manufacturing Due to Drowning Hazard

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with the firm named below, today announced a voluntary recall of the following consumer product. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.



Name of Product: Halcyon Diving Equipment

Units: About 20,300

Manufacturer: Halcyon Manufacturing Inc., of High Springs, Fla.

Hazard: The over pressure valves (OPVs) in the diving equipment could fail allowing the buoyancy compensator devices (BCDs) and

the diver lift inflatable devices to leak, posing a drowning hazard to divers.

Incidents/Injuries: None reported.

Description: This recall involves Halcyon diving equipment including the Halcyon Explorer, Eclipse, CCR35, Evolve and Pioneer Buoyancy Compensator Devices (BCDs) and Halcyon Surface Marker Buoys (SMBs), Lift Bags, Diver Alert Markers (DAMs) Surf Shuttle and Diver Lift Raft Inflatable Devices. "Halcyon" is printed on the diving equipment.



Sold at: Diving equipment retailers and distributors from January 2006 through December 2008 for between \$350 and \$450 for the buoyancy compensator devices (BCDs) and between \$50 and \$275 for the inflatable devices.

Manufactured in: United States

Remedy: Consumers should immediately stop using recalled diving equipment and return it to an authorized Halcyon distributor or dealer for a free inspection and, if necessary, free replacement of the overpressure valve spring.

Consumer Contact: : For more information, contact Halcyon at (800) 425-2966 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET Monday through Friday, visit the firm's Web site at www.halcyon.net/opv-recall, or email the firm at techservices@halcyon.net

CPSC is still interested in receiving incident or injury reports that are either directly related to this product recall or involve a different hazard with the same product. Please tell us about it by visiting

<https://www.cpsc.gov/cgibin/incident.aspx>

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from thousands of types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. The CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard. The CPSC's work to ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters, and household chemicals - contributed significantly to the decline in the rate of deaths and injuries associated with consumer products over the past 30 years.

To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, call CPSC's Hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (301) 595-7054.

To join a CPSC e-mail subscription list, please go to <https://www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx>. Consumers can obtain recall and general safety information by logging on to CPSC's Web site at www.cpsc.gov.

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