

As a Victim of Police Brutality, I Could Have Ended Up Dead Like #SandraBland

When I read the story of Sandra Bland, it sent chills down my spine because that very well could have been me rolled out of a jail on a gurney, dead.

There's a lot we don't know about her death, but here are some undisputed facts: Bland landed in jail after she allegedly made an improper lane change. Texas State Trooper Brian Encinia pulled her over on July 10 during what was allegedly a routine traffic stop.

From there, the truth is a little murky.

"Bland, 28, began swinging her elbows at me and then kicked my right leg in the shin," Encinia claimed in the affidavit. "I had a pain in my right leg and suffered small cuts on my right hand. Force was used to subdue Bland to the ground to which Bland continued to fight back."

Police arrested Bland for assault on a public servant and took her to jail. Three days later, she was found dead in her cell.

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The question everyone is trying to figure out is this: How, exactly, did she really die? Authorities insist there was no foul play—they say she hanged herself from a metal bar with a trash bag—but the family isn't buying it. I don't blame them.

Let's backtrack a moment. First of all, Encinia's affidavit is inconsistent with the video from his patrol car. The video shows he told her she was under arrest before any alleged assault. What's more, the video does not show Bland swinging

her elbows or kicking the officer in the shin. Rather it shows him yelling angrily and threatening to what clearly sounded like “light you up.”

At this point in the video, it looks like Bland’s biggest crime was being uncooperative with a police officer who was overly-aggressive. I don’t advocate mouthing off to cops but the punishment doesn’t fit the crime.

In a separate video, taken by an onlooker who police commanded to leave the scene, you can hear Bland saying, “You just slammed my head to the ground. Do you not even care about that? I can’t even hear. He slammed my ... head to the ground ... over a traffic ticket.”

Sharon Cooper, Bland’s sister, told CNN that initial autopsy results revealed “deep tissue bruising to her back” that happens when someone is pushing a knee into the back. Bland also told Cooper she thought her shoulder was fractured.

There’s a lot we still don’t know and, in fact, we may never know the truth. What we do know is she was sensitive to police brutality and that is likely what caused her to react the way she did to the officer.

“Being a black person in America is very, very hard,” she said in a video posted in April. “At the moment black lives matter. They matter.”

Despite the autopsy, Texas authorities handled this as murder investigation. But on Thursday they ultimately concluded she hanged herself with a garbage bag, despite all indications that she was excited about the next chapter in her life.

There are inconsistencies in the cop’s affidavit and inconsistencies on her jail intake form that look fishy. We may never know if there was foul play. Here’s the reality of the situation: If she hadn’t been pulled over for not putting on her blinker, and hadn’t been arrested for not wanting to

get out of her car, she wouldn't be dead. This was a senseless death. Senseless.

"I have confidence in God and knowing that he is in control and he is going to reveal the real truth," Geneva Read-Veal, Bland's mother, said in an exclusive interview with MSNBC's PoliticsNation. "Confidence in man I do not have at this point."

So what does this have to do with me? In the early 1990s, my then-fiancé became violent. I told him if he did not calm down I would call the police. He didn't calm down. I called the police. They set out to arrest him.

Long story short—and this is part of my testimony that you can read [here](#) or watch [here](#)—a manly female police officer threatened me, then slammed me against her patrol car while another cop looked on from 10 feet away. She didn't beat me bloody, but I was left bruised from head to toe. She then charged me with resisting arrest with violence and battery on a law enforcement officer. Bogus charges both.

Later, a judge ruled my case a gross injustice but it cost me almost every penny I had to get an attorney to bring out the truth. Thank God, I was vindicated, but I could have gone to prison for five years on false charges from a dirty cop with a chip on her shoulder and an axe to grind.

I believe most police officers are trying to do their job—and it's a hard job. I believe we should cooperate when they pull us over and ask us to get out of the car. But I don't believe police officers should lose their temper, threaten to "light you up," put you in chokeholds until you can't breathe, or otherwise bring unnecessary harm to someone who is supposed to be innocent until proven guilty. Police are there to enforce the law, not to execute judgment.

I am weary of reading about police violence. It's easy to overreact but it's just as easy to ignore the realities of

this problem. And it's not a new problem. There just weren't any video cameras around when that manly female cop beat me down and laid false charges against me 20 years ago.

I've kept silent about these stories until now because I didn't have anything constructive to add to the debate. I didn't want to throw fuel on the fire. I still don't know what the answer to this problem is, but I am praying and I would humbly ask that you pray also. There's something deeper working behind these kinds of stories. And it's not always racism. I'm pale white with red hair and freckles. This is not about color. This is demon-inspired. We're not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers (see Eph. 6:12).

"I want Sandy to be remembered as an activist—sassy, smart and she knew her rights," her mother says. "Do the research while this is going on, so you know your right, and it's not your daughter, your son, your kid. That's what I want. The anger can be channeled into something so much greater than the incident that happened to Sandy."

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