

# Firefighters

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After lunch, when she was alone with the two black men in the class, she picked up the noose that was, by then, laying on the table behind her.

"What is this?" I asked them.

"On baby girl, you know what kind of knot that is. It is a nigger knot," one of them replied.

"I was hoping, at that point, that they would help me. But they didn't, she said. She attributes that lack of help to fear.

Four or five days later she was warned by a classmate, "Russell, keep your eyes open and your head up."

"What's going on," she asked.

"I promised I wouldn't say," he replied.

The group headed out to the training ground where they work in partners and she was informed she would have a new partner.

On the grounds, the class broke up into groups of seven to perform the eight or nine events. Russell-Williams learned she would be the last to perform.

After she completed most of the events, she was ordered her to throw a 24 foot ladder.

It is not recommended in the training manual that a single person throw a ladder. It is a 'two-man' event. But she complied in spite of her injured shoulder.

The attempt failed, she tried again, she was told she had no heart and to "just get the f\_\_ out of here, you failed."

"But you don't fail training," she said.

She tried again while they verbally abused her.

The last time she threw the ladder it began to fall towards her and that's when she heard one of them say, "Let it fall on her."

One of the two trainers summoned up enough decency to say it he would not let it fall on her.

"By this time, all of the other rookies were in the classroom. I knew they didn't like me and I heard him say, 'let the ladder fall on her.' Their purpose wasn't safety and training. This was beyond training. I prayed to God, 'Help me or they will kill me,'" she said.

Then her air bottle started ringing, a signal that she only had three to five minutes of oxygen left.

The break between events was not to be had. The hose pull was next.

Her partner told her later that he had been ordered to NOT initiate the next event.

She began to pull a charged hose. She was running out of air. It was the end of the training day, she had already completed several events. She was still wearing all of her turn-out gear. She was exhausted and hot. But most importantly, she was out of air.

She dropped the hose and was cursed at.

"Pick up the f\_\_ hose. You f\_\_ clown."

She tried to tell them she had no air.

"Go to F\_\_ clown school."

When they realized she was trying to tell them something. They told her to turn off the mainline to her airtank but that still left her without air.

She needed to disconnect the low pressure hose so she

could draw outside air into her mask.

"I needed air. I was afraid. I pulled off my glove," she said.

They continued to yell at her to put her glove back on, then she became disoriented.

"I began to black out. I could see things floating in my vision. I couldn't feel my legs," she said.

She fell.

"Get the hose," they yelled.

She tried again. She went down again.

They yelled again.

She tired again and pulled the hose about 20 or 30 feet before she suffocated.

When she regained consciousness, she was on the

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# Report: Blacks searched often

ST. LOUIS (AP) — A report released Friday shows that police in Missouri stop black motorists at a rate 30 percent higher than white drivers, and search them 70 percent more often.

The report by Attorney General Jay Nixon also found that Hispanic drivers, when stopped, are twice as likely to be searched as white drivers.

"That's a big deal," said Hilary Shelton, director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's Washington bureau. "It's consistent with what we've heard."

The findings don't consider all factors that lead police officers to stop motorists and therefore can't prove for a statistical certainty the existence of racial profiling, Nixon said.

"However, in reviewing the data, I have found nothing that would dispel the perception of a racial profiling problem," he said.

But Nixon cautioned that several factors can skew figures, including small sample sizes in some areas, interstate or major highways that run through communities, or outstanding arrest warrants that require a search. The report is the product of a state law passed last year, requiring police departments in Missouri to record the race, sex, general age group and the cause of every driver stopped, along with the stop's final outcome.

Nixon's office collected data from 634 police departments in Missouri and ended up with a 1,329-page report covering 453,189 stops made from Aug. 28, 2000, to Dec. 31, 2000. Next year's report will cover the entire year.

Racial profiling has been the focus of hearings in New Jersey where a state Senate committee is investigating allegations that former Attorney General Peter Verniero failed to acknowledge the extent of the practice or take sufficient action to stop it.

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# NAACP

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tion. The flier displayed pictures of Mfume and Bond, and asked the reader to consider whether the men had "sold out" the Las Vegas Branch to enhance their own relationship with MGM-Mirage.

"I did that one," Richardson said without hesitation, adding, "As for that press release, I'm not going to speak to that one." Rivers denied any deal between the NAACP and MGM.

Meanwhile, Collins and his supporters hold weekly strategy sessions at the offices of the former branch. "Those meetings, of the membership, are still taking place- Thursdays at 6:30," he said, promising to update attendees on the progress of efforts to get national officials into district court.

"We're trying to give the national office every opportunity to resolve this issue without having to resort to litigation," said Richardson. "But we will not shy away."

Ironically, NAACP representatives plan to be in Las Vegas very soon, Rivers indicated this week. "We are having a community meeting there on June 19th," he explained, saying he could not release details but was aware that the administrator's arrival is being eagerly anticipated.

"Well," said Collins, "this whole thing is bizarre. The oldest civil rights organization in the country, looks like to me, has been caught violating the same civil rights that they have sworn to uphold."