

## **A Daughter's Worst Fears**

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My mom spent her last years in long-term care. Wildwood Canyon Villa was a beautiful facility in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains. The building was new. The grounds were immaculate. An enclosed courtyard kept dementia care residents safe from outside harm.

But all was not as it appeared... Caregiver records told a story of pain and fear. My mom was terrified of a male caregiver who worked alone at night in the locked dementia unit. Records show that my mom fought, screamed, and begged for help. She often complained of "pain in stomach."

Medication records show that my mom received extra meds on nights when the male caregiver present. The facility silenced her cries with Ativan, Seroquel, and Haldol. Ativan is used for agitation. Seroquel and Haldol are powerful anti-psychotics. The FDA warns against giving these drugs to elders with dementia.

After about a year of increasing agitation and escalating chemical restraint, the facility nurse left a message that my mom was at a "non-emergency medical appointment." But Kaiser's records say my mom was in the emergency room. An ambulance took her to the ER for vaginal bleeding, genital trauma, and severe agitation. Those medical records state that my mom pleaded, "Help me. Help me. Help me." The ER discharged my mom back to the facility.

After the ER visit, the facility nurse quickly determined that my mom needed "a higher level of care." With only a day's notice to family, they transferred my mom to a different facility. They terminated the male caregiver. And six weeks of staffing records mysteriously vanished.

Our attorney asked the male caregiver if he ever sexually assaulted my mom. The caregiver exercised his Fifth Amendment right and declined to answer the question.

The sheriff refused to discuss the case with us. The DA determined there was “no evidence of a crime.” And California’s Department of Justice also found “no evidence of a crime.”

The male caregiver went on to work for other long-term care facilities and in home care services.

Now I spend much of my time educating law enforcement that crimes against elderly victims are still crimes. Crimes against persons with dementia are still crimes. Those vulnerable individuals deserve justice as much as those of us who can tell our own stories.