

Hero Police Officer Speaks About Toddler Rescue

By **Jim Herr** - September 6, 2018



Cheektowaga Police Officer Christopher Wierzbowski in his patrol car. (Cheektowaga Chronicle)

Cheektowaga Police Officer Christopher Wierzbowski spoke about his experience of [saving a toddler](#) from a steaming hot car Tuesday night, after he noticed it strangely parked and running in the Rite Aid parking lot at the corner of Genesee Street and Harlem Road.

Officer Wierzbowski, a patrolman on the force for just under eight years, was on a routine patrol by himself Thursday night. He explains what led up to the rescue of the young girl, and the discovery of her mother who was passed out from a heroin overdose with a needle in her arm.

"I was heading to the next call that was coming up when I drove by the Rite Aid at Harlem and Genesee. This was about ten to 11:00 pm, so the business was closed. At that time there, the lights are all turned off, so it's a pitch black parking lot, and I noticed in the far corner a vehicle with its lights on and the driver's side blinker going." Officer Wierzbowski said.

"I turned around to go investigate it, and as I pulled up, I put my spotlight on the patrol car on that vehicle, and I could see into a majority of the vehicle and I didn't see anybody in the vehicle at all." Officer Wierzbowski said he notified dispatch about the discovery and explained why he looked into the incident further. "A couple things went through my mind; maybe the business was getting robbed or burglarized, or the car could have been stolen and was ditched really quick."

At the same time, dispatch crews sent back up cars to help assist at the scene.

Officer Wierzbowski described what he noticed when he went around to take a closer look at the vehicle. "So as I got out of my patrol car and started walking over to that vehicle, I was looking around to see if anybody was standing anywhere close by or anything like that. All of a sudden, this little kid jumps from the floorboard of the passenger seat, and I was like 'oh my God, there's a kid in the car!' It caught me off guard to be honest with you."

"So then, I was walking a little closer, and I found a female, unresponsive, slumped over the center console, with a hypodermic needle sticking out of her arm." Officer Wierzbowski continued, "I started yelling, pounding on the window, she was unresponsive, wasn't answering, wasn't moving, wasn't doing anything. So one of my first thoughts at that point is that she already passed from the heroin overdose. So I went to my patrol car and got out one of our glass break tools that we have that's attached to our spotlight, and I broke out the driver's side rear window, and had to unlock the doors that way."

This happened on one of the hotter nights this week. The temperature that evening was still around 80-degrees and humid outside. Scientists often warn about [parked cars reaching deadly temperatures](#). "The doors were locked, the windows were up, the car was running." Officer Wierzbowski explains that wasn't the only issue, "Once I broke the window, I felt this big rush of hot muggy air coming from the vehicle, and I'm like, 'geez, the air conditioning's not even on and it's the heater going.'"

"So I open up the rear door, climbed to open up the driver door, at that point another patrol car came that was covering, they got the child out from the passenger front door, and just as I was going to give this lady a dose of Narcan she finally came to and woke up." Officer Wierzbowski continues describing the incident. "There was one needle in her arm and a pack of nine on the floorboard on the passenger side where the child was... In the cup holder in the center console was a little baggie of heroin as well."

When it came to the little girl, "The best way I can describe is it looked like she just got out of a swimming pool. That's how sweaty she was, very red. The next day we went to the business and looked at some security footage. We believe she was there 30 to 45 minutes prior to me getting there." Officer Wierzbowski said. "She just told me after I broke the window 'Mommy's fine, why'd you break the window?' and she kept saying 'Mommy's fine, Mommy's fine.'"

The woman involved in the incident, Jade Nickel, 28, of St. James Road, was taken to ECMC to be checked out. Nickel is in the Erie County Holding Center on \$1,000 cash bail or \$3,000 bond, facing a number of charges, including; Reckless Endangerment, Endangering the Welfare of a Child, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance, and Possession of a Hypodermic Instrument.

Jade Nickel mugshot (Cheektowaga Police)

Her daughter was picked up at the scene by her grandmother. The toddler remains in her care.

"I've been on countless overdose calls before over the last couple years, but nothing to this degree." Officer Wierzbowski said, explaining he felt like he was at the right place at the right time. "This one's a little different. When I finally got out from here that night, I was here a little bit later than normal, I reflected a little bit on it, but the next morning I needed to get up and help get my kids ready for school."

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