

DR. BYUN IN MEDIA



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Woman Talks About Surviving Kidnapping, Beating *Victim Urges Donations To Women's Shelters*

CHICAGO -- Teri Sue Jendusa-Nicolai, the Wisconsin woman whose ex-husband allegedly kidnapped her, beat her repeatedly with a bat, and left her for dead, stuffed in a trash bin in an unheated storage locker in Wheeling, Ill., spoke out about her ordeal for the first time Wednesday.

"I thank the Lord for my safe return and the safe return of my two children," Jendusa-Nicolai said at Lutheran General Hospital, in Park Ridge, where she has been since her rescue a week and a half ago. "I appreciate everyone's prayers of support."

NBC5's Kim Vatis reported that doctors said it's a miracle Jendusa-Nicolai is still alive.

"She looks so good (now) that you doubt the condition she was in," said Dr. Michael Byun. "But, literally, her head was about 3 times the size it is now."

Jendusa-Nicolai was able to call police from her cell phone after being kidnapped on Jan. 31, police said, but she spent 21 hours stuffed in the trash bin before investigators were able to find her. Police said her ex-husband also kidnapped her two children but they were unharmed and later found at a babysitter's house.

Tuesday, it was revealed that Jendusa-Nicolai also suffered a miscarriage during her ordeal, but when she spoke on Wednesday, she chose to speak in positive terms about her future. She said Wednesday is the 4-month anniversary to her current husband, Nick Nicolai.

"On Saturday morning, Jan. 31, the nightmare started," Jendusa-Nicolai recalled.

"Through the many cold, dark hours that followed, I clung to my faith and gathered my strength ... Even though there are still physical and emotional wounds, my family and I are on the path to healing."

She recalled her thoughts as she struggled to survive.

"At times, when I was losing consciousness, I felt I was at peace, because I knew I was going to heaven," she said. "But I realized I had to stay awake. Dying was not an option because my girls need me."

Nick Nicolai echoed her hopes for the future.

"I know that Teri will be running around with the kids soon, and one day we look forward to expanding our family," he said. "Teri has a wonderful spirit, and she will recover."

Doctors said Jendusa-Nicolai may suffer some permanent damage to her hands and to her feet because of frostbite. She goes back into surgery Friday, and the tissues around her toes is at risk.



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Jendusa-Nicolai said she was speaking publicly because she wanted to take a stand against domestic violence.

“Domestic abuse is a growing problem,” she said. “And it’s my desire to use this experience as a platform for change. After going through this ordeal, I realize I am stronger than I thought I was.”

She asked that viewers who are touched by her story make a donation to a women’s shelter in her name.

Tuesday Night Report

The ex-husband of Teri Sue Jendusa-Nicolai, David M. Larsen (pictured, left), faces federal kidnapping charges for allegedly abducting and trying to kill his ex-wife. He was indicted on kidnapping and domestic violence charges in Wisconsin on Tuesday.

Jendusa-Nicolai, 38, of Wind Lake in Racine County, was allegedly attacked with a baseball bat after going to Larsen’s Wind Lake home to pick up her two daughters, who were visiting their father.

Prosecutors say Larsen kidnapped Jendusa-Nicolai and

their two daughters, tying Jendusa-Nicolai up in the back of his pickup truck. While driving to Wheeling, Ill., sources say, Larsen pulled over several times and beat his ex-wife with a baseball bat.

“With the kids in their child seat, I would think their vision would have been restricted,” Assistant U.S. Attorney Mario Gonzalez told NBC5.

The Racine County district attorney told family members they are going to review Jendusa-Nicolai’s medical records, according to NBC5. Jendusa-Nicolai’s brother, Mike, told NBC5 by telephone that he hopes the new information about his sister’s miscarriage leads to new charges against Larsen.

Both Wisconsin and Illinois have state homicide laws stating that the killing of an unborn child at any stage of prenatal development is intentional homicide, NBC5 reported.

Jendusa-Nicolai was able to call police from her cell phone during her ordeal, but it took extensive detective work for investigators to find her. Her brother Mike also told NBC5 that there needs to be a better way to trace 911 calls from cell phones.

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Kidnap victim’s frostbitten toes removed

A Racine-area woman who was abducted and beaten, then locked in an unheated storage unit in Wheeling, where she suffered frostbite, underwent surgery Friday to remove all 10 toes and skin at the back of her head, where she’d been struck with a baseball bat.

Teri Jendusa-Nicolai’s doctors said the surgery at Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge had gone well.

Despite suffering severe frostbite, “Thankfully, at this time, the remainder of the tissue in both feet appears alive,” said Dr. Matthew Jimenez, Jendusa-Nico-

lai’s orthopedic surgeon.

Additional surgery was done to remove an area of dead tissue about 5 centimeters by 5 centimeters at the back of Jendusa-Nicolai’s head. Doctors had feared she’d have a permanent bald spot there, but her plastic surgeon, Dr. Michael Byun, said, “The hair should grow in fully.”

Jendusa-Nicolai’s ex-husband has been charged with her abduction and beating. David M. Larsen, 39, pleaded not guilty Friday in Milwaukee to federal charges of kidnapping and interstate domestic violence and was scheduled for

trial May 3 in federal court in Milwaukee. Larsen also faces four state charges in Wisconsin, including attempted homicide.

Jendusa-Nicolai, who had remarried, was five weeks pregnant when she was beaten with a baseball bat, bound with duct tape and left in a plastic garbage can at a storage locker in Wheeling, not far from the airport where her ex-husband worked as an air-traffic controller. Found Feb. 1, a day after her abduction, Jendusa-Nicolai also suffered a miscarriage as a result of the attack.

Staff and wire reports