

One night while working in CRC (crisis response center/ psychiatric emergency room) a patient came in for treatment. He was well known to us. After about thirty minutes on the unit, he requested to leave. He was denied by the psychiatrist on duty. The doctor felt the patient was intoxicated on some substance and did not feel comfortable discharging him. Instead the patient was offered medication. He refused medication and demanded to leave. The alarm was sounded and additional staff was called for a show of support.

The patient grabbed some blankets and started to dismantle two patient phones removing the receivers. Arming himself with a receiver in each hand, he spread the blankets out on the floor around him so if anyone approached him, they would slip and fall. He backed into the corner and got into a fighting stance. Then the patient unexpectedly charged into the nursing station trampling one of the nursing staff.

As I came to assist my coworker I was hit in the head with one of the receivers and bitten on the arm as I took the patient down. I did not realize I had been injured until I saw blood everywhere. Once the patient was subdued and restrained, I was treated in the ER for a head wound requiring three staples and a tetanus shot. While in the ER I demanded that the police be called so I could press charges. The police arrived quickly assessed my injuries and said, "He goes with us. This is assault." When the officer was informed the patient was in the CRC, he said he needed to call the detective in charge. When he returned from his call he informed me that the detective told him the patient was protected by Mental Health Law and could not be arrested.

I was out of work for eleven days. I went to the police district and pressed charges the next day. I found out this patient was on probation and refusing to see his probation officer. I never got my day in court and patient continued to come to the CRC.

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