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## Officer accused of murder, molestation

May 07, 2005 | From Randi Kaye CNN

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Once a respected police officer in Charleston, Daniel William Hiers is now the focus of an international manhunt -- accused of child molestation and murder.

The allegations against Hiers left one South Carolina woman "in total shock." "I was scared," said Leslie, who asked that her last name not be used because she is accusing Hiers of molesting her 11-year-old daughter.

Leslie said her daughter met Hiers in karate class. He showed no interest in the mother but a strong interest in the girl, who is 20 years younger than him. He took her shopping, bought her expensive gifts, drove her to karate class and twice sent her flowers.

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Leslie, a single mom, said she was suspicious at first but grew to trust Hiers. She even planned to designate Hiers as the girl's legal guardian in case of emergency.

"He stepped in as a father to my daughter, and I used to thank God for him," Leslie said. "I would pray and thank my God."

Leslie said that changed when, after watching a video about inappropriate touching at school, the girl told her mother that Hiers had been touching her. "I gave her a hug and I told her everything was going to be OK," she said through tears. "That was hard."

According to police, Hiers would take the girl to places such as a Wal-Mart parking lot, fondle her repeatedly and make her touch him.

"She said that every time that they passed by there that she knew what was going to happen, especially when she noticed that the truck was slowing down," Leslie said. "And that she was just too scared to do anything."

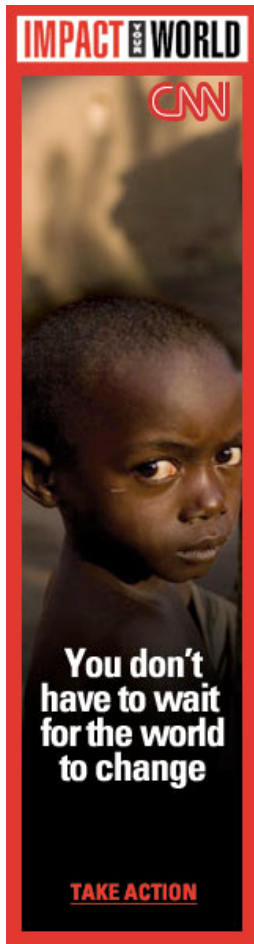
Leslie said Hiers threatened her daughter, telling her she'd get in trouble if she talked about the alleged abuse and that no one would believe her because he was a police officer.

But investigators did believe her. They moved to arrest Hiers and charge him with lewd acts with a minor. It was then they discovered Hiers had a wife.

Hiers met Mila Cohe de Araujo in 1996 when she was vacationing in Miami, Florida, from Brazil. Hiers was 23 and Mila 15. They married two years later. "I believe my family, everybody, was fooled by him," said Mila's sister, Alessandra Cohe de Araujo.

Alessandra said she remembers how charming Hiers could be. She also remembers how distant he became as his wife grew older.

"They didn't have a normal sexual life. They used to pass a month or three months without having any kind of contact," she said.



The couple eventually stopped going out together.

A local karate instructor called the fact that Hiers was married "the biggest shock."

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