

SEARCH

The Web

CNN.com

Home Page

World

U.S.

Weather

Business at CNNMONEY

Sports at SI.com

Politics

Law

Technology

Science &amp; Space

Health

Entertainment

Travel

Education

Special Reports

Autos with EDMUNDS.com

SERVICES

Video

E-mail Newsletters

Your E-mail Alerts

RSS

CNNtoGO

TV Commercials

Contact Us

SEARCH

Web CNN.com

# TRANSCRIPTS

[Transcript Providers](#)

Shows By Category:

[Return to Transcripts main page](#)

## AMERICAN MORNING

### Mountain Lion Attack

Aired January 9, 2004 - 07:16 ET

THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT. THIS COPY MAY NOT BE IN ITS FINAL FORM AND MAY BE UPDATED.

BILL HEMMER, CNN ANCHOR: A terrifying attack by a mountain lion in southern California, leaving one woman in critical condition, another badly shaken. It happened while they were riding on mountain trails near Los Angeles, and they may not have been the lion's only victims.

Al Naipo of our affiliate KTTV has more this morning.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

AL NAIPO, CNN AFFILIATE KTTV REPORTER (voice-over): Mountain bikers emerging from a horrifying mountain lion attack in the Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park.

DEBBIE NICHOLS, FRIEND OF VICTIM: I was probably 20 feet behind Ann (ph), and this mountain lion jumped on her back and started dragging her. So, I grabbed her leg, and he drug us down probably -- I don't know -- 100 yards down into the brush, and I just kept screaming.

NAIPO: Other bikers heard her and ran to help.

NILS MAGNUSON, ARRIVED ON SCENE DURING ATTACK: I noticed two girls down in the bushes, and one was yelling, "Mountain lion, mountain lion! Come on, help me, grab her legs."

NICHOLS: And I just was holding on to her the whole time, and this guy would not let go. He had a hold of her face.

NAIPO: Other bikers rolled up and began pelting the mountain lion with rocks.

MIKE CASTELLANO, RESCUER: It took three rocks the size of almost, you know, soccer balls to get this thing to move, and we hit it square with those rocks.

NAIPO: It was a bloody scene, you can tell from the rescuers who helped the victim. But what they didn't know was that just a few feet away lay the body of another mountain biker mauled by the same big cat.

CAPT. STEPHEN MILLER, ORANGE COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY: Adult male, hard to tell the age right now, possibly 20s, 30s, but we don't know how long that person has been there. It could have been anywhere from hours to possibly days.

NAIPO: The hunt was on to find the killer cat before he struck again. As investigators looked over the scene, it seems the mountain lion was looking at them.

ASST. CHIEF STEVE EDINGER, FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT: Using a flashlight, they saw some eyes in the brush, and with that, they shot a shotgun and a rifle. Orange County deputies shot a rifle and a shotgun and did kill the

mountain lion right there by the attack site.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

HEMMER: Al Nipo, KTTV reporting. You heard from two gentlemen in that story. The quick actions of nearby bikers may have saved the lives of the two women. Both of those gentlemen, Nils Magnuson and Mike Castellano, witnessed the attack. They're with us now live from Dana Point in California.

Gentlemen, good morning to you.

And, Nils, I want to start with you. What did you see when you arrived on the scene?

MAGNUSON: The first thing I notice is, I was heading down Cactus, and I noticed the bike that was propped up on the side of the trail. So, that kind of alerted to me that something was wrong. So, you know, I put my bike down and started looking around and yelling down the canyon for somebody and nobody responded.

I noticed Mike and three other bikers on another trail across the canyon headed upwards, and I alerted them to the bike and no biker.

HEMMER: And to Mike then, I understand you guys started throwing rocks at that point. Tell us what happened then?

CASTELLANO: Well, actually not quite at that point. We went down to look to see if there was maybe somebody injured from the bike that was sitting there. And when I got down to where Nils was with the bike, the lone bike, then we heard screams down the trail about 75 yards.

So, at that point, Nils jumped on his bike, and I was right behind him. And, you know, we thought the girls got hurt, you know, fell off the bikes. But when we came upon the scene, literally, the mountain lion had Ann (ph) in its -- her entire face in its jaws, and it was a tug-of-war between Ann (ph) and Debbie -- or excuse me -- the lion and Debbie. Debbie had her arms around Ann's (ph) legs and was just holding on with all her might. I mean, she really showed incredible courage, and she was inches from this huge cat. It was an unreal experience definitely.

HEMMER: Unreal and terrifying. Nils, at this point, how did the lion respond when you responded by throwing rocks at that animal?

MAGNUSON: It did not respond. It just sat there and held her, still holding her head.

HEMMER: How long would you say this period of time elapsed, gentlemen?

MAGNUSON: From the time we arrived on the scene, maybe three minutes.

CASTELLANO: It's hard to say.

MAGNUSON: Yes, it's really hard to say.

(CROSSTALK)

CASTELLANO: It was so fast.

HEMMER: Mike, how big was that cat? Sorry about the interruption. A bit of a delay. How big was that cat?

CASTELLANO: Oh, it was over 100 pounds. It was the biggest mountain lion I have ever seen.

HEMMER: And you've been on that trail several times, I'm certain, in the past. Ever seen a mountain lion before? Ever come across it?

CASTELLANO: Hundreds.

HEMMER: Ever got -- you're seen hundreds there.

CASTELLANO: No, I've been on the trail hundreds of time. I've seen a few mountain lions in my time, but usually, you, you know, come around a corner and you see them on the trail, and they scatter into the brush. But this lion was hunting. It wasn't -- you know, this wasn't random. It was waiting and it pounced on her as she came by.

HEMMER: Do you think you saved her life, gentlemen?

MAGNUSON: No, I think -- I believe Debbie did.

CASTELLANO: Yes.

MAGNUSON: She's the true hero.

HEMMER: How is she doing today?

CASTELLANO: Yes, Debbie, if it wasn't for -- we don't know. We haven't checked into it yet.

HEMMER: Well, listen, bravo to both of you.

CASTELLANO: You know, if it...

HEMMER: Go ahead, Mike. Finish up.

CASTELLANO: Thank you. If it wasn't for Debbie, you know, that mountain lion would have dragged Ann (ph) off, and I don't think she would have had a chance. You know, we merely showed up and started throwing some rocks, and we got lucky and chased it away.

MAGNUSON: The right place at the right time.

HEMMER: Lucky, indeed. Thanks. Enjoy your weekend after the great work yesterday.

CASTELLANO: Thank you.

HEMMER: Nils Magnuson and Mike Castellano there in Dana Point in California, thank you again.

TO ORDER A VIDEO OF THIS TRANSCRIPT, PLEASE CALL 800-CNN-NEWS OR USE OUR SECURE ONLINE ORDER FORM LOCATED AT [www.fdch.com](http://www.fdch.com).

[International Edition](#)

[CNN TV](#)

[CNN International](#)

[Headline News](#)

[Transcripts](#)

[Advertise With Us](#)

[About Us](#)

SEARCH

[The Web](#)

[CNN.com](#)

© 2005 Cable News Network LP, LLLP.  
A Time Warner Company. All Rights Reserved.  
[Terms](#) under which this service is provided to you.  
Read our [privacy guidelines](#). [Contact us](#).



All external sites will open in a new browser.  
CNN.com does not endorse external sites.



Denotes premium content.



Add [RSS headlines](#).