

Follow @thedailybeast

Dow 01,234 +012 , Nasdaq 0,123 +01

Search the Daily Beast



- HOME
 - POLITICS
 - BUSINESS
 - INNOVATION
 - ENTERTAINMENT
 - BEAST TV
 - BOOKS
 - ART
 - WOMEN IN THE WORLD
- Featured: [ELECTION](#) [FASHION](#) [ROYALIST](#) [ANDREW SULLIVAN](#) [HOWARD KURTZ](#) [DAVID FRUM](#)

WORLD NEWS

CHANGE TEXT SIZE

AUTHOR

David Leser

Follow @thedailybeast

Australia's Collar-Bomb Hoax

Aug 4, 2011 2:11 AM EDT

Sydney authorities worked for 10 hours to free Madeleine Pulver, 18, from a device suspected of being a collar bomb—but turned out to be fake. David Leser on the teenager's ordeal.

Print Email Comments () Tweet

The elegant Sydney Harbor suburb of Mosman was the scene Wednesday of a horrifying hostage bomb scare after an 18-year-old young woman had a suspected explosive device strapped to her neck by a balaclava-wearing intruder.

For 10 hours Wednesday, Sydney time, schoolgirl Madeleine Pulver sat terrified and transfixed in her family home as police and bomb disposal experts worked to free her from what they believed was "a collar bomb," never before seen in Australia.

Police said they faced an unprecedented situation, both "extremely complex and stressful," given that the device was thought to be a remotely detonated bomb, or one capable of being activated by a trembler switch. The trembler switch has been used by the Provisional IRA and other terrorist groups to detonate car bombs from safe distances. They can be set off when the explosive device is tilted beyond a certain angle.

At midnight last night, the device was found to be "a very, very elaborate hoax," possibly part of an extortion attempt against the young woman's family.

"[The hoax] certainly gave the appearance of a legitimate improvised explosive device," New South Wales Police Assistant Commissioner Mark Murdoch told reporters. "We had to treat it seriously until we could prove otherwise, and that's exactly what we did, and that's why it took so long."

According to the Sydney Daily Telegraph, the intruder entered the Pulver family's harborside home shortly after 2 p.m., and ordered the terrified teenager to the front of the house, where she was forced to sit down as the device was strapped to her neck. Some reports said it was tethered to her with a chain.

As the masked intruder did his work, he told his hostage she would be allowed to call the police once he'd left. He warned her that if she provided details of either him or their conversation, he would activate the explosive. He cautioned her that he'd also planted a listening device in the home so he could hear what she said to police. He then left, reportedly attaching a ransom note to the device.

Madeleine Pulver celebrated her 18th birthday last month and is in her final year at the prestigious all-girls high school, Wenona, on Sydney's exclusive north shore. She is due to begin her final exams in two months.



Police and family members at the scene of Mosman home where an 18-year old girl is believed to have had a bomb strapped to her earlier today, on August 3, 2011 in Mosman, Australia. , The Sydney Morning Herald / Getty Images

MOST POPULAR

[Andrew Breitbart, 1969-2012](#)

[The Real Reason Olympia Snowe Quit](#)

[Is Pickiness an Eating Disorder?](#)

[Jonathan Franzen's Woman Trouble](#)

[A Death at 'Degrassi'](#)

STORIES WE LIKE

EW.COM

['Hunger Games': 3 New Photos](#)

HUFFINGTON POST POLITICS

[Schneiderman Joins Dems' Marriage Equality Push](#)

NEWS ONE

[Marvin Gaye III Needs a Donor For Kidney Transplant](#)

BUZZFEED

[25 People Who Think President Obama Killed Andrew Breitbart](#)

MENTAL FLOSS

[Why Does Running Water Make You Have to Pee](#)

HUFFINGTON POST POLITICS

[Dem Rep: Limbaugh 'Slut' Comment is Attempt to Silence Women](#)

POP SUGAR

[Adriana Lima Hits Miami on a Jet Tour with Her Victoria's Secret Angels](#)

Her father, William Pulver, a high-profile business executive and one of Sydney's wealthiest men, is the CEO of Appen Butler Hill, a linguistic-solutions company that provides linguistic and voice-recognition services in more than 120 languages to most of the world's automated telephone call center and in-car navigation systems. The company's clients include Toshiba, [Microsoft](#), [Google](#), IBM and Fujitsu, as well as governmental bodies such as the U.S. Defense Department.

Until recently, William Pulver and his wife, Belinda, were based in New York, where he was president and chief executive of the global research firm, NetRatings, before returning to their plush four-bedroom home overlooking Sydney Harbor. Among their neighbors in this elite, leafy suburb are wealthy and prominent figures from the business and sporting worlds.

Wednesday night, the street was cordoned off as police and bomb specialists tried to determine whether the device was real or fake. Murdoch said it had been fastened to Madeleine "by a chain or something similar," and that this had seriously complicated efforts to remove it. It also had prolonged Madeleine Pulver's extreme trauma.


Police were called to the Pulver home shortly before 2.30 p.m. (Australian Eastern Standard Time) after William Pulver received a frantic phone call from his daughter. Nearby residents were evacuated immediately while bomb technicians, negotiators and detectives were called to the scene.

You would never expect it to happen in real life in Australia.

Murdoch praised the courage and poise of a young policewoman who arrived first on the scene with a male colleague. As the policeman summoned help and evacuated the street, the female officer went into the house to sit with the teenager.

"She was not wearing any protective clothing," Murdoch said. "She wasn't trained as a negotiator, but she made the decision herself, this young officer, to stay with Madeleine and make sure she tried to remain calm and she wasn't left alone. She did an outstanding job in that regard."

View As Single Page 1 **2** [NEXT](#)

Print Email Comments ()  Tweet

TAGS: [Australia](#), [Australia](#), [World News](#)

RELATED STORIES

You might like:

[Why Indian Tycoon Vijay Mallya Is Hiding Out in an English Village](#)
[Bye Bye Brushing: Nanoparticles Are Coming to Save Your Teeth](#)
[Harry At Yale Studying Law? Not Likely, Your Honor](#)
[Don't Give Up On Johnny Manziel Just Yet](#)

OTHER NEWS

[POLITICS](#)

[ENTERTAINMENT](#)

[ENTERTAINMENT](#)

[POLITICS](#)



Pippa's Inner Circle
Pinkberry's Crazy Co-Founder
The Real Reason Olympia Snowe Quit

Get More from Powerwall



The odds are in your favor: How to get your mouth on Liam Hemsworth
Justin Long to make Broadway debut alongside Jeff Goldblum in 'Seminar'
'Assassin's Creed III' will take place during the American Revolution

Get More from EW.com



What Happened To Lil Kim's Eyebrows?
Christina Hendricks Dressed In Leather, Posing With Weapons
24 Devastating Photos Of The Harrisburg, Illinois Tornado

Get More from Buzz Feed



Why So Sloppy?
That Presidential Voice
Michigan Republicans Change Delegate Allocation

Get More from Political Wire

[HELP](#) | [ABOUT](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [JOBS](#) | [ADVERTISE](#) | [PRIVACY](#) | [COMMUNITY POLICY](#) | [TERMS OF USE](#) | [FINANCIAL DISCLAIMER](#) | [COPYRIGHT & TRADEMARK](#)

Sections: [HOME](#) | [POLITICS](#) | [ENTERTAINMENT](#) | [BOOKS](#) | [VIDEO](#) | [WOMEN IN THE WORLD](#) | [ANDREW SULLIVAN](#) | [NEWSWEEK](#)

Featured: [ELECTION](#) | [FASHION](#) | [ROYALIST](#) | [ANDREW SULLIVAN](#) | [HOWARD KURTZ](#) | [DAVID FRUM](#)

Partners: [EXPEDIA](#) | [HOTELS](#) | [HOTWIRE](#) | [MERCHANTCIRCLE](#) | [REFERENCE](#) | [THESAURUS](#) | [URBANSPOON](#)