

Dugard uses pinecone as symbol of hope

By Robert Salonga, Contra Costa Times

Nearly two years after she was freed from the captivity that robbed her youth, Jaycee Dugard looks to a pinecone as both a link to life before her horror and a symbol of hope for her future.

"Back then (the pinecone) was the last thing I touched. You know, the last grip on me. Now, it's—it's a symbol of hope and new beginnings. And that—there is life after something tragic," Dugard, 31, said in an excerpt released by ABC News on Thursday from her yet-to-be-aired exclusive interview with Diane Sawyer.

In the excerpt, Dugard said after she was zapped with a stun gun by kidnapper Phillip Garrido, she tried to scoot into some bushes and remembers touching something sticky before lapsing into unconsciousness. After the liberation of Dugard and the two daughters she bore from Garrido's sexual abuse in a home outside Antioch, the internationally recognized survivor said she asked people to bring her pinecones.

She would later realize that the pinecone was the sticky thing she remembers touching before she was whisked from her South Lake Tahoe neighborhood in 1991 to the home of Garrido and his wife Nancy, where the 11-year-old was forced to satisfy the sexual desires of Phillip, already a convicted kidnapper and rapist.

Dugard told Sawyer that she now wears a symbol of a pinecone around her neck to remind her of the hope that helped her endure 18 years of captivity and the long-delayed freedom she now enjoys.

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