It doesn't always melt in the mouth

Written by Nancy Spencer Monday, February 13, 2012 5:36 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, February 27, 2013 3:23 PM

While catching some fresh air Friday evening, I could hear sirens somewhere in our fair city. I said a little prayer that everything would be OK.

My bestie once told me she does that every time she hears sirens and I just thought it was a great idea. It pretty much covers everything.

Most sirens start with a 911 call. Someone is in trouble and needs help.

I'm sure 98 percent of emergency calls are very straight forward and just what they appear. We've all seen the crime dramas where the 911 call told a different story than the caller intended. Something is said that garners a closer look or a voice is heard in background implicating whatever and then the detectives follow up and the bad guys are caught and the show ends how we feel it should; with closure. All tied up in a neat little package.

If only life could be that tidy.

A recent tragedy garnered international attention with the 911 call the centerpiece. Was it necessary? No. Did it do what the media outlet intended? Oh, yeah. It was sensational. It went viral.

It also caused a lot of heartache and needless pain to a lot of people. Most people were appalled. I found it appalling, too.

Emergency calls are public record. I'm sure some people get tired of hearing that phrase. Some things don't seem right. They offend our sensibilities. They make us shudder and turn away. That doesn't change what they are.

There were several media requests for the recording of that call.

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Emergency calls are public record for a reason. For example: what if a call was not what it seemed and was being used to cover up a crime? What if a call wasn't handled right by the dispatcher?

Both are reasons those calls need to be heard. They tell a story and sometimes they bring justice. They bring closure.

Both outweigh the ones that are used for different, less tasteful reasons. So while it makes us cringe, some things aren't always pretty and melt in your mouth. Some things grate on your nerves and make you turn away.

You have to think what the alternative would be. If no one could listen to 911 calls, how would we know they are being handled correctly? How would we know the people we depend on to keep us safe are doing their jobs?

It's like a check and balance. Kind of tidy but not the package you'll see under the tree at Macy's. That's OK. You just tear the wrapping off anyway and it ends up in the garbage - neat and tidy like.