

TV reporter speaks about speech problem at Grammys

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FILE - In this Sunday, Feb .13, 2011 undated handout file photo provided by KCBS in Los Angeles, veteran TV journalist Serene Branson reports on the Grammy awards show outside the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Branson's speech became incoherent during the stand-up, which fueled Internet speculation that she suffered an on-air stroke. Doctors said Thursday that she suffered a migraine, the symptoms of which can mimic a stroke. (AP Photo/KCBS TV) NO SALES

(AP) -- A TV reporter who lapsed into gibberish during a live shot outside the Grammys said she was terrified when it happened and knew something was wrong as soon as she opened her mouth.

KCBS-TV reporter Serene Branson's incoherence Sunday fueled Internet speculation that she suffered an on-air stroke. But doctors at the University of California, Los Angeles where she went to get a brain scan and blood work done ruled it out. Doctors said she suffered a type of

migraine that can mimic symptoms of a stroke.

Branson told the station in an interview Thursday that she "started to get a really bad headache" but assumed she was just tired.

"At around 10 o'clock that night I was sitting in the live truck with my field producer and the photographer and I was starting to look at some of my notes," she said. "I started to think, the words on the page are blurry and I could notice that my thoughts were not forming the way they normally do."

"As soon as I opened my mouth I knew something was wrong.," Branson said. "I was having trouble . remembering the word for Grammy," she said. "I knew what I wanted to say but I didn't have the words to say it."

The station quickly cut away, and she was examined by paramedics and recovered at home.

Most people with migraines don't have any warning. But about 20 to 30 percent experience sensations before or during a migraine attack.

"A migraine is not just a headache. It's a complicated brain event," said UCLA neurologist Dr. Andrew Charles, who examined Branson.

The most common sensations include seeing flashes of light or zigzag patterns. In Branson's case, she felt numbness on the right side of her face that affected her speech, Charles said.

"She was actually having the headache while she was having these other symptoms," he said.

Branson told doctors she's had migraines since a child, but never suffered an episode like this before, Charles said.

Branson, a Los Angeles native and two-time Emmy nominee, worked at the CBS affiliate in Sacramento before joining KCBS. Prior to that, she was a reporter and anchor at TV stations in Palm Springs and Santa Barbara.

A telephone message left with KCBS was not immediately returned Thursday.

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