

Hit-run victim in fair condition; family seeks info

By BILL CASPER

Joseph Raymond Hughes, a laid-off auto worker, just wanted to get out of the house for a while after a day of watching the children while his wife was at work.

He has yet to return home from motorcycleing with a friend on July 31.

The 28-year-old Redford Township resident was about five minutes away from his Kinloch home shortly after 10 p.m. when an unknown driver in a 1978 champagne-colored Ford Thunderbird crossed the double yellow line on Inkster Road at Bell Creek Park.

The auto smashed head-on into Hughes' motorcycle, then sped away. On Monday, doctors in Royal Oak's Beaumont Hospital, fighting to save Hughes' life, were able to list him in fair condition.

Hughes had surgery six times in 12 days. One leg was partially amputated in the first operation following the accident and was completely amputated in subsequent surgery.

Last week, doctors operated again in an attempt to stop the spread of infection. His condition has been complicated by pneumonia, hemorrhaging and kidney failure, the latter requiring him to spend an average of four hours each day on a kidney machine, said his 27-year-old wife, Denise.

WHILE HE LIES unaware of the hit-and-run, his family is trying to cope with the horror of a tragic, unexplained accident and locate the person responsible.



Joseph Raymond Hughes, victim of a hit-and-run accident July 31, with his baby, Shannon, now 23 months old.

assistance in the investigation and has offered a \$1,000 reward to anyone providing information leading to the arrest and conviction of the hit-run driver. He has been described as a thin white man with a dark complexion, about 6 feet tall, about 30-35 years old. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Redford police department at 537-3030.

In contrast to the rest of the family, Ray's wife wants no part of the search for the man who has put her husband's life in jeopardy.

"The unreal part of this whole thing is that the guy just took off and left Ray to die," said Mrs. Hughes. "I can't deal with that, and I won't deal with it. I don't even think he (her husband) could deal with it right away."

"HE HAS asked about the other guy, but he doesn't know he was hit by a hit-and-run driver, and we won't tell him because I don't think he could handle it psychologically," she said. "I'm fighting for Ray's life and that's the only thing I want to deal with. I feel I have to be strong, that now is not the time to break down — although my nerves are shot and I may break down later — but not while Ray needs me," she said.

"I have had a lot of supportive people around during this ordeal and I'm grateful I have these friends I can hold onto, cry to and bitch to," Mrs. Hughes added.

She said her husband's spirits have improved recently after a period of depression when he refused to see any visitors, including his brother.

Redford Township police released this composite of the driver of the champagne-colored 1978 Thunderbird that hit Joseph Hughes in late July. He is described as a thin white man, 30-35 years old, with a dark complexion, and about 6 feet tall. Information can be phoned into the Redford police department at 537-3030. Hughes' family has offered a \$1,000 reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction of the hit-run driver.

From an autumn sky, Sasson jumps with paratrooper pizzazz and Ivy League fatigues for juniors. Black bomber jacket in nylon parachute cloth, S.M.L. 39.00. White-collared, red bow blouse in polyester/cotton, 5 to 13, 29.00. Box-planted grey cotton cordway trousers, 34 to 42, 42.00. Come see more high fliers! Junior Sportswear, Second Floor



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His father, 67-year-old John Hughes, could not handle the sight of his son in a hospital bed maimed. He suffered cardiac arrest and had to be rushed to emergency for treatment. The Canadian resident now is out of the hospital staying with his other son, James, in Redford.

"I was shocked the first time I saw Raymond," said the elder Hughes, noting that family members most often call Joseph by his middle name.

"I'm really close to both of my sons, and I stopped breathing for a few seconds when I saw him. I can't talk about much now, because I'm afraid I'll break down again."

Ray's accident also has been hard on his brother, who is battling his grief with efforts to find out who ran into his brother.

James said he is trying to help the police investigation as much as possible, but despite receiving several tips, police do not have a solid lead. So he has been conducting his own investigation. It, too, has led to one dead end after another.

"I've been checking the newspaper classifieds looking for anyone trying to sell a 'Thunderbird,'" he said. "I've checked on three of them so far, one which was even the same color as the description of the hit-run auto, but I haven't had any luck yet."

HE SAID the family also has acquired the services of a Southfield hypnotist to work with one witness in an attempt to draw a license plate number of the hit-run car from the witness' subconscious.

"The witness remembers looking at the car's license plate, but everything happened fast and he can't remember the number. The witness did provide a license plate number under the first hypnosis session and police played with the numbers in an attempt to come up with a registered owner, to no avail."

"The hypnotist told me he would try again and is confident a second session will result in the witness recalling the license plate number," James said.

The family has requested citizen as-

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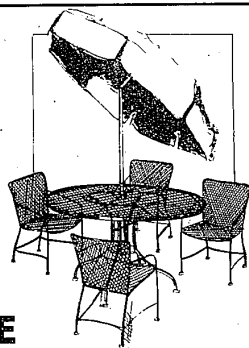
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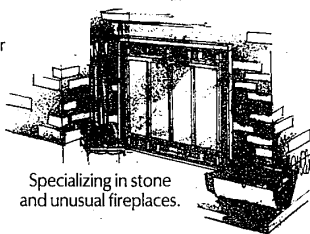
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