

Coping: Liz and Tom Nugent are still affected by the shooting in February.

Shot from page A1

As she was pulling napkins out of the glove box to staunch the bleeding, the couple speculated Tom may have been hit by a rock kicked up from a passing ar. He did suspect he might have been shot, but it want until paramedics started talking about the diameter of his would that his suspicions took root.

When I got to the fire station and they were working on me, I felt there was something wrong, he said. They had a concerned took in their eyes.

Search for suspects

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A police officer called to Fire
Station 1 where the Nugents
drove to get help, then began
canvassing the area around Nine
Mile and Drake. While the officer was scarching for evidence,
drivers of two cars stopped him
and told him they were hit, too,
according to a police report.
As he and another officer
walked through the neighborhood, he looked into an attached,
converted garage and spotted
mud-caked tonnis shoes on the
floor. A teenage boy when
answered the door denind he'd
been outside or owned a pellet
gun.

gun.
The officer said he went back

'It's kind of hard to answer questions when you don't understand vourself. We've tried not to hide it from them. When it hap-pened, a police officer helped me toll them. I didn't know what to 88y.1

Liz Nugent

to the garage for another look and spotted a box of pellets, also in plain view. At the same time, the boy who had answered the front door opened the door to the garage, and the pellets wore seized as evidence.

A friend who was ataying overnight admitted to police the boys had been shooting a pellet gun earlier in the evening. Based on what he told them, officers found a pellet gun in the bushes around the corner of the house.

Meanwhile, a CAT scan at Botsford Hospital confirmed the presence of a pellet in Tom's skull. Because he didn't have any symptoms of neurological damage, ho was released from the hospital that evening. On Monday, he made another trip to the dector, and the following Friday had surgery to remove the pellet.

In the aftermath

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Over the past few months,
Tom has had to cope with occasional headaches, limited mobility in his jaw and some numbness. A neurosurgeon has told
him complete recevery could take aix to eight months.

The family still deals with what happened almost every
day. Liz longs for a rotura to
heir "normal" life, when something as simple as a call from a
friend doesn't bring back the
memory of blood streaming down
her husband's face and their
children screaming and crying.
The two older children don't
talk about it much any more, she
said. Their youngest, a 6-yearold boy, still asks why someone
had to shoot his daddy, and
what's going to happen to the
bad guys.

"It's kind of hard to answer
questions when you don't under-

stand yourself," Liz said quietly.
"We've tried not to hide it from
them. When it happened, a
police officer helped me toll
them. I didn't know what te say.
The police, fire and EMS people
really helped us through all
that."
Tom is back at work in the federal court system and now advises his co-workers to wear bulletproof vests. Even though it
wouldn't have prevented his
wound, he can't shake the realization that the pellet fired at
him was from a distance,
through a window open no more
than a few inches, while his car
was moving down a major thoroughfare.
Will the system work?

Will the system work?

oughfare.

Will the system work?

Prosecutors, judges and other co-workers have asked Tom what happened – and why the only teen prosecuted imit facing more serious penalties.

The 16-year-old suspect was charged with folonious assault and two counts of malicious destruction of property, one for \$200.31,000 damage to a 1999 Mercury Villager and one for less than \$200 damage to a 1999 Chrysler Schring.

This was a case where two boys were out shooting pollets at geese and signs, and one of them decided to up the anto," Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor David Law said. "At this time, the other county and the serious county and the serio

doubts about whether the sys-tem will work, the couple have nothing but high praise for the people within it.

"It's just thinking how the criminal justice system works, and the possibility he may get off lightly for this," Liz said. "We don't want to knock the people handling the case."



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