

Stranger who shot Brian is still at large

By Lynn Waldamith
special writer

Brian DeMare of Redford Township was a victim of a brutal, senseless crime. Worse, he will be victimized by that crime for the rest of his life.

And what happened to Brian DeMare could happen to anybody.

Brian was shot by a stranger in downtown Detroit this summer. He's back home now, after spending the past three months at Detroit Receiving Hospital. At home he lies in bed, day after day, paralyzed from the neck down.

"I think I'm easy to get along with," he said. "I like to have fun. I never thought that it would happen to me. You always hear about the other guy."

ALTHOUGH HE has some feeling in his arms and legs, he is unable to move them. He can move his neck very slowly. Next to his bed is a noisy respirator that enables him to breathe. A tube attached to the respirator connects to a hole in Brian's throat. Talking, for Brian, is a slow process. He says a few words, then pauses for several seconds while the machine allows him to inhale.

"There was these two guys, and me and my friend," he said. "We had a slight disagreement. I guess it carried on for several minutes, so we got ahead of them. And they chased us down."

ACCORDING TO Detroit police, Brian and his friend (unidentified) left the Taboo nightclub at 1940 Woodbridge about 2 a.m. on July 6. As a valet brought their car, another valet drove another car behind theirs.

Two men and two women got in the car and began shouting at Brian and his friend to move.

Both cars drove onto Woodbridge. A short distance from the nightclub, the two pairs of men apparently got out of their cars for a confrontation. Police say Brian's friend was punched by the driver of the other car.

Then, without warning, the man who was a passenger in the other car pointed a .22-caliber gun at Brian's face and fired one shot.

BRIAN DOESN'T remember being shot. He barely remembers anything at all — everything happened within a matter of seconds.

"Next thing, I was shot," Brian said. "I woke up at Detroit Receiving



Brian DeMare
"I won't give up"

ing. "I thought it was a dream, really."

"But then I couldn't talk. I couldn't move. I really couldn't do anything."

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A nurse who happened to be leaving the Taboo at the same time had given him cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Brian never learned her identity.

"I was dead," he said. "Then a nurse brought me back. I'm eternally thankful to her. She saved my life."

The bullet struck a portion of Brian's brain and cracked his spine. Before the shooting, Brian worked as a furrier at Hudson's and was an avid softball player. A car buff, he had just recently purchased a Ford Thunderbird.

IT HAS BEEN more than three months since the shooting, but no arrests have been made. Police say they have no suspects and few leads.

The man who shot Brian is described by police as white, between the ages of 27 and 31, with a long, thin mustache and long, dark, curly hair.

The car the suspect drove that night is believed to be a Pontiac Firebird, perhaps a Trans Am model.

Brian's mother, Marian DeMare, is bitter about her son's circumstances.

"It's just so frustrating that those two men are out on the street, while my son's lying in there," she said. "The girls should have a conscience. They should come forward."

DESPITE HIS paralysis, Brian said he is hopeful that he may be able to walk again some day.

"I am going to beat this thing. Without hope, you have nothing."

He also said that his family and friends have been very supportive. "I think that's what's helped me a lot. They give me motivation. And that keeps me going too. I just keep my faith."

What happened to Brian DeMare is a puzzle that has too many of the key pieces missing. The identities of the man who almost took his life and

the woman who probably saved his life remain unknown. The other missing pieces include the many unanswered questions surrounding the shooting, especially the simplest and most complex question of all — why?

"He could've took me that night," Brian said. "But I'm still here. Must be a reason. I just won't give up."

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