

# Miracle

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“We were both like, something is up because when we set the brakes on the truck, if someone was sleeping, they would have at least moved.”

The men got out and walked toward the woman before suddenly stopping.

“There was blood all over the blanket, all over her arms and legs,” Joey said. “She was facing her head away from us, but I could see a huge pool of blood around her head. I thought for sure she was dead. I was instantly freaked-out. I wanted to throw up.”

While Joey called 911 on his cellphone to report finding a dead woman, his co-worker went over to the QT parking lot, where MedStar paramedics happened to be sitting in an ambulance, awaiting their next call.

The paramedics rushed over and found that the woman had a pulse.

A helicopter ambulance was summoned, and Hope DeHart — known that day as Jane Doe — was flown to John Peter Smith Hospital.

Medical personnel on the scene indicated that the woman was unlikely to survive, so homicide Detectives Matt Barron and Tom O’Brien and Sgt. Joe Loughman were notified.

The trio quickly surmised that the victim had been shot at another location and dumped on the road.

Surveillance video collected from the QT by digital forensics Sgt. Troy Lawrence gave investigators a vital lead. A white four-door Cadillac was spotted about 5:48 a.m. behind the QT at the end of the dead-end street. It stopped briefly and turned off its lights before driving away.

The bloodstained comforter would provide another lead, as O’Brien and Loughman noted that it looked like those used at motel and hotel chains. The detectives copied down the comforter’s manufacturer information from the tag and passed it along to Detective K. Sullivan at the office to research.

Meanwhile, more homicide detectives began canvassing motels for missing bedding or bloodstained rooms.

More than an hour later, Sullivan tracked down a representative of the comforter’s distributor, who told the detective that the same comforters were sold to the Comfort Suites on Tanacross Drive in Fort Worth.

Detectives went there in search of a crime scene. They found none. The general manager gave them a list of other area Comfort Suites, and soon detectives were fanning out to those motels.



Hope DeHart, 18, is seen with her mother, Paige DeHart, at John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth, Texas.

At the Comfort Suites at 5825 Quebec St. near Lake Worth — about 15 miles from where Hope was found — Pate found a blood-splattered trail of evidence.

The manager revealed that the cleaning staff discovered that the bedding from Room 212 had been stolen. The staff also found drops of blood leading down the hallway to a set of stairs at the motel’s west end and, outside the door, a luggage cart with what appeared to be coagulated blood on it.

In Room 212, crime scene officers found bloodstains in a dragging pattern on the floor and what appeared to be a bullet impact on the headboard.

“The headboard had obvious blood on it, and the wiping motions through the blood stains suggested that an attempt had been made to clean the room,” Barron wrote in an arrest warrant affidavit.

The woman who had initially rented the room, but was now staying next door, told detectives that she and five friends, including DeHart, had checked in July 31, a Friday.

Another man, whom she knew as “Bam Bam,” had recently become involved with DeHart and another of her friends, Amanda Garcia, and had been at the motel as well. He drove a white Cadillac and carried a gun, she told detectives.

Through his Facebook page and motel surveillance video of the Cadillac, investigators identified “Bam Bam” as Hernaldo “David” Gonzales, 30.

The woman told police that Gonzales and Garcia had left the motel but returned about

4:30 a.m. Through the partly open door of her own room, she saw the pair enter Room 212, where DeHart had been inside.

“As soon as the door closed behind them, she heard a loud bang that she described as a gunshot,” the affidavit says.

The woman told detectives that she texted Garcia, asking whether she’d just heard a gunshot. She said a nervous Garcia later came to her room, telling her it was not a gunshot.

She had not seen Garcia and Gonzales since.

The motel surveillance cameras captured video of Gonzales and Garcia at 5:28 a.m. moving an “obvious body” down the second-floor hall toward an exit, the affidavit says.

Gonzales carried the body — only partially covered with a white comforter — draped over his shoulder while Garcia, 31, walked next to him, the affidavit says.

With DeHart clinging to life in the hospital, Gonzales and Garcia, also known as Joan Ashley Geisel, would be arrested on suspicion of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

Paige and Randy DeHart know firsthand the grip that addiction can have. Both are recovering addicts who work as alcohol and drug counselors for parolees.

“You never get over it completely,” Paige DeHart said. “You’re in remission and you have to stay in remission one day at a time.”

They have watched Hope DeHart struggle with the same problems, including using methamphetamine.

“Last year she went

through a period where things were really rough,” Paige DeHart said. “For, like, seven months, every day we thought we were going to get a call like this. But things had really smoothed out. She met [her boyfriend] Juan. She had calmed down.”

But in the week before the shooting, the DeHarts said, Hope DeHart seemed to be slipping, spending more and more time away from home.

Paige DeHart, who insisted on daily phones calls with her daughter, said she last talked to Hope DeHart the morning before the shooting.

“She tried to tell me she was just waking up,” Paige DeHart said. “I could tell she’d been up all night.”

She said she later sent her daughter repeated text messages, asking her to call, but got no response. The next day, about noon, she received a phone call from her daughter’s number but when she answered, the person hung up.

“I [texted], ‘I don’t care if you have Hope’s phone, I just want to know if you know where she is,’” she said.

She said she was hours away from calling hospitals to look for her daughter when, at 11:30 a.m. Aug. 4, she got the call that her daughter was in intensive care.

“I said, ‘What happened?’ They said, ‘We can’t tell you. You need to get here immediately,’” Paige DeHart said.

## Vital signs improve

Hope DeHart had been placed in a medically induced coma as doctors sought to ease her brain

swelling. But in the first few days after the shooting, her condition deteriorated.

“There is a Scripture that says God is the same yesterday, today and forever. I’ve always held onto the fact that in the almost 30 years of walking on this spiritual path that I’ve been on, he’s never failed me,” Paige DeHart said. “I found it really hard to believe that that’s how this was going to end.”

Her Facebook message that a miracle was needed spread quickly, bringing an avalanche of prayers from family, friends and strangers.

“Within probably four hours, her vitals started getting better,” she said.

On the morning of Aug. 7, doctors removed Hope DeHart from the coma after a promising CT scan. Still, they weren’t sure of her prognosis.

“They said she would probably never wake up,” Paige DeHart said.

Three days later, Hope DeHart woke up.

“It was about 4:15 in the morning,” her father said. “I had spent the night up there with her. I got up and went to the restroom. When I came back, I looked over to check on her before I lay down and she was looking right at me. I did a double take, and there she was, looking right at me.”

Though DeHart could nod and seemed to understand questions, doctors cautioned that she would not have the same brain function or personality.

“I was trying to see if she could write one word to tell me her feelings, and I gave her a pen and a piece of paper, and she started writ-

ing full sentences and told me exactly what she was experiencing, what she was feeling,” Paige DeHart said.

Her first note, a little shaky but still legible, was to her boyfriend, Juan Calvillo.

“I will always love you,” it read.

Many more notes have followed. The teen even joked that she and her boyfriend were going out to buy cigarettes and would be back in a few minutes.

“They told me her personality and stuff, it will be a new Hope,” Paige DeHart said. “I’ve had enough contact. This is the same Hope. She’s there.”

Though a tracheotomy prevented Hope DeHart from talking during a recent interview with the Star-Telegram, she borrowed a phrase from John Lennon to write a message for others:

“All you really need is love, love, love!”

Paige DeHart considers it a blessing that her daughter doesn’t remember the shooting, but she also didn’t hold back in telling her the truth.

“Do you recognize these people?” she asked her daughter, showing her an online article with the suspects’ mug shots. “They’re not your friends! I thought people would think I’m the most psycho mother ever because she looks so fragile and I’m here going, ‘These people shot you!’”

Loughman said investigators have not determined what led to the shooting. Paige DeHart is certain methamphetamine played a part.

“People always say, ‘Oh, you can’t OD on methamphetamine.’ But it makes people psychotic,” she said.

I don’t know if we’ll ever know exactly what happened. I do know that methamphetamine was involved,” she said.

## Best is yet to come

The DeHarts pray that the shooting proves to be Hope DeHart’s rock bottom. She turned 19 recently, a birthday her relatives weren’t sure they’d be able to celebrate.

“I was afraid I was going to lose her to drugs and alcohol and to that lifestyle,” Paige DeHart said. “I’m hoping this might possibly be enough to get her attention that she was going the wrong way.”

Though a long recovery is ahead, the DeHarts say they have faith in their daughter’s future. Hope DeHart is now walking with the help of a walker, and recently she spoke for the first time since the shooting after being fitted with a smaller trach tube. She is preparing to be moved to a rehab center.

“It’s a miracle. It’s a bona fide miracle and I think ... the best is yet to come,” Paige DeHart said.

# Noonan

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change our attitudes and behaviors toward chronic pain, the better. We need to realize drugs are only a short-term solution for pain and cause more problems in the long run; that the patient

has to participate in their care, beyond just taking their pills on time; and there are very effective, safe, natural treatments that do not rely on pills. These changes need to happen among the public as well as our health care providers. Our addiction to painkillers, as well as many other drugs, cannot be addressed by a health care

system that only knows how to medicate these problems and a public that expects a pill to fix their chronic, difficult health issues.

Dr. Michael Noonan practices chiropractic, chiropractic acupuncture and other wellness therapies in Old Town. He can be reached at noonanchiropractic@gmail.com.

# Farwell

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MaineCare beneficiaries.

But the study’s authors accounted for a couple of other likely culprits, finding no effect on the association between medical pot laws and lower opioid overdose deaths. For example, they examined state prescription monitoring programs, such as Maine’s, finding those programs didn’t change or explain the association.

When they included deaths from heroin, even those involving no narcotic painkillers, the link persisted, indicating that the reduced opioid deaths weren’t offset by higher rates of heroin deaths.

The timing of medical marijuana laws drove the link, Saloner said.

But one expert isn’t convinced. Dr. Andrew Kolodny, chief medical officer at Phoenix House, a national addiction treatment nonprofit, told Newsweek the slowing of overdose deaths likely has nothing to with medical marijuana laws. Only a small subset of doctors offers medical pot to

patients to begin with, and most don’t suggest it in place of Vicodin or other painkillers, he said.

“Addressing this epidemic of opioid overdose is going to require a lot of different kinds of strategies,” Saloner said. “We’re looking at one that may be promising, but

it’s going to require, among other things, getting people into treatment programs, which is a serious concern in a state like Maine.”

Read BDN Health Editor Jackie Farwell’s blog, Vital Signs, at [vitalsigns.bangordailynews.com](http://vitalsigns.bangordailynews.com).

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