



Hanes' family asks for privacy as she recovers

By Jan Schultz and Russ Pankonin
The Imperial Republican

"It could have had a much different outcome."

Those were words from State Patrol Capt. Jim Parish Sunday night following a daylong ordeal that ended in the death of the suspect who kidnapped one of Imperial's own.

Julie Hanes, 38, of Lincoln, the daughter of Jim and Pam Hanes of Imperial, was released by her captor, her estranged husband Dwayne Lawrence, also 38, from a Haarberg Farms cornfield near Imperial at 6:25 p.m. Sunday.

About 90 minutes later, Lawrence took his own life with a gunshot wound to the head in the same field Hanes walked out of, two miles northwest of Imperial.

Lawrence's 7:45 p.m. death ended a 33-hour ordeal that began in Lincoln Saturday about 12 noon CT when Hanes was taken by Lawrence at gunpoint from her business, Audacious Hair Salon & Massage.

Residents of this normally quiet community on a Sunday afternoon had that peacefulness upturned as the sound of a search helicopter and Code-Reds alerted them that the Lincoln kidnapping had come to their doorstep.

Many here were aware of Hanes' kidnapping Saturday, but confirmations they had come to this area weren't made until Sunday morning.

Two CodeRed alerts Sunday, one at 8 a.m. and another shortly after 10 a.m., informed residents that the 1993 Chase County High School graduate and her abductor were in the Imperial area.

Another CodeRed late Sunday afternoon said the search was continuing and was concentrated in an area northwest of Imperial.

After Hanes' release at 6:25 that evening, she was rushed to an Imperial EMS ambulance, then taken to Chase County Community Hospital for treatment that included IVs and a reunion with local family members.

Officers confirmed they heard a shot about 7:45 p.m. in the field, and the ordeal had ended.



Concern heightened when car spotted here

After notification from the Lincoln Police Department (LPD) about 11:30 a.m. Saturday of the kidnapping and Lawrence's possible intention of coming this way, Imperial police immediately set up surveillance at Jim and Pam Hanes' home on West 5th St.

LPD had notified local officers that Lawrence had made terroristic threats against the entire Hanes family.

Police officers and the Chase County Sheriff's Department continued to keep watch on the home through the day Saturday and into Sunday morning.

Between 3 and 3:30 a.m. Sunday, the 1998 Chrysler Concorde identified in Nebraska State Patrol alerts was spotted by a police officer on foot outside the Hanes' home.

Police Chief Rob Browning said the car drove into the alley behind the home. After officers attempted to make contact, the car went dark, sped off and they lost contact.

The first big break in the case came Sunday morning when local farmer Dan Reeves was on his usual morning round of checking pivots. He found a strange vehicle backed into the road to one of his pivots near the John Keil farm.

Reeves said he knew something wasn't right. "Anything outside of the ordinary is cause for concern," he said.

Reeves said he checked Facebook and Twitter that morning and learned about the kidnapping and the possibility they could be coming to Imperial.

He thought the car matched the description being disseminated to the public and immediately called Browning.

Browning said the plates were gone but the sheriff's office positively identified the car through the vehicle identification number.

This confirmed the suspicions that the couple was indeed headed for Imperial and in the area.

Also that morning, Max Kaiser, who lives along Ave 331 northwest of Imperial and was out checking pivots, spotted a couple walking hand-in-hand around 7 a.m. along Ave. 331, not far from the Kaiser home.



Kaiser said he stopped and offered them a ride, but they declined, saying they were just out for a walk.

Having no knowledge yet that the couple was in the area, he didn't think much about it.

"I can remember her looking at me, but nothing really registered" that she was in trouble, he said.

But, he recalled that Lawrence was carrying a towel draped over his hand. Kaiser said he can assume now that the handgun may have been underneath.

When law officers started showing up in the area, "It clicked," about the couple walking on the road, he said.

He then contacted police that he believed he'd seen them.

Kaiser also said he noticed their abandoned car about 6 a.m. parked off the side of the road north of his place, but hadn't heard about the vehicle descriptions yet.

Local officers had already called in for assistance from the Nebraska State Patrol, which eventually had about 20 officers on the scene, including its helicopter and 12 SWAT team members.

