

Julie Hanes safe, captor dead in kidnapping ordeal

Written by Wauneta Breeze

Thursday, 29 August 2013 17:21 - Last Updated Thursday, 29 August 2013 17:30



Escorted by Imperial EMTs, Julie Hanes enters a farm building not far from the field from which she was released after her harrowing kidnapping experience. (Imperial Republican photo)

Hanes' family asks for

privacy as she recovers

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By Jan Schultz and Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

“It could have had a much different outcome.”

Those were the words from State Patrol Capt. Jim Parrish 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 when Hanes was taken 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 CodeReds alerted them that the Lincoln kidnapping had come to their doorstep.

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Many 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 late Sunday afternoon CodeRed 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

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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.

"We want to thank the Nebraska State Patrol, the FBI, Lincoln Police Department and investigat

"We are grateful and humbled by the amount of love and support our entire family received.

"Through the help of these agencies and individuals, we safely received Julie back from this or

"We thank you in advance for your support and understanding of her need for privacy at this tim

—Statement from Hanes Family

Aug. 26, 2013

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 one of his pivot roads near the John Keil farm.

Reeves said he knew something wasn't right. "When stuff is out of the norm, you notice," he

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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 suspicion 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.

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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.

At a 5 p.m. press conference Sunday, Capt. Parrish, Sheriff Kevin Mueller and Chief Browning all said they believed the couple was still in the area and on foot, despite the hours that had passed.

Some rural house-to-house checks were made, and officers advised rural residents in that area to pull keys from their vehicles.

Tracks were found leading into the corn field, prompting the agencies to focus their hunt in a two-mile square vicinity of the field.

But, with the corn's height and density, along with the inability of finding them with infrared cameras due to the heat, they could not be located.

However, late Sunday afternoon, officers remained convinced they were still alive and had not hitchhiked out of the area.

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“We are going on the premise they are alive. We have no indication otherwise,” Parrish said at the 5 p.m. press conference.

About 90 minutes later, Hanes was released by her captor.

Sheriff Mueller said Hanes exited the field on the pivot road, carrying flip-flops, and wearing boots and socks given to her by Lawrence.

At a press conference Sunday night, Capt. Parrish of the Nebraska State Patrol said a 40-caliber handgun was recovered from the scene.

Sheriff Mueller said after Hanes had exited the field, she told one of his deputies he intended to kill himself, and gave directions to his location.

When the ordeal eventually came to an end, his body was found only about 130 yards in from where their tracks were spotted.

Capt. Parrish said they never had any contact with Lawrence by phone or otherwise. Officers had his cell phone number, but he never answered their calls.

Parrish, Mueller and Browning all praised the cooperation between the various law enforcement agencies, which also included the FBI.

In all, about 30 law officers were eventually on the scene Sunday.

An autopsy will be done on Lawrence along with a Grand Jury investigation, according to

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officers. A special prosecutor will be named by the County Attorney's office to go through the Grand Jury process.

The only real problem experienced during the search for the couple was inoperable radio communication between the different agencies.

That was aided by 12 portable radios brought to the scene by Prairie States Communications.

It was a long and expensive operation, but Parrish said that does not matter in these situations.

"It's a human life and those can't be replaced," he said.



SWAT team members from the Nebraska State Patrol had a strong presence in the area Sunday as the search continued for Julie Hanes and her abductor. Here, a pair of SWAT team members travel along Highway 6, west of Imperial. (Imperial Republican photo)