

# A Senseless Assault

One seemingly ordinary night a young man went out on the town to celebrate his 19th birthday. He was not to know that later that night he would be fighting for his life outside a night club, and had it not been for a twist of fate he would not have survived.

That same night, two friends with nursing backgrounds also went out to have some fun.

On their way home, at around 3am, one of the nurses, Barb, needed to go to the toilet. Jane, the other friend, wanted her to wait until she got home but Barb insisted she needed to go.

They decided to go to a night club near where they had parked their car, a well-known drinking venue for young revelers.

As they approached the night club they saw a crowd near the entrance of the night club. Like everyone else they were interested to find out what all the commotion was about. They asked one of the five policemen standing nearby what the trouble was. He told them that a young man was drunk and injured and they were waiting for an ambulance to arrive.

Barb asked if the boy needed any assistance but the policeman assured her that the young man was more intoxicated than hurt. With that they entered the bar.

As they were leaving the night club they noticed the ambulance had not yet arrived. Barb wanted to take a look at the young man's condition before heading home.

The police were reluctant for Barb and Jane to get involved, but Barb insisted. She sensed something was wrong.

Jane was reluctant to get involved. The young man was covered in blood and she did not have gloves or any form of protection – she also didn't want to impose, especially as the police said things were under control.

Barb insisted that Jane, a neuro-surgical nurse, take a look and as she pushed her way through the crowd one of the young man's friends told them their assistance was not needed.

As Jane got closer she knew something was terribly wrong so both women became insistent that Jane be allowed to examine the injured young man.



Upon reaching the young man, Jane forgot about the blood, she could see his condition was deteriorating rapidly.

The police had put the young man in the coma position but his head was placed in such a way that his airway was being blocked. Later the Police Media Liaison Officer, Brian Minards, said the police put him in the coma position after the young man's friends tried to get him to sit up.

By the time Jane and Barb were at his side he had turned a dull blue colour. Jane knew if she didn't do something immediately he would die. While she was clearing his airway she noticed that blood was coming from his nose and that he was not responding to verbal commands.

While Jane was attending to the young man, Barb found out what happened to him. According to witnesses, the young man was standing outside the night club when another young man came over and started harassing one of the injured man's friends.

When the offender finished badgering this young man, he turned around and for no apparent reason king hit the injured man, simply because he was standing there.

According to the witnesses the single blow thrust the young man forward, where he smashed his head into a cement seat.

The assault took place directly in front of the night club bouncers, yet the offender was allowed to enter the bar after the incident.

After hearing this Barb approached one of the policemen and insisted he go and arrest the offender, especially as some of the witnesses knew his identity and whereabouts. The policeman politely shrugged her off.

It was only after the police visited the hospital and learnt of how critical the young man's condition was, that they took any action.

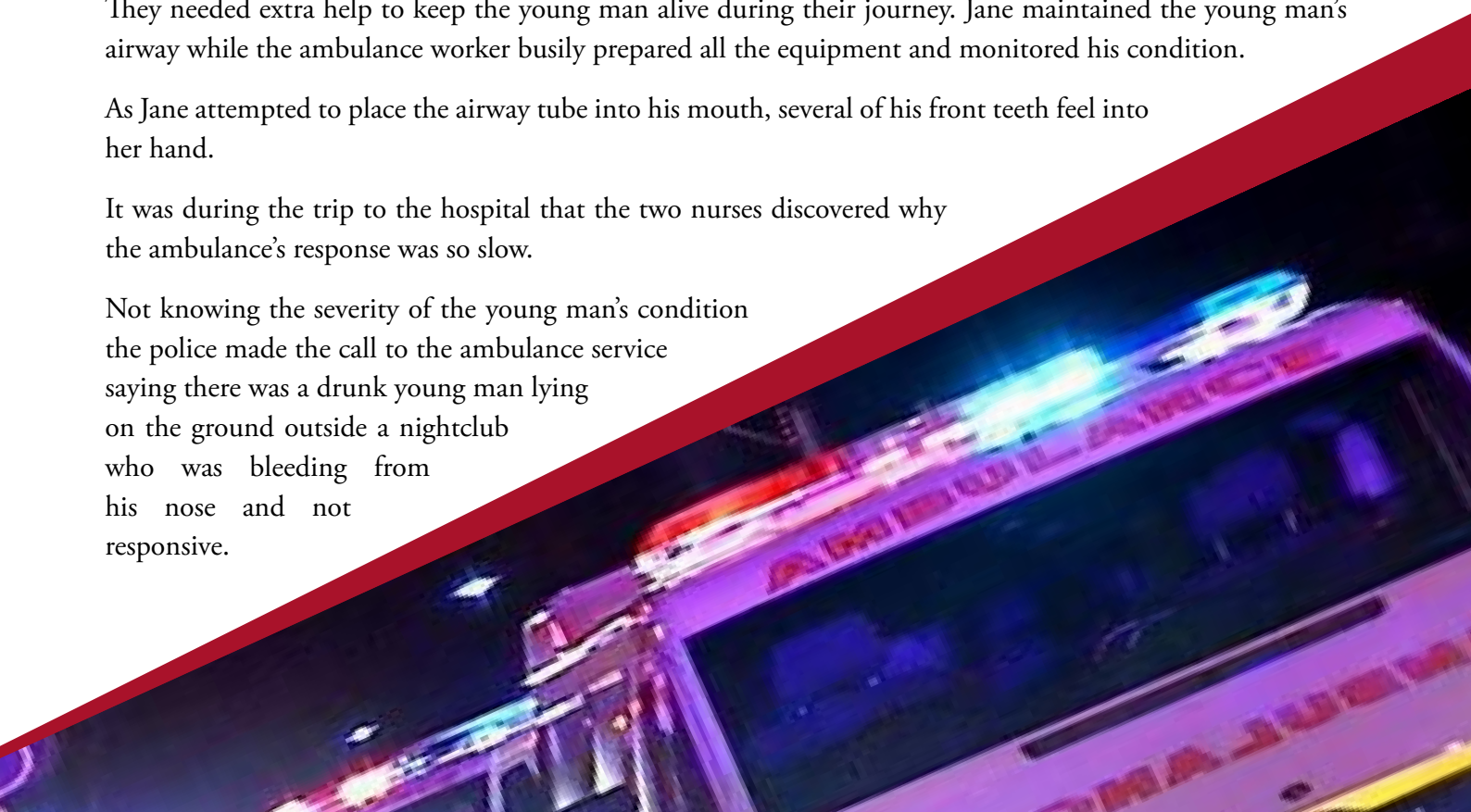
A further five minutes passed before the ambulance arrived. The ambulance officers didn't want to wait for back-up to arrive, which is usual practice when dealing with head injuries, so they asked Barb and Jane to accompany them in the ambulance ride to the hospital.

They needed extra help to keep the young man alive during their journey. Jane maintained the young man's airway while the ambulance worker busily prepared all the equipment and monitored his condition.

As Jane attempted to place the airway tube into his mouth, several of his front teeth fell into her hand.

It was during the trip to the hospital that the two nurses discovered why the ambulance's response was so slow.

Not knowing the severity of the young man's condition the police made the call to the ambulance service saying there was a drunk young man lying on the ground outside a nightclub who was bleeding from his nose and not responsive.



It was only when the ambulance officers got to the scene that they realized how the police had under-estimated the young man's condition, and had Barb and Jane not come along the young man may have lost his life.

On arrival at the hospital the young man was x-rayed and cat scanned. He sustained extensive head injuries from the assault which resulted in severe brain damage. To save his life he was operated on that night by a neuro surgeon.

Barb and Jane met the young man's family, that night and over the following days. They saw the hope in the parent's eyes, believing that one day the young man would wake up and be the same as he had before the night he went out to celebrate his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

They believed this to be true for a long time but as the months rolled by their hope turned to despair as they realized their son would never be the same as he once was. He is now severely brain damaged, confined to a wheel chair and dependent on others for survival.

This family's life changed in an instance, when a drunken youth punched a stranger in the face for no reason.

Because of this senseless action, a young man, someone with vast possibilities, had the best of his life taken away from him.

This senseless assault not only ruined the life of a young man, it also devastated the lives of all those who loved him, particularly his family.

Barb and Jane felt connected to this young man for a long time after the night they saved his life. They wondered at times whether saving him was for the best – they thought about his quality of life and about the people who cared for him around the clock.

They never found out what happened to the young man who committed the assault. They assumed he got a suspended sentence with a good behavior bond or he was sent to prison for awhile which would have only made him a more angry young man.

They thought a good punishment would have been to make him care for people with brain injuries (not his victim but other people with brain injury) – then he would understand the full impact of what he had done.

Whatever punishment he received, Barb and Jane hope he never hurts another person again.

