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Winona State University

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McShane

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was when I finally was aware of what was going on completely."

At first, she said, "I wondered what had happened to everybody else, since it was blank to me." Thankful and relieved were among the many emotions she felt when she found out everybody was still alive.

McShane was in the hospital for two weeks.

"It felt like forever," she said. This was due to her falling in and out of sleep so often. She said she never got a whole night's sleep because nurses and doctors constantly were checking in on her.

"It was so weird, because people would come in and ask what's your name, and like that, like bugging me," she said.

McShane had entered the hospital in critical condition. She had lost an extraordinary amount of blood. The human body needs eight pints of blood to survive. McShane had lost five in the accident.

During her stay, her right leg and the right side of her face had to be

almost completely reconstructed.

She said there was "incredible pain," throughout her stay in the hospital. In addition to the pain of her injuries, the morphine shots, she said, hurt a considerable amount as well.

After her release from the hospital, she didn't leave her house very much.

The injuries, the reconstruction and the pain were reasons enough to stay in.

The first month after her release, any traveling hurt due to the bumps in the road.

As part of the reconstruction, ceramic plates were put in the right side of her face.

"The first time I looked in the mirror, it scared me," she said. "It was terrible."

She had staples and stitches in her cheek and her eye was swollen up.

"I've been scared by a lot of horror movies, but looking at myself never scared me before," she said. "Sometimes I just cried because of how awful I looked."

McShane's entire right side was injured to an extreme that much of that side is full of plates, screws and rods. They have made even sleeping difficult.

She has a screw two and a half inches long in her right hip.

Because of the pain, she said, "If I wanted to turn, I'd have to wake up. Lately, though, I haven't had to wake up."

Currently, a bone fragment is coming to the surface out of her right thigh, making it harder to sleep.

The pain is not the only thing making sleep difficult.

"There are nights I don't sleep because I dream about falling down and getting hurt," she said.

McShane missed about three weeks of classes fall quarter. She managed to complete one, while taking incompletes in the other two.

This quarter she has taken one class and is working on her two incompletes.

McShane still tries to be active. She went to her Army reserve unit's drill last month.

"I took my wheelchair and just rolled around," she said.

She is still part of the reserves and plans to continue.

"I'm trying to keep my life going as it was before," she said. "I've never really been hurt. I've been a really active person."

"To have this happens just sucks. It shuts down my life."

Following the Dec. 3 snowfall, she began using her crutches to walk to and from classes.

"I'm getting stronger," she said.

She said she practices walking around the room a lot. She has to put most of the pressure on the her left leg, which sustained only a broken foot in the accident. Having both feet out of commission made using the crutches a little difficult.

There have been bright spots in her ordeal, however, much of which came from people who care for her. While in the hospital, she received an endless number of cards, stuffed animals and flowers.

One of those people who cares is McShane's boyfriend Phil Carlson, a senior public relations major.

"The accident really shook him up," McShane said.

Two weeks after the accident Carlson asked her to marry him. That proposal was made over a dinner he had made for McShane. The dinner was to make up for the last dinner he had made, which she never got to enjoy because it was on the night of the accident.

The other victims in the accident (Kathy and Chris), who were critically hurt, are confused and angry, McShane said.

"They want to know why this happened," she said.

According to McShane, they are still scared. Both are afraid of the

never-ending doctor appointments they must go to.

"They don't want any more pain," she said.

Seeing the children suffer makes McShane even more angry.

"I wanted to kill her (Ritter)," she said. "I think she should have to do community work in the hospital and have to visit the kids. I want her to remember what she did."

McShane said she is getting more and more frustrated and angry over the ordeal.

"All the emotional stuff is starting to hit me now," she said. "I wonder why she (Ritter) isn't trying to contact me."

Right now, McShane's big goal is trying to get better and at the same time getting her life back in order.

One big road block to that is that is she doesn't know what will happen with her right leg yet. This uncertainty is difficult.

"It is so indefinite; I don't like it," she said. "I guess it will heal whenever my body feels like it is ready."

Other than that uncertainty, she is looking toward accomplishing her goal.

"I have to gain weight back," she said. "It might as well be muscle."

She is looking forward to Christmas break, when she and Carlson

will be heading off to Colorado.

McShane said Carlson had been joking that she "would set off all the metal detectors in the airport."

She hopes to go to school full-time again spring quarter.

Her and Carlson's June wedding, she said, should take up some of her time now, as well.

But for now, "I am just dealing with everything the best I can," she added.

Do you like to play racquetball, but find it hard to get a game going? Have you ever wondered who else plays out there? Get on the ball and check out the new WSU Racquetball Club.

Preliminary meeting: Wednesday, Dec. 12 4 p.m. in the Smaug



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Workin' for a season

Students put in long hours to help retailers through the Christmas shopping season



Upper left: Shawn Rommes, sophomore, adds a row of dolls at Shopko.

Upper middle: Dave Domino, senior, hangs a ice auger in the sporting goods department at Shopko.

Upper right: While on the job at K-Mart, Robert Buerck, freshman, looks ready for the holidays in his Santa cap.

Center: Jodie Paulson, junior elementary education major, answers a call for home entertainment at Shopko.



Upper left: Amy Daniel, an art major at St. Mary's College, answers a call at K-Mart's service desk.

Upper right: Noel Brandt, senior, works in the housewares department at K-Mart.

Lower: Long lines are a common experience for college students cashiering during the holiday season.

Photos by Bill Garrison



