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THE WAR AT HOME

A decorated Navy SEAL was seriously injured working security at a downtown bar

By Lael Henterly



Young Kwak

Jason Hogan is hopeful he'll get out of a hospital in months, not years.

At 32, Jason Hogan already has been exposed to more danger than most people face during their entire lives. A decorated Navy SEAL Team 3 veteran, Hogan has traveled the world risking his life to defend America's interests. When Marc Lee became the first Navy SEAL Iraq War casualty in 2006, it was Hogan who brought him home to his mother.

This month, he was slated to head to the high seas to fight pirates off the coast of Africa. To say he was qualified to work security at a Spokane bar popular with the college crowd would be an understatement. Hogan and Globe Bar & Kitchen owner Ryan Bates met during Navy SEAL demolition training, and when Bates needed help opening up the bar, Hogan moved to Spokane to pitch in. He ended up staying and working security.

But then he broke his C3, C4 and C5 vertebrae during an altercation that erupted at the club over Hoopfest weekend.

Hogan can't recall much of what happened the night of Friday, June 26. He remembers arriving at work around 6:30 pm; that the club was near capacity, with probably 270 people inside and more lined up waiting to be let in; that it was hot that night. Beyond that, his recollection of most of the evening is gone.

Globe General Manager Brian Mongkolpuet says he saw it all, though. He was working security with Hogan when a man started creating problems inside the packed bar. "This guy had been irritating other guests, he had been violent with another guest, and very handsy and inappropriate with a lot of the female patrons here. He actually yelled in our lead server's face and spit in her face," says Mongkolpuet. He watched from across the bar as Hogan steered the unruly patron out of the building and to the fence line. Hogan let go of the man and told him to leave, Mongkolpuet says, and it looked like that was the end of it.

"The guy actually walked away about 10 or 15 feet, and then he about-faced and charged at Jason and tried to hit him," says Mongkolpuet. Hogan ducked that blow and grabbed the man's waist to take him to the ground.

"The man's arm went around the back of his neck, and it caused Jason to fall headfirst into the concrete," says Mongkolpuet. "I was right behind him at the point where they went to the ground, and this guy still had Jason in a headlock — a reverse headlock to be specific — which is a lot more dangerous."

Spokane police arrived on the scene in seconds to find Hogan, Mongkolpuet and a third Globe bouncer restraining the man. The report describes a chaotic encounter, with many intoxicated witnesses and conflicting stories for the police to sort through. Friends of the unruly patron, Jerry Betts, said he had just been trying to get into the bar, that the bouncer wouldn't let him in, and that Hogan fell during a scuffle after Betts tried to punch him. The officers arrested Betts for disorderly conduct.

"The crowd was a mix of friendly and unfriendly people," writes SPD Officer Michael Schneider in his report. "Members of the Globe crowd were heckling and telling me how I should do my job. Members of the bouncing staff came up and I directed them to move the crowd back and to control their patrons. The staff did a poor job at best."

Meanwhile, Mongkolpuet waited with Hogan for the ambulance as blood pooled beneath his head.

"Jason couldn't really move. He was able to communicate, and he told me several times he was having a lot of difficulty breathing," says Mongkolpuet. "He recognized my face but couldn't tell me my name."

Schneider cited Betts for disorderly conduct and tried to let him go, but Betts refused to exit his car. The crowd was getting more drunk and increasingly volatile, and Schneider decided to transport Betts to jail. He spat in his patrol car and refused to cooperate with officials at the jail. Betts could not be reached for comment.

The cluster of bars by North Division Street and East Main Avenue has been having something of a moment lately, and not everyone is happy about it. John Waite, a downtown business owner and a city council candidate, lives across the street from the bars and says it is "just mayhem on Friday and Saturday."

The noise and the occasional fight often go with the bar scene. Working security is a dangerous job, and from all accounts Hogan was one of the best. "This is what they risk every night," says Mongkolpuet. Hogan was making minimum wage plus a portion of tips the night of his injury, and bouncers typically don't have benefits like health insurance.

This life-altering injury couldn't come at a worse time for Hogan. He was about to leave for a lucrative overseas contracting gig, working ship security off the coast of Africa and India. "Basically they put a couple of us on there and we watch the ship to make sure no pirates come on," says Hogan, who hopes that he may still be able to pursue the opportunity in a year or two. "That was my next thing I was going to do."

Instead, he's at St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute, taking things a day at a time. Everything is up in the air right now, but he has a strong support system of Navy SEAL brothers and plenty of people rooting for him. Already, Hogan's recovery is going quicker than expected: He walked a few steps over the weekend and is optimistic that he could be out of the hospital in a couple of months.

Bates started a Go Fund Me for Hogan that has gained traction on social media. "I have been amazed," says Hogan. "People I haven't heard from since my sophomore year in high school have been giving money." The Jason Hogans Recovery Fund has already been shared 4,200 times and, as of press time, raised more than \$48,000 from 713 donors.

"Now show the world what SEALs are made of; it's not when we fall that defines us, it's what you do after. Go get'm brother," writes one donor, Andrew Paul, who contributed \$500.

"It comes down to what happened was an accident, but all that guy had to do was go about

his business. But instead he decided to turn around and attack Jason," says Mongkolpuet. "Had that guy just swallowed his pride and moved along, Jason would be working for us this weekend. He'd be going about his life."

Mongkolpuet says that neither the police nor the prosecutor have contacted him to hear his account of the events. ♦

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