

Rebuilding a Life *continued from page 3*

says Scott. "The day he was sentenced my oldest daughter Alexis said, 'I'm going to be 19 when he gets out. We're going to miss him and he's going to miss my whole time growing up and going to high school. He's not going to be there for me.' It was really detrimental to all the kids when he went away. We all love him and he's family to us."

Hines was working at Fine Line Pacific, a marble and granite installation company in Lake Oswego, and living in Forest Grove, when his father Dennis became too sick to work and take care of himself at the family home in Birkenfeld. Dennis was drinking himself to death and suffering from Hepatitis C and cirrhosis of the liver. Hines left his job at Fine Line to take care of his father.

"He told me, 'Desmond, I did all this for you, this is all going to be yours; you're my only good son,'" says Hines about his father's promise to leave him the property. "He'd had a falling out with both my brother and my sister because dad just wasn't a very nice person. After years and years of thinking about it I decided that I needed to put all those negative feelings aside and go have a relationship with my father before he passed away. So I did. I went out there and did whatever he needed done around the place. I took him up to the VA Hospital when he needed to go. I'd bring him a bottle of booze so he could sit and look out the window and drink and tell me how I was doing everything wrong."

Hines says he heard whisperings around the community that his father was going to "stab him in the back" and give the property to his friend, co-worker, and drinking buddy, Keith Borders. "I said, 'No, my dad has told me a hundred times to my face that we were good and he was leaving it to me.'"

Dennis Hines died on March 13, the day before Desmond's 31st birthday. "I got into the gun safe and found the will and it clearly said, 'I do NOT want my children to inherit any of my estate,' and it named each of us kids and gave our social security numbers," says Hines. "It named his neighbor as the executor of the estate, and then gave all his belongings - the houses on the property, the guns, the cars, everything - to Keith Borders."

When he learned he had been cut out of his father's will, Hines says he flew into a rage. He felt like what he had been working so hard for, and been promised, was being taken away from him. "I dove pretty deep into the booze and I was mad."

Hines is reflective when talking about why he was so angry and disappointed with his father's decision. "My sister had a couple kids and I thought she should get some of the property because that's what parents are supposed to do - take care of the generation behind them and leave things better than you found it."

Hines says he spent several days this way, drunk, angry and irrational, driving around with a pistol in his truck. His friends thought he might be suicidal, so they sent his friend Darrell Schoonover to spend the day with him while he took care of some of the details of his father's death, like the crematorium bill. Then they went back to his dad's house. Hines says Schoonover's step-mother had given them a half gallon of cheap rum. "My first thought was, 'I'm not very good on that stuff,'" says Hines. "My second thought was, 'I'm broke and I only have a six-pack of beer, so I'm going to have to take that rum.'"

Hines said he and Schoonover started drinking hard. "We were just goofing around, wrestling and being drunk, having fun," says Hines. A friend of his father's stopped by and later told the Grand Jury that they looked like a couple of unsupervised kids having fun - not angry, not fighting.

"I don't really remember what happened that night," says Hines. "I know when we got home I had reloaded the pistol. I know I was in a really angry place and I didn't care about people's lives at that point. I was just in a really, really dark place in my mind."

Hines says he and Schoonover drank almost the entire half gallon of rum between 8:00 pm and 1:00 am. "We were drunk and I had the gun pointed at my head, at his head, and back at my head," says Hines. "I don't really know how it happened, but I know I shot and killed him."

Hines says he went and got a bible and read Psalms 23 over Schoonover. Then he held Schoonover's body in his arms before calling 9-1-1. When police arrived he told them he had shot and killed his friend. Hines says it wasn't

until they told him they were arresting him for murder that the magnitude of what he had done actually sunk in.

Instead of going to trial, Hines took a deal and pled guilty to Manslaughter II and received a sentence of 75 months. "I took responsibility for it and I continue to take responsibility every day when I wake up," says Hines. Schoonover's father spoke on Hines's behalf at his sentencing. "He said, 'You

took my son from me and that is something you can never replace,'" says Hines. "He said, 'I forgive you because I have to, because of my faith, but you don't get to live just for yourself anymore, you have to live for my son too.'"

"I figure Darrell gave his life, so that I could get my life back," says Hines. "I'm not ever going to take it for granted that I'm getting a second chance. I'm going to make my way through the rest of my life the best I can."

Hines ended up serving 84 months in prison. His first year he ended up in some trouble. At 150 pounds he was a target and had to establish himself in the prison population hierarchy. He ended up in several fights and had a couple disciplinary issues. After that first year things settled down. He was a hard worker and the guards knew they could give him extra work assignments. He was able to stay busy and stay out of trouble. He served his time in the Oregon prison system, doing time at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, the Snake River Correctional Institution, and the Warner Creek Correctional Facility. At Snake River he worked on several wildland fire crews and helped fight the massive Cornet/Windy Ridge Fire in 2015, where his experience working in the woods as a logger came in handy. When he left the prison system he was commended for his lengthy 13 page work history.

When Hines was released from prison Scott offered him a place to live and a chance to come home to Vernonia.

"After years and years of thinking about it I decided that I needed to put all those negative feelings aside and go have a relationship with my father before he passed away. So I did. I'd bring him a bottle of booze so he could sit and look out the window and drink and tell me how I was doing everything wrong."

Vernonia City Council Meetings and Closures

City Council Meetings are scheduled for 7:00 pm:
Monday, November 7, 2016
Monday, November 21, 2016

City Closures are scheduled for:
Friday, November 11, 2016
Veteran's Day
Thursday, November 24, 2016
Friday, November 25, 2016
Thanksgiving Holiday

Dates and times subject to change due to conflicts of schedules

Vernonia Police Blotter • October 17-31, 2016

Reports/Arrests

- October 18, 2016 Report of a stolen vehicle near Airport Way
- October 21, 2016 Report of Unlawful Entry and Criminal Mischief near Lakeview Dr.
- October 27, 2016 Report of Theft II near North St.
- October 28, 2016 Arrest on a Felony Warrant near Spencer Ave. and Bridge St.

- October 29, 2016 Report of Criminal Trespass near Sheely Creek Rd.

Citations/Other

- October 17, 2016 Cited for Restricted Parking of an RV on a Public Street near Maple St. and Weed St.
- October 18, 2016 Cited for Driving While Suspended near Bridge St.
- October 19, 2016 Cited for Driving While

- Suspended near Bridge St. and Madison Ave.
- October 28, 2016 Cited for Driving While Suspended near Bridge St.

Vernonia Police Department responds to calls that do not always end in Arrest, Report, or Citation. 10/17/2016 through 10/31/2016 VPD had 216 calls for service.

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"What happened really divided our group of friends," says Scott about Schoonover's death. "Desmond and Darrell were good friends - like brothers. We were all like family and it was really painful to lose both of them. Darrell saved Desmond's life one time when he tried to commit suicide. Some of us truly believe it was an accident when Desmond killed Darrell, because Desmond would never do that - would never kill his best friend. Others are still really pissed that it happened and haven't been able to accept him being back."

Scott says Hines has definitely taken responsibility for what happened that night. "He never says it was an accident. He says he killed his friend. He's already put himself through a lot. None of us can make him feel any worse about what happened."

Scott says Schoonover's father had wanted to see Hines when he was released from prison but he passed away just weeks after Hines's release and the two never had a chance to speak. "I feel like if the family can forgive you, that's what is really important," says Scott.

Hines says that early in his life he lost touch with his older brother, who now lives in Klamath Falls. "We didn't talk to each other for about twenty years," explains Hines. "He found me when I was in prison and we wrote back and forth a time or two. I found out he's still deep in his own alcoholism so I told him I couldn't come see him until he decides to put the booze down for at least a weekend. Where I'm at with my life right now I just can't be around it."

Scott says Hines worries about what people think about him here in town. "But there are people who are willing to give him a chance, and that's important. We're helping him get back

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The Vernonia Transfer Station is open on the 2nd and 4th Saturday

**November 12
December 10**

Dates are subject to change due to weather