

**March 29, 2004**

**“Vermont Woman Turns Out Missing After Car Crash”**

**Gary E. Lindsley**

Another young woman has turned up missing after a car accident on a dark, rural highway - this time in Vermont.

Brianna Maitland, 17, of Sheldon, Vt., has disappeared after being involved in a one-car accident late at night on the East Berkshire Road in northern Vermont.

This comes on the heels of the disappearance of Maura Murray, a 21-year-old nursing student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, has not been seen since she was involved in a one-car accident on a dark stretch of rural Route 112 in the town of Haverhill, N.H., Feb. 9.

Maitland was working at the Black Lantern in Montgomery March 19, when she clocked out at 11:20 p.m. and headed to her friend's house in Sheldon, where she was living. She had even left her friend a note saying what time she would be home from work.

She never made it.

Her car was found by police early the morning of March 20, with its rear end in an abandoned building. The car was about a mile from the Black Lantern, where Maitland is a dishwasher.

However, Maitland's parents were not notified about the accident although the car is registered to the mother, Kellie.

It wasn't until Tuesday, March 23, when Brianna's friends contacted the Maitlands, that they became aware something was wrong.

"They asked us if Brianna had moved back in with us," Bruce Maitland said. It was the first he and his wife had heard she was missing.

The Maitlands contacted state police in St. Albans to file a missing person's report. Troopers told them an all points bulletin would be put out about Brianna and her 1988 Oldsmobile.

State police did not draw any connection between Brianna and the car, until Thursday morning, nearly a week after the accident. The Maitlands were called about the Oldsmobile. Bruce Maitland said it was her car.

The Maitlands don't understand why state police did not call them after finding the car because the car is registered in Kellie's name.

"That was a huge error on their part," Bruce Maitland said. "I asked why we weren't notified. They said the telephone number did not match the address. All they would have had to do was look in the telephone book."

He said the state police have been very leery about sharing information with the family. "I gave them a good lead, the only one they have," he said. He did not want to publicly divulge what it was because he didn't want to compromise the investigation.

The Maitlands have also turned something else over to state police, a woman's jacket found near the accident scene. "It had a wallet with a woman's name and credit cards," Bruce Maitland said.

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He said it appeared the woman was from California and had recently moved to Vermont. It also appeared she was a certified ski instructor.

With his daughter missing, as well as Murray, now finding this woman's jacket, Maitland is worried there may be someone in the area preying on young women.

Kellie Maitland is upset because state police have said they believe her daughter just took off.

She said a co-worker supposedly told troopers Brianna had said she was going to take off on a short trip.

Kellie Maitland does not believe that because she said her daughter was doing really well. She had recently passed her GED with flying colors, and worked at the Black Lantern and as a hostess at KJ's Diner in St. Albans.

"Her jobs are going well," Kellie Maitland said. "She has been upbeat. Everything seemed fine."

She also doesn't believe her daughter hit a patch of ice and slid off the road into the building. "I saw the pictures (of the accident scene)," Kellie Maitland said. "I know it was not her doing."

And she also does not believe Brianna just took off. "There weren't any keys in the car," she said. "And her two paychecks were on the front seat untouched."

Also, her ATM card, medication, makeup, clothes and contact lenses were still at her friend's house.

"She is very pretty," Kellie Maitland said. "I saw her earlier in the day (March 19). I had taken her shopping to get her dress slacks. She had a good time."

Brianna is 5 feet, 4 inches tall, weighs 105 pounds, has hazel eyes and medium length brown hair. She also has a nose stud in her left nostril and a faint scar in her left eyebrow.

Kellie Maitland said her daughter, if she were planning a trip, would have come to her for money. She doesn't understand why state police are treating this as a young woman taking off.

"I don't want anyone else going through what Maura's family is going through," Kellie Maitland said.

State police in Vermont have not been available to talk about the Maitland investigation. Detective Sgt. Heidi Glynn was unavailable for comment Friday and Sunday.

When Sharon Rausch heard another young woman has turned up missing, under similar circumstances, and that state police are treating the case as a missing person rather than a criminal investigation, she was upset.

"It's like living it all over again," said Rausch, whose son, Billie, is Maura Murray's fiance-to-be. "I feel so sorry for her."

New Hampshire State Police had not heard about Maitland's disappearance in Vermont. People with information about Maitland should call Vermont State Police at 802-524-5993.

Anyone with information about Murray should contact New Hampshire State Police at 603-271- 3636.