



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO/JUSTINE HUNT

CIRCLE OF HOPE — Friends and family of Maura Murray gathered at the track at Whitman-Hanson High School yesterday to release balloons for Murray, who has been missing since Feb. 9 after a car accident.

May 3, 2004, Globe Staff Photo/Justine Hunt

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February 15, 2004

"A Student Vanishes, and No One Knows Why - Woman Who Left Crash Had Planned a Getaway"

Peter DeMarco

Six days have passed since college student Maura Murray crashed her car on a rural highway in northern New Hampshire and disappeared without a trace. But as family, friends, and investigators continue their search for the 21-year-old Hanson native, two questions continue to baffle them: Where was Murray going, and what was she running from?

A junior in the University of Massachusetts at Amherst's nursing program, Murray was doing well in school. She had a dedicated boyfriend, a loving family, and close friends. Her father, Frederick, had just told her he wanted to buy her a new car.

But on Monday, Murray apparently decided she needed to get away from life for a while. In short order, she withdrew a few hundred dollars from an ATM machine, packed her cellphone wall charger and her favorite stuffed monkey into her Saturn, e-mailed her professors to tell them she wouldn't be in class all week, and headed north for the White Mountains. Whatever her intended destination was, she never made it there in her car.

At about 7 that night, while taking a sharp turn on Wild Ammonoosuc Road in Woodsville, N.H., Murray lost control and slammed into a snow bank. Shaken by the accident, and apparently intoxicated, Murray told a witness she didn't need help, local police said. The witness went to call the police and by the time they arrived Murray was gone.

Using tracking dogs, helicopters, and trained searchers, local and state police, as well as state fish and game officials, covered nearly 20 miles along Route 112, but found no trace of Murray's footprints in the snow. The tracking dogs lost her scent within 100 feet of the accident, leading investigators and her loved ones to believe she either hitched a ride and continued on her way, or was abducted.

"We're all under the assumption that since the trail sort of falls off someone picked her up. We really hope she doesn't quite understand how many people have been looking for her," said high school friend Carly Muise. "Maybe if she doesn't realize that, the person who gave her a ride will and will come forward." Murray, a former top student and track star at Whitman-Hanson Regional High School, is described by friends and family as a responsible, attractive young woman who is very close to her family, in particular her father, who spend yesterday checking bus stations in New Hampshire and Vermont for any signs of her.

A self-reliant woman, Murray toughed out three semesters as a chemical engineer at the US Military Academy at West Point before deciding the Army wasn't for her. Since transferring to the University of Massachusetts, she has been a successful student in the nursing program, said dean Eileen Breslin. "Nursing students are very responsible. That's part of her character," said Breslin.

If Murray was troubled by something, family and friends said, it might have been a small car accident she got into last Saturday night, when she damaged her father's new Toyota. The day after the accident, she called her boyfriend, Army Lieutenant Bill Rausch, who is stationed in Oklahoma, in tears. A day later, on Monday, she got into her Saturn and headed north.

Rausch, who got a leave of absence from the Army, arrived in New Hampshire on Thursday. Joined by his parents, who drove from Ohio, and by Murray's father and some of her siblings, Rausch has spent

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the past few days driving across both New Hampshire and Vermont, stopping at local gas stations, bus stations, and police headquarters, asking whether anyone has seen Murray.

Yesterday morning, Rausch and his father were told that Murray might have been at a McDonald's in St. Johnsbury, Vt. They drove there, but no one had seen her. "Obviously, we're hoping for the best. If I just got some news, although I guess no news is good news," Rausch said. Rausch said Murray fled with a backpack, but left many of the other items she'd packed, including the stuffed monkey he gave her and her favorite book, "Without Peril," behind in her car.

A witness told local police Murray appeared to have been intoxicated at the time of the crash, and Rausch said that there was an open bottle of alcohol in the car. However, he said he'd never known Murray to drink and drive, and guessed she might have fled out of fear she'd broken the law.

Breslin, UMass's nursing dean, said Murray had e-mailed a professor on Monday indicating she needed to take time off because of a "family problem" and will return to class this week. Her family and friends, have since spend hours plastering missing posters and calling news agencies to get her picture and story out.

"I'm hoping someone will see her and call someone to let us know she's all right. We're just sitting on eggshells waiting for that," said Laurie Murray, Murray's mother, a nurse at the Samuel Marcus Nursing Home in Weymouth. New Hampshire State Police have posted her photo on national missing persons databases, and have promised to follow any leads. So far, they have none.

"It's a difficult one," said Sgt. Robert Bruno, detective supervisor. "I wish I has more to tell you."

February 17, 2004

“With No Word From Missing Student, Family's Hopes Dim - Kin of 21-Year-Old Suspect Foul Play”

Ralph Ranalli

For all the questions torturing relatives of University of Massachusetts at Amherst nursing student Maura Murray, one thing is increasingly certain. The fact that she has not contacted them in more than a week since disappearing from a rural New Hampshire roadside, they say, means something is terribly wrong. Murray's father, mother, and boyfriend said yesterday they now believe and fear that the 21-year-old Hanson native is a victim of foul play.

"She is just a skinny, little girl, and I am getting more scared by the hour," Frederick Murray, Maura's father, said in a telephone interview from Woodsville, N.H., where his daughter disappeared Feb. 9 after crashing her Saturn into a snowbank.

Relatives have been searching in and around the small towns near the Vermont border where Maura Murray vanished, posting fliers and interviewing witnesses. As best they can determine, Murray got a ride from someone in a car shortly before police arrived at the accident scene on Wild Ammonoosuc Road, said her boyfriend, US Army Lieutenant William Rausch.

No one saw her do so, but residents on the street saw her standing on the road before police arrived, and search dogs lost her scent less than 100 yards from her wrecked car, Rausch said. "It seems apparent that she most certainly jumped in a vehicle," Rausch said. "An older couple who lives here put her at [the Saturn] one minute before the police arrived."

Given the preparations Murray had apparently made for a trip, relatives had hoped for much of the last week that she may have wanted to be by herself or that she was too embarrassed to call home after crashing a second car in three days.

At the time she left Amherst, relatives said, Murray had been upset that she had crashed her father's car two days earlier. Before heading north toward the White Mountains, Murray withdrew a few hundred dollars from an ATM machine, packed her cellphone wall charger and her favorite stuffed monkey into her Saturn, and e-mailed her professors to tell them she would not be in class all week because of a "family problem."

But with each passing day, hopes that she abandoned her car, hitched a ride, and continued her journey are fading, her mother said. It would be out of character for her daughter not to call, her mother said. "She knows I'm a worrier," Laurie Murray of Weymouth said.

Also out of character, family members said, were reports from witnesses that Murray appeared to be intoxicated just after the crash. Murray, a former top student and track standout at Whitman-Hanson Regional High School, is described by friends and family as a responsible young woman who is very close to her family, particularly her father.

She spent three semesters as a chemical engineer at the US Military Academy at West Point before transferring to the nursing program at UMass.

New Hampshire State Police have opened a missing-person investigation into Murray's disappearance and posted her photo on a national law enforcement database. A spokesman said yesterday there were no new developments in the case.

February 20, 2004

“With No New Leads, FBI Joins Search for Missing Student”

Peter DeMarco

The FBI has joined in the search for missing college student Maura Murray, but without a single lead in the nearly two-week old case, New Hampshire authorities said the additional investigators might not make a difference. Murray, a 21-year-old Hanson native and nursing student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, vanished the night of Feb. 9 after crashing her car into a snowbank on a rural road in Woodsville, N.H.

Police in helicopters and with their dogs searched the area for a second time yesterday, but with no evidence that Murray fled into the woods, her family and authorities believe she either hitched a ride and is on her own, or was abducted. Missing persons cases are typically handled by local and state authorities unless a federal crime has been committed.

So far, investigators have found no evidence that Murray was kidnapped or taken across state lines. Nevertheless, at the urging of Murray's father, Fred, New Hampshire State Police are now working with Boston-based FBI agents on the case, officials said. Though police have questioned many of Murray's family members and friends, FBI agents will probably return to UMass-Amherst and Hanson for further interviews and background checks, said Lieutenant John Scarinza, commander of State Police Troop F.

"We're now at the phase where we need to learn more about the week before Maura headed north," he said. "If any friends or associates or classmates had any discussions with her about her wanting to come up north, or places she'd like to visit, or important destinations, we'd like to hear from them. Maybe that would help us understand where she went, or why."

Hours before she departed for New Hampshire on Feb. 9, Murray e-mailed a professor and her part-time campus job to say she was heading home for the week because of a death in the family, according to school officials and the Massachusetts Daily Collegian, a student newspaper.

Withdrawing \$280 from an ATM, she loaded her Saturn with clothing, a book, and a stuffed toy monkey and headed to New Hampshire, where she had frequently hiked with her father. She told no one of her plans. About 7 that evening, she lost control on a sharp bend on Route 112 in Woodsville. Unhurt, but appearing to be intoxicated, she refused help from a motorist who offered assistance and was gone when police reached her car about 10 minutes later, officials said.

Fearing that Murray may have been taken across state lines and unaware of any major issue she might have been struggling with, her family urged the FBI to get involved. Woodsville is about 5 miles from the Vermont border and about a two-hour drive from New York, Maine, and Canada.

Fred Murray, who is scheduled to appear on ABC-TV's "Good Morning America" today to discuss his daughter's disappearance, said the FBI involvement is a good start, but not enough. "They're saying the FBI is in, but that's a very limited scale," he said. "I'd like to see the best case scenario -- agents crawling all over the place up here."

Scarinza said investigators, including detectives at UMass-Amherst, share Murray's concerns. At the same time, he cautioned that people sometimes escape to the White Mountains without telling their family or friends. "She's an adult. If you want to go on vacation for a few weeks, you have a right to do that. But even the FBI is not going to go to California to see if she's on vacation there," he said.

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"Hopefully, by the close of [today] we will have talked to everyone at least twice within a reasonable radius of the area. We're talking 5 miles, give or take," he continued. "There's no evidence of a struggle near or around the car. No witness says there was an altercation. No evidence that any criminal offense has happened to her. Yes, she's missing. It's frustrating for the family. And law enforcement officials are frustrated too. We have no idea where she is."

February 21, 2004

"Map Clue Spurs Search for Student in Vermont"

Peter DeMarco

Police are searching the Burlington, Vt., area for missing college student Maura Murray after a review of her personal computer revealed she used the Internet on the day she disappeared to obtain driving directions there. Fred Murray, the missing woman's father, said University of Massachusetts at Amherst campus police discovered yesterday that the junior nursing student had used Mapquest.com to research directions to Burlington on Feb. 9. Hours later, she crashed her car into a snowbank in Woodsville, N.H., and vanished without a trace.

Murray's father said he also discovered a note card that mentioned Burlington among many personal belongings she had packed in her car. The two last visited the northern Vermont city on Columbus Day weekend, when they hiked nearby Camel's Hump Mountain and Mount Mansfield.

New Hampshire State Police -- who are investigating Murray's disappearance, along with Haverhill, N.H., police and the FBI -- notified authorities in Vermont yesterday to be on the lookout for the slender, 5-foot-7 Hanson, Mass., woman, who was last seen nearly two weeks ago. "We mentioned to all the officers at roll call to be on the lookout for her," said Lieutenant Scott Davidson of the Burlington police. "We have her picture. The South Burlington police are looking for her, too."

New Hampshire State Police Lieutenant John Scarinza said yesterday that for several days police have been checking motels and hotels in several Vermont communities. Investigators know of no one Murray might know in the Burlington area, he said. "Vermont State Police, Burlington police, and other local agencies have canvassed motels in Burlington, South Burlington, Colchester, Shelburne, and surrounding towns to see if she checked in anywhere around," he said.

Authorities used helicopters and dogs to search the area where Murray crashed last week and again on Thursday, but have found no indication that she fled into nearby woods or evidence of foul play. Nevertheless, her family and friends say they believe she was kidnapped. What is clear is that Murray, a conscientious nursing student and former West Point cadet, was deeply troubled by something in the days preceding her disappearance.

On Thursday, Feb. 5, Murray was working at her campus job at a security desk in a UMass-Amherst dormitory when she received a phone call that made her cry, said her father and a high school friend, Andrea Connolly. She was so disturbed by the call that her supervisor had to escort her home. Two days later, she damaged her father's car in a minor accident. Distraught over her fender-bender, she called her boyfriend, Army Lieutenant Bill Rausch, in tears the next day.

About 24 hours later, on Feb. 9, she lied to a professor and the campus art gallery where she worked, informing them through e-mails that she needed to return to her hometown of Hanson because of a death in the family, officials and family members said.

Murray then withdrew \$280 from an ATM, packed all her belongings as if she were moving out, and took off with some of them in her Saturn. A witness who offered Murray help after she crashed her car told police she appeared to be intoxicated, officials said. An open bottle of alcohol was found in the car, Rausch said.

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By the time Haverhill police arrived at the accident scene, Murray, who had asked the witness not to call authorities, was gone. Fred Murray said he had planned to talk to his daughter that night about filling out a police report in the earlier accident. In her car was a blank accident form from the Amherst police. "I'm convinced she was going to call me Monday night and was going to make out the form," he said. "If she wasn't going to do it, why go to the Amherst police and get the form? That makes me think she was unable to make the call. That's why I think she's been physically harmed and is in danger." New Hampshire officials, respectful of her family's concerns, caution that Murray may have simply gone away for a few days without informing anyone.

"I totally appreciate the family's frustration in not knowing where she is or what has happened," Scarinza said. "But it's also true that she was apparently leaving Massachusetts without telling her family or friends or her boyfriend. That indicates to me that perhaps she wanted to get away on her own."

Murray's family has offered a reward for information and has created a website, www.spbowers.com/mauramissing.html.

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February 27, 2004

“Footprints in the Snow”

Brian McGrory

Haverhill, N.H. -- They say the hardest thing that any parent can ever be called upon to do is bury their child. But standing amid the glorious scenery of the White Mountains this week, where an uneven layer of snow coated the meadows like vanilla frosting on a homemade cake, I had to think there might be something even worse. And Fred Murray is living it right now.

Murray is from the South Shore. His daughter, Maura, a 21-year-old nursing student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, vanished into the thin air of the northern New Hampshire wilderness this month. She had a minor car accident along a pitch black stretch of rural road on Feb. 9, and in the 10 minutes it took police to respond, she was gone. Her cellphone hasn't been used since. Her credit cards haven't registered any purchases. She left most of her clothing in a suitcase in the back of the disabled car. And her father, her sister, her brothers, her friends have no idea what they're supposed to do now.

Immediately, they descended upon this hamlet en masse. They scrambled through the dense woods nearby. They drove a hundred miles in every direction, tacking fliers to telephone polls and bulletin boards of local stores. They stopped at bus stations in hopes that someone might have seen something. "I followed footsteps through the snow," Fred Murray said this week. When he saw a set of prints, he took off after them. This much is known: At UMass, Maura received a call on the evening of Feb. 5 that reduced her to tears. A couple of days later, she told professors she'd be gone for a week for a family emergency. On Feb. 9, she left her boyfriend of three years, an army lieutenant in Oklahoma, an e-mail and voice mail in which she indicated nothing wrong, packed her car, and headed north.

The next time she was seen was in this tiny valley town, by Butch Atwood, a 58-year-old local school bus driver who passed her car as it sat in the snowbank. He said he stopped and asked if she needed help. She declined. He drove the 100 yards to his house and called the police. When they arrived, she was gone. Authorities sent a heat-seeking helicopter along the treetops as recently as yesterday.

They used dogs to try to trace her steps away from the accident scene. They dispatched cadaver-sniffing canines into the forest, all to no avail.

Eventually, life continues, bills need to be paid, and last weekend Fred Murray had to get back home.

"The worst part was driving home alone," he said. "Then I stopped in her room at UMass, and that was pretty awful." The two were uncommonly tight since she was a young girl. Both avid runners, they trained together. They hiked regularly in New Hampshire. "I was looking for some hint that she might have left for me, something that I'd understand that would say goodbye," he said of her room search. "But there wasn't anything."

"We weren't strangers; we were very close. I can't see her not saying goodbye to me. That's why I suspect foul play." Her father acknowledges that she was fleeing school for reasons that he said are still unclear. He also believes that once she crashed, only two scenarios remain: She was picked up on the road by someone who wanted to help her or by someone who hurt her. If it was the former, they would have already come forward to let authorities know where she went.

Butch Atwood, the last witness to see her, has been questioned several times by police. Worried that he should have helped more, he told me outside his cabin this week, "I have some sleepless nights now." If

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Maura Murray is alive and well, she ought to know that hearts are broken. She should know that no mistake is insurmountable. People forgive. Time and attention heal feelings and wounds.

These days, when Fred Murray's phone rings, he jumps. Minutes drag like hours. Shady psychics and gumshoes keep offering help. "I just want to get my little girl back," he said. Hopefully, there's a happy ending. It's just tough to see it now.

March 2, 2004

**“Investigator Joins Search for Woman - Family of Woman Hires Investigator”
Associated Press/Boston Globe**

A private investigator is assisting in the search for a missing Massachusetts woman who was last seen three weeks ago following a minor car crash in northern New Hampshire. R. C. Stevens of PSII Inc., a Northampton, Mass., private investigation agency, is helping to look into the disappearance of 21-year-old Maura Murray, who was last seen the night of Feb. 9. It appears that Murray, a nursing student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, was planning a getaway. She lied to professors about a death in the family, said she would be gone from class for the week, then packed her belongings as if she were moving out. Her family and friends believe she was given a ride and want police to treat her disappearance as a criminal investigation.

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March 2, 2004

“Where Could Maura Be?”

Brian McGrory

The mystery continues to deepen around Maura Murray, the nursing student who vanished in New Hampshire three weeks ago after she slammed her car into some trees on a dark, rural road.

Investigators have determined the origin of an unusual telephone call that Murray received a few nights before she fled the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The conversation upset her so much that she had to be escorted from her job to her dorm room.

The call, according to UMass police Lieutenant Robert Thrasher, came from one of Murray's two sisters. But Thrasher said police have yet to receive an explanation of what was so upsetting.

Yesterday, Fred Murray, the girls' father, said he was told that Maura's sister called her to talk about a "monstrous" fight with a boyfriend. "But I don't think that would upset her all that much," Murray said.

The more details are revealed, the more baffling the case becomes, police acknowledge. Yesterday, Thrasher said that Maura had fastidiously packed all her belongings into boxes before she left school, even removing the art from her dorm room walls. Meanwhile, one UMass friend has seemingly withheld information from police, saying she didn't want to get Maura "in trouble."

UMass investigators, who have interviewed dozens of potential witnesses and combed through Murray's computer, shared an in-depth time line that preceded the disappearance. Murray received the call on Thursday evening, Feb. 5. On Saturday, Feb. 7, Maura and a girlfriend had dinner with Fred Murray, who was visiting Amherst. Afterward, the father returned to his hotel, and the two young women attended a campus party.

At 3:30 a.m. Feb. 8, Maura crashed her father's new Toyota into a roadside post. She told her father about the accident later that morning. Just after midnight on Monday morning, Feb. 9, she conducted a Map Quest search of the Berkshires and Burlington, Vt., on her personal computer.

At 3:40 p.m. Monday, she withdrew \$280 from an area ATM, then stopped at a liquor store. Surveillance cameras at the bank machine and in the store show that she was alone.

Maura was next seen at 7 p.m. in the White Mountains hamlet of Haverhill, N.H., an area where she had hiked and camped with her father. School bus driver Butch Atwood came across her car in an embankment, he said, and stopped to ask if she needed help.

When she declined, he drove the 100 yards to his cabin and summoned police. By the time authorities arrived seven to 10 minutes later, she was gone. Her bank card, credit cards, and cellphone have been dormant since.

Authorities are exploring four scenarios, all of which they say contain flaws.

Least likely is that she committed suicide. She left no note. Her grades were excellent. Her medical records showed no issues, and her relationships appeared sound. One investigator characterized her ongoing e-mail exchange with her boyfriend, an Army lieutenant in Oklahoma, as "sappy."

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Second unlikeliest is that, intoxicated, she ventured into the woods and was overcome by the elements. But dogs couldn't trace her scent, there were no footprints in the fresh snow, and helicopters equipped with heat-seeking devices were no help.

Third is that in the brief window of time, she was picked up by someone who abducted or killed her. But authorities believe the odds of a violent criminal coincidentally coming across her on the rural road are as remote as the location itself.

Fourth is that she was picked up by a passerby, taken to a bus station, and fled the area, possibly with little idea of the anguish she has left behind.

This may have started innocently, with a confused young woman needing a break from the pressures of student life. But it isn't ending well. Maura, if you're alive, if you're able, come home. And if she's not, there's someone, somewhere who has some idea of what happened that night.

April 4, 2004

"More Searches Set for Mass. Woman - Family Still Hoping to Find Missing Woman"
Associated Press/Boston Globe

HAVERHILL, N.H. (AP) — Family and friends continued their search this weekend for a Massachusetts woman who disappeared after a car accident in northern New Hampshire in February. "I'll never give up hope," the missing woman's mother, Laurie Murray, said through tears yesterday. Although state officials ended their search weeks ago, K-9 *dog* teams from the Adirondack Rescue Dog Association resumed searching the Haverhill area for any sign of Maura Murray, 21, of Hanson, Mass. Police have said there is no evidence of foul play and are treating the disappearance as a missing person investigation.* Numerous searches, using dogs and helicopter, turned up no sign that Murray wandered into the snow-covered woods and led police to sat Murray may have wanted to get away on her own for a while.*

Searchers found no signs of struggle at the scene, and it appears Murray was planning a getaway. She lied to professors about a death in the family, and said she would be gone from class for the week. Then she packed her belongings as if she was moving out. Police said Murray may have wanted to get away for a while. Her mother said she doesn't buy it.

From her home in Hanson, Mrs. Murray said she doesn't buy it.

"Two months, and there have been no clues, nothing. Isn't that odd." she said. Laurie Murray, whose daughter attended the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, said she planned to travel to the Haverhill area today to deliver a message to police.

The distraught mother/Mrs. Murray said she planned to travel to the Haverhill area on Sunday to deliver a message to police.

Mrs. Murray said she also wants to help distribute new fliers announcing that the reward for information leading to Maura Murray has risen to \$40,000 Sharon Rausch, whose son, Billy, is Murray's boyfriend, said she her son and Murray's family have not given up hope she will be found and safely returned. "She's not a runaway," she said. "She was abducted. She would never not call her family."

Fred Murray, the missing woman's father, said he was impressed by the teams when they searched the area last weekend. He was returning to the scene this weekend to search areas not being searched by the K 9 teams.

Meanwhile, Rausch is enlisting the help of University of Massachusetts at Amherst officials. Murray was a junior nursing student there Rausch is asking them to send an e mail message to students this month reading: "Please help us find Maura. Please forward this to all the contacts in your address book." The email will contain a description of Murray and information about the accident on the night of Feb. 9. "It will literally (reach) hundreds of thousands of people," Rausch said.

April 11, 2004

"Missing Student's Kin Skeptical of Psychic"

Peter DeMarco

Maura Murray's parents have reacted with skepticism to a nationally known psychic profiler who believes the missing college student was abducted and murdered after vanishing from a rural New Hampshire road on Feb. 9.

"I don't believe her," said Laurie Murray, of Hanson, whose daughter disappeared without a trace after crashing her car into a snowbank in Woodsville, N.H. "I don't believe in [psychics] at all."

Murray's father, Fred Murray, of Weymouth, said he was not sure whether to believe California profiler Carla Baron, who said she has had psychic visions of his daughter's abduction and death. But with law enforcement officials at a loss to explain his 21-year-old daughter's disappearance, Fred Murray said he is willing to listen to anyone offering help.

"About five or six psychics have contacted me. I have no idea whether they know what they're talking about or not," he said. "If they're wrong, they're wrong. It's worth a try, [as] the police seem to be out of ideas and there's no information coming forward."

Murray, who believes his daughter was abducted, said he contacted Baron a few weeks ago after being told of her strong track record with missing persons cases. The California psychic said she has helped dozens of police departments with homicide and missing persons cases over the past 20 years. Baron said yesterday that after speaking with Fred Murray on the phone, she saw visions of Maura Murray and received messages from her in the form of thoughts.

Baron said she believes Murray hitched a ride with "a clean-cut looking man" in a truck following her car accident the night of Feb. 9. The man then sexually assaulted her and buried her body in a sparsely wooded area that may be a construction site, Baron said.

Her assailant, Baron added, has killed at least one other woman whose body is buried close to Murray's. "He happened to be driving by her. It was an opportunity. That's the thrill for him -- he never knows where the thrill will be," Baron said.

Baron equated her visions to snippets of a movie film, in which she perceives some details but not others. She could not say where Murray was picked up by her assailant, or whether Murray had hitched previous rides.

The psychic said she also was not sure why Murray, a nursing student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and former college track star, abruptly packed her belongings the day she disappeared and drove to New Hampshire without telling any friends or family members of her plans. Fred Murray said he met with New Hampshire State Police on Friday to inform them about Baron's psychic reading. At his urging, Baron said, she left her contact information with investigators.

Baron, who was featured with psychic John Edwards on the 2003 Court TV program "Psychic Detectives," and has made several television and radio appearances, acknowledged that her readings are often met with skepticism.

While in some instances she has led investigators directly to victims, she said, on other occasions her input is merely a starting point for an investigation.

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"Hopefully we can start talking," she said. "Even if there is one little piece of information I have that can assist them in finding where she is, it's [worth it]."

New Hampshire State Police have said they have yet to find evidence of foul play in Murray's disappearance. The lead investigator on the case, John Scarinza, could not be reached yesterday.

April 16, 2004

“N.H. Police Consult Psychic on Missing Woman”

Peter DeMarco

New Hampshire State Police interviewed a California psychic yesterday who says she had visions of a man abducting Maura Murray, the Hanson native who disappeared in February after a minor car crash on a rural New Hampshire road.

Lieutenant John Scarinza, the lead investigator, said he spoke with psychic profiler Carla Baron and plans to talk to her again, but he did not share details of their conversation.

Baron, a nationally known psychic, told Fred Murray that she believes his daughter was abducted and killed. Baron said the visions indicated that Murray was buried near another woman abducted by the same man. Scarinza said authorities would consider Baron's psychic visions as they would any other tip. "Mr. Murray has asked us if we could listen to what this woman has to say. We're not close-minded to talking to anyone," he said. Baron was profiled last night on ABC's "Primetime Thursday." She has aided numerous police departments in missing persons and homicide cases.

More than a dozen psychics have called New Hampshire State Police offering assistance with the Murray case, Scarinza said. But Murray's father has only asked police to speak with Baron.

Meanwhile, the police chief in Haverhill, N.H., where Maura Murray was last seen, has warned her family members that they could be arrested if they trespass on property surrounding the accident site, according to the Associated Press. Police Chief Jeff Williams said in an April 2 letter to Murray's father that his department has received a written request from area residents complaining about repeated trespassing and parking problems, the AP reported.

Murray's family believes that the 21-year-old woman, a nursing student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, was abducted by someone who offered her a ride just minutes before police responded to a 911 call about her car accident. Authorities have found no evidence of foul play and say they have been unable to determine where she was headed at the time of the accident. Investigators plan to conduct further aerial searches of the wooded area in Woodsville, N.H., where Murray crashed into a snowbank on Feb. 9, Scarinza said.

State Police and New Hampshire Fish and Game officials, along with a team of dogs, are preparing for another "line search" of the area in hopes of finding any of Murray's belongings, such as a backpack, that were apparently missing from her car, he said.

While similar searches have already been made, Scarinza said, "We don't want to leave anything to chance."

May 7, 2004

“New Lead Is Reported in Search for Student - Woman Was Seen Along N.H. Road”

David Abel

A new witness recently came forward, providing a lead for investigators in the disappearance of a 22-year-old nursing student from Hanson, police have told the family.

New Hampshire State Police told the parents of Maura Murray, who disappeared in February after abruptly leaving her dorm at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, that a motorist recalled seeing a woman fitting their daughter's description jogging along Route 112 on the night she vanished.

The motorist, apparently a local contractor who commutes along the route every day, told police he saw the woman turn down a dirt road as he approached, said Laurie Murray, the missing student's mother.

"I hope this helps and at least keeps it in the news to help find my daughter," said Murray.

State Police Lieutenant John Scarinza said the man reported seeing someone fitting Maura Murray's description along the road in Haverhill, N.H., the Associated Press reported. The spot was 4 or 5 miles from where Murray had a minor car accident that disabled her vehicle just before her disappearance.

Police said they will search that area this weekend.

The witness said he saw Murray around 7 p.m. on Feb. 9, around the time she disappeared, police told the Murrays.

"I am encouraged by the lead," said Fred Murray, Maura's father, who added that he plans to hold a news conference tomorrow morning in Woodsville, N.H., to release more details. "All I can say now is we've got her alive and moving at a particular place at a particular time. I believe it's my daughter, based on the description."

Police told the family the man did not come forward earlier because he didn't connect reports of Murray's disappearance with the woman he saw.

May 9, 2004

**“State Police Find Skeletal Remains - New England in Brief / Livermore, N.H.”
Globe Staff**

The skeletal remains of what could be a hiker were recovered by New Hampshire State Police yesterday about 500 feet from the summit of Mt. Kancamagus in Livermore, N.H., police said. The unidentified remains, which include a skull, were found by a hiker who ventured off a trail on Friday. The remains appear to be at least a year old, and based on their apparent age, police have ruled out the possibility they could belong to missing college student Maura Murray of Hanson, who vanished in February about 25 miles away.

May 9, 2004

“Families of Missing Women Gather - Parents, Siblings Seek Support, Connection Between Three Cases”

Mike Recht

HAVERHILL - The families of two missing women came together in Haverhill on Saturday to plead for help from the public and federal authorities.

Fred Murray of Weymouth, Mass., whose daughter, Maura, 21, disappeared on Feb. 9 in Haverhill after a minor car accident, set up the meeting before starting another weekend of searching.

He was joined by Bruce and Kellie Maitland of East Franklin, Vt., whose daughter, Brianna, 17, was last seen on March 19 after she left work at the Black Lantern Inn in Montgomery, Vt.

Also lending their support were the parents of 20-year-old Amie Riley of New Hampshire, who was last seen leaving a bar in August. Her body was found last month in a marsh.

Although they had never met before, the parents hugged tearfully, knowing each other's pain. Murray said the three cases “easily could be” connected, although state police said there is no evidence pointing in that direction.

Murray said the three investigations should be centrally coordinated by an agency such as the FBI, since they cross state lines.

“There is substantial reason for the FBI to be involved,” he said. “People should be yelling for the FBI to come in.”

“What if the cases are not related and a local person is involved?” he said. “Then people here should be uneasy. It takes a local to catch a local.”

Bruce Maitland said any missing person older than 12 is treated as a runaway. Murray and the Maitlands pleaded for anyone to come forward if they think they have any information about the whereabouts of their daughters.

“It can come to you; it can be your family; it can be your daughter,” Kellie Maitland said. Asked what message she wanted to send to the public, she shouted tearfully, “not one more girl; not one more beautiful girl.”

Charlotte and Michael Riley have been lobbying lawmakers to change the rules for reporting a missing adult. According to Mrs. Riley, it took police three months to enter her daughter's name into the National Crime Information Center system.

About 15 Fish and Game officers, joined by the New England Canine and the Upper Valley Wilderness Response team with six dogs, searched the woods for Maura Murray, a University of Massachusetts student, about five miles east of the accident site on Route 112. A limited ground and helicopter search was conducted in March, and another helicopter search was done last week, Fish and Game officer Todd Bogardus said.

THE BOSTON GLOBE (2004)

The search was prompted by a new witness account of a woman fitting Murray's description walking along the road that night.

Searchers would not be out again unless some evidence is found, he said.

"There is substantial reason for the FBI to be involved. People should be screaming for the FBI to come in." - Fred Murray, Father of missing 21-year-old.

June 3, 2004

“Police Say Husband Confesses in Slaying - New England in Brief / Hyde Park, VT.”
Globe Staff

The husband of a Johnson woman missing since last week has confessed to killing her, police said last night. Earlier in the day investigators discovered the body of a woman but officials said they could not positively identify it as that of Jodie Whitney. At a late- afternoon news conference held to announce the discovery of the body, Lamoille County Sheriff Roger Marcoux described Edgar Whitney as a suspect in the disappearance of his wife. Edgar Whitney tried to kill himself by overdosing on pills yesterday morning, said Marcoux. Marcoux said investigators were still looking for links between the cases of two other missing women from the region. Marcoux and a State Police detective were still planning to meet Friday with New Hampshire detectives to look for links between the cases. In February Maura Murray, a University of Massachusetts student, disappeared after a minor car accident in Haverhill, N.H., about 75 miles from Johnson. In March, Brianna Maitland of Sheldon disappeared after leaving her job in Montgomery.