

South Lake Tahoe victim of hit and run DUI coping in pain; hopes to walk, work again

By Kathryn Reed

“There is no prognosis for full recovery. I will have problems for the rest of my life.”

That is the life sentence Adam Rose has been left with after being hit by a drunken driver in August while riding his bike on Emerald Bay Road between his house and the store. The sentence for the woman who hit him has yet to be rendered.

The 38-year-old South Lake Tahoe resident spends two to three days a week going to physical and occupational therapy. Every six weeks he sees an orthopedist in Reno.

The woman who hit him, 54-year-old Christine Whalen of South Lake Tahoe, sits in the El Dorado County Jail unable to post bail. She is headed for prison.



Adam Rose before he was injured. Photo/Provided

“One day I was building a deck for a client and riding my bike to the store and the next second I was hit by a drunk driver and left on the side of the road for dead,” Rose says of how his life has unfolded. “I received a life sentence of sorts. I will never be able to do a lot of things I wanted to do. I will never be able to go free climb a mountain or backpack. I used to go backpacking. I cannot do that again. I really liked my work ... and I can’t do that.”

But it’s even the basics of life that Rose has difficulty with. He can barely walk. Crutches and a wheelchair are how he gets around most of the time.

He can’t drive.

“My right foot won’t lift up. You need range of motion for the gas pedal,” Rose told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He pays for the bus to pick him up to take him to physical therapy.

Rose was a contractor before the accident. He remodeled kitchens, bathrooms, put on new decks, laid wood floors and did other work.

Like many who are self-employed, he didn’t have health or disability insurance. He has been able to get health insurance through El Dorado County that pays for his physical therapy.

He lives with his girlfriend who pays most of their bills.

Rose has an attorney who is working with Whalen’s insurance. What the payout might be he doesn’t know – assuming there is one.

Even though he is in constant pain, the most meds he’ll now take is an over the counter drug like Advil.

This, despite losing 50 percent of the muscle in his left forearm that he says will never come back. His arm strength is about 20 percent of what it was. He's lucky if he can lift something that weighs 2 pounds. His hand cannot open all the way.

His right leg was broken in three places.

Rose's days are spent "burning a hole in the couch" with all the sitting. Even cooking is an ordeal because he can't lift pots and pans.

"I would love to be able to walk again. I want to take my dog for a walk," Rose said. "I know I will always have a limp. If I can walk with a cane, that would be a goal. I would love to work again."

He knows he will never return to the physical labor he so enjoyed. But a management position in construction is something he sees as a real possibility.

"I have a good attitude, good sprit. I'm looking at things positively, though realistically," Rose said. "I have not had depression, other than what would normally be expected."

Rose says he has forgiven Whalen, but it will be impossible to forget that fateful day.

"I do think if she only ends up serving a short stint in prison, she is getting off easy. I think she should do 15 to 20 years, not two to three," Rose said.

Whalen was driving on Highway 89 near 12th Street in South Lake Tahoe on Aug. 21 when her vehicle struck Rose, who was on his bicycle. She fled the scene.

One day Whalen will go to prison. She has pleaded guilty to felony hit-and-run with injury, felony driving under the influence and causing injury, and felony failure to yield with the intent to evade. This is will be a strike under

California's three strikes law.

She could be sentenced from zero time with felony probation to about five or so years in state prison. The time she has spent in El Dorado County Jail does not count toward prison time. Ultimately it is up to the judge.

The probation department is working on a presentencing report. Rose will be interviewed for the report and could speak at the sentencing hearing.

"It is very unusual for someone to plead out in this manner. It appears to reflect her remorse and willingness to accept responsibility for her actions without need of trial or even a preliminary hearing," El Dorado County Assistant District Attorney Hans Uthe told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Whalen has no prior convictions.

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Terry Soule, Adam Rose's mother, shares her thoughts in this column.