

Lifetime Dream Cut Short

The Story of Officer Anthony Dwyer

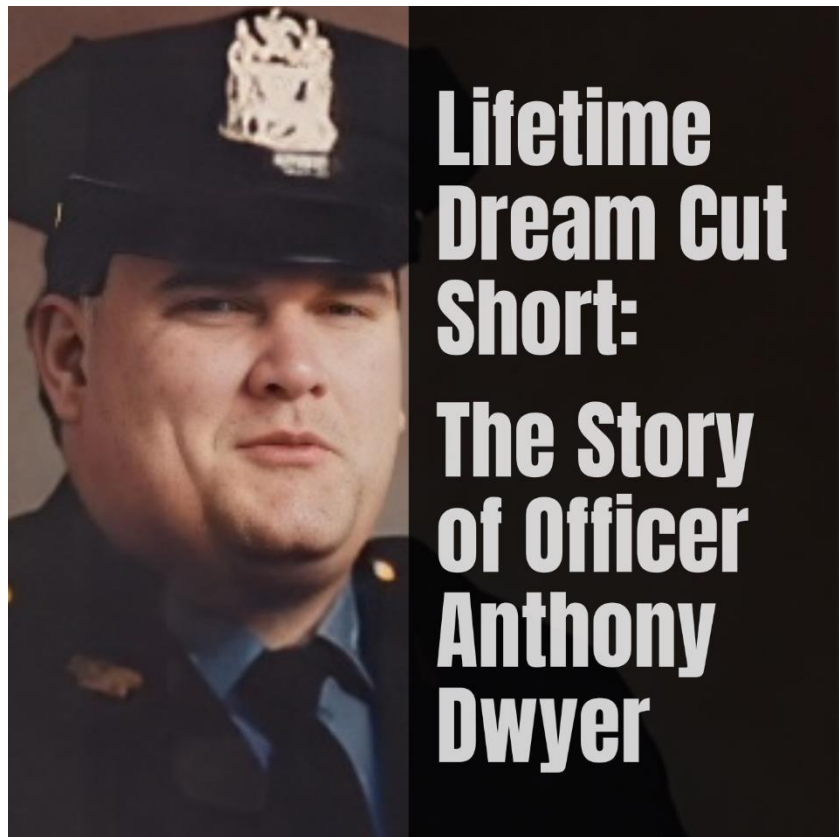
Anthony Dwyer lived to help others, said his mother Marge Dwyer. She remembered when Anthony was about 12 years old that he asked to borrow some money from his father. Anthony reassured his dad that he would pay him back when he became a cop. Even at a young age, Anthony was serious about that dream. When he was able to take the police exam, he prepared for it. “He became 100% student, going to the library, constantly reading, to make sure he could pass it,” said Marge Dwyer of her son. “The greatest day of his life was when he graduated from the police academy,” she added.

Anthony Dwyer’s desire to help people didn’t start with the NYPD, though. His brother, Andy, also an NYPD officer said, “Anthony was always helping people. He taught religious instruction at his church, he was a volunteer fireman, always helping.” Andy recalled that one of Anthony’s high school friends was involved in a serious crash and was comatose. Anthony went to visit his friend every day, and he was there when he came out of his coma.

But everything changed on October 17, 1989 at about

3:00 in the morning when 3 armed suspects entered a McDonald’s Restaurant on Seventh Avenue at 40th Street near Times Square. At gunpoint, the robbers rounded up the employees who were working the overnight shift. A couple of them were able to escape, and they summoned police. Two of the first arriving officers were Anthony Dwyer and Jerry Kane.

Jerry Kane remembered when he and Dwyer entered the restaurant, the suspects fled. Dwyer tore after one of the men who headed for the rooftop. In the struggle that ensued, the suspect kicked Officer Dwyer off of the roof, causing him to fall into a gap, described to be like an airshaft by



Officer Kane. “It was a space between 4 different buildings. He was about 30 feet down.” It was a difficult rescue, said Kane. Emergency crews had to breach a hole in the wall of an adjacent building in order to extricate Officer Dwyer. Once he was rescued and placed in the ambulance, Officer Kane asked Anthony what happened. At the time, Kane was unaware that this would be his friend’s dying declaration. Dwyer told Kane how he chased after the suspect to the rooftop and grabbed him by the leg, and then was kicked off the roof by the suspect. Enroute to the emergency room, Dwyer’s condition quickly worsened, and medics began CPR. Doctors at Bellevue tried to revive Anthony, but tragically, they were unable to save him. He died at 4:50 AM, less than 2 hours after the initial radio call came in about the armed robbery.

Officer Kane remembered that Anthony was “a very faithful kid” and he wanted to make sure that he received last rites. So Kane, a former altar boy himself, performed the ritual. “It was the best I could do”, said Kane. “I didn’t know what prayer to say. I did a Hail Mary, and an Our Father. Hopefully, hopefully I did the right thing for him.”

Shortly after the time when Officer Kane administered last rites to Anthony, two other NYPD officers were on their way to Anthony’s parent’s home to bring them to their son in the ER. Anthony’s mother Marge will never forget the knock at the door that roused her and her husband. Marge said that the officers didn’t have a lot of information for them. She still didn’t know the condition of her son, but they made the trip into the city. Marge looks back on that trip now, recalling that the police radio was turned down so they were unable to hear any transmissions about Anthony, and the Midtown Tunnel had been closed so that they could get through without delay. Soon after, they were at Bellevue. “We were there a few minutes and they told us he passed away. It was shocking, unbelievable. I just saw him a few hours ago and he was fine. Now he’s gone,” remembered Anthony’s mother, Marge.

Anthony’s sister Maureen was 11 years old when Anthony died. She told *APB Behind The Badge* that her brother was her hero. Several years later Maureen was at a gathering where people were introducing themselves. One of the people in the room was a cousin to the man that Anthony had helped through his coma. “We were at my friend’s house,” said Maureen. “We were saying our last names and the area we were from, and his face dropped.” She continued, “he said, your brother taught him (*his cousin*) how to walk. He said he was heartbroken when he learned that Anthony died because he knew that his cousin was able to walk again because of my brother.”

The trial was held about a year after the incident. And the words spoken by Officer Dwyer in the ambulance were given in testimony by Officer Jerry Kane. All told, 4 suspects were arrested for murder of a police officer, assault, burglary, and attempted robbery, along with gun charges. The suspect who directly caused Officer Dwyer’s death was convicted of murder, burglary, and attempted robbery.

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Anthony’s parents formed The Deceased Officers’ Parents Association with the Hansen family who lost their NYPD son during a training exercise. The organization provides support to parents who go through the same heartbreak as the Dwyer’s and Hansen’s in losing a son or daughter in the line of duty. At the first meeting, Marge Dwyer said a lot of the parents were hesitant. “But once you got there, you’re in a room of people who went through the same thing. It’s not a room full of people crying – we talk to each other.” The group holds dinners twice a year with assistance from the PBA. “Everyone appreciates it. It helps us, it helps them,” said Marge Dwyer. Anthony’s brother, Andy, sees the organization as a legacy of his heroic brother. “He was definitely in it to help people out. He was there to do good for people.”

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