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3 Entered Shorewood's Hammel Woods on Foot, 1 Died in River Drowning

Michael K. Hughes, 24, of Itasca was pronounced dead at the scene after authorities found his body floating in the DuPage River.



Ron Kremer, Patch Staff

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For three young men, a night out on the town turned from revelry to tragedy in a matter of moments.



Michael K. Hughes, 24, Itasca, died early Sunday morning after drowning in the DuPage River in Shorewood, according to [Forest Preserve District of Will County](#) Lt. Tracy Phillips.

Hughes and two friends—one from Bolingbrook and the other from Naperville—decided to go for a swim after departing from [The Crowd Around Me](#), a local bar, Phillips said, ignoring a “no swimming” sign posted near the dam in [Hammel Woods](#).

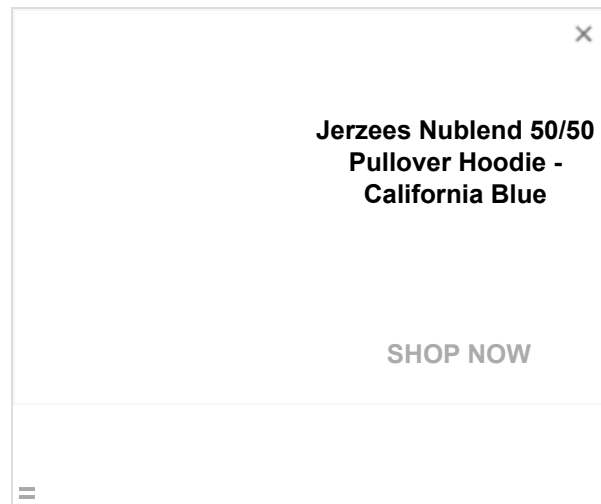
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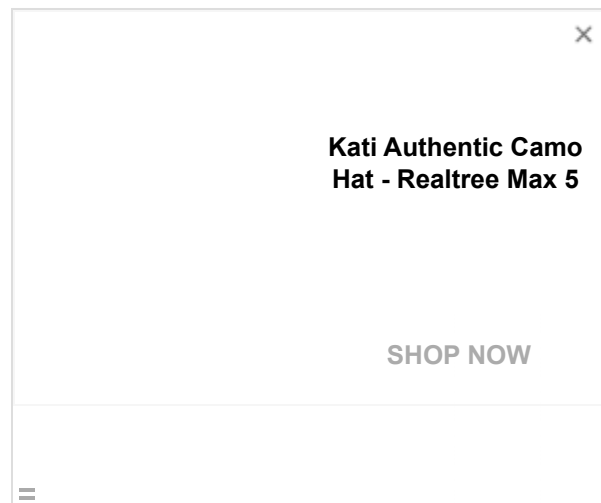
Phillips declined to release the names of Hughes’ two friends.

She said the three men left the bar about 3 a.m. and entered Hammel Woods on foot off of Jefferson Street, near a mobile home park, skirting around one of the Forest Preserve district’s locked gates. And then they decided to jump off the dam, where the current runs fast and the water is estimated to be 8-10 feet deep, she said.



“They were walking across the dam and jumping off of the top of the dam,” Phillips said. “They went over a couple of times—all of them. Then, finally, the last time the victim was in the middle. He couldn’t make it to either side.”

Phillips said Hughes was caught in the dam’s undertow and/or the river’s current. She said his two friends tried to save him—but were unable pull him out of the current and save themselves at the same time. Finally, they ran out of energy, she said.



Phillips said Hughes’ body floated 2.5 to 3 miles down river where it was discovered between 4:15 and 4:45 a.m. by a Will County Sheriff’s supervisor looking down from off of the bridge at Mound Road. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Alcohol was involved in the incident, Phillips said.

“Last year, we had some kayaks go over the dam and one flipped,” Phillips said. “But everybody was rescued. We did some articles in the paper about dam safety and how dangerous that area can be. But those are the only other things I can remember since I’ve been here.”

Phillips has worked with the Will County Forest Preserve District for 8½ years.

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