

'A modern-day miracle': College student feared to be brain dead **RECOVERS** hours before life support due to be switched off

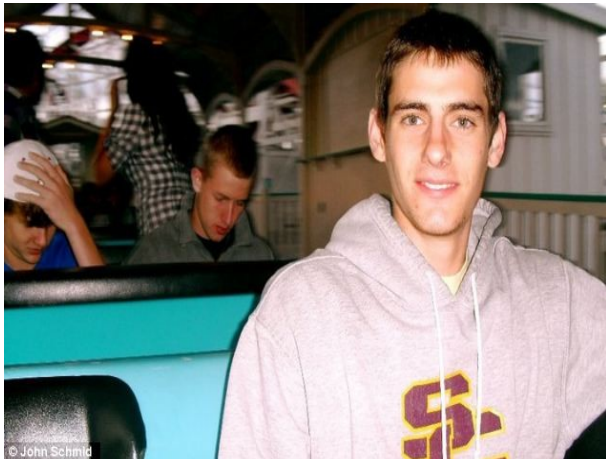
By Hannah Roberts

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He was less than a day from having his life-support machine switched off, with doctors believing he was brain dead.

Following a car crash, Arizona college student Sam Schmid was comatose with no sign of recovery and was even being considered for organ donation.

But mere hours from death, the 21-year-old staged an incredible recovery, lifting up two fingers in a sign which has been hailed as 'a Christmas miracle'.



Schmid suffered near fatal injuries in a horrific car crash in Tucson in October.

The college junior broke his left hand and both femurs in the crash. He also received life threatening trauma to the brain.

The accomplished athlete, who taught snowboarding as well as coaching basketball, had suffered a hemorrhage, an aneurysm and a stroke from the part of the aneurysm.

After surgery on the aneurysm, the business major was comatose for days, ABC News reported.

With no outward sign of recovery, doctors advising his family at Barrow Neurological Institute in Pheonix, Arizona, gave him dismal prospects.

Schmid's mother, Susan Regan, said hospital staff had begun to talk to her about 'quality of life'.

'At some point, I knew we had to make some sort of decision, and I kept praying,' she said .

But as the family prepared themselves for the worst, Schmid's doctor neurosurgeon, Dr Robert Spetzler, considered ordering one last brain scan.

Schmid did not have a blood clot in the most vital part of his brain, Dr Spetzler noted.

Nor had he had a massive stroke, which would have destroyed any chances of having a normal life. The results of the scan were promising.

Then later that same day the business major miraculously responded to doctor's commands.

In a magical moment that completely reversed the expectations of his family and doctors, Schmid 'inexplicably' moved, following the doctors' commands, to hold up two fingers.

Within seven days he was in rehab and is now beginning to walk with help. He is also making marked improvements with his speech. Doctors foresee a total recovery.

Schmid is even planning to get out of hospital for a day to spend Christmas with his family.

Regan called the recovery 'a modern-day miracle'. She said: 'Nobody could ever give me a better Christmas present than this -- ever, ever, ever.'

Brother John Schmid said: 'It seems like we were being led down a path to plan for the worst and that things were not going to work out.'

'The miracle, to put it bluntly, was that in a matter of seven days, we went from organ donation to rehab. What a roller coaster it was.'

His brother's speech is still slow, but he understands other people. The fact that Sam is athletic is likely to have helped, he said.

Medical magic: Schmid's neurosurgeon Dr Robert Spetzler insisted on one last scan before the life support machine was turned off

'Honestly, I am at a loss for words,' 'I am just so proud of Sam. He's got a strong constitution and he's very determined. But it's been quite an eye-opener for me -- a real learning curve. You can't take anything for granted.'

Dr Spetzler said his patient's extraordinary recovery was 'like fireworks all going off at the same time.'

'It looked like all the odds were stacked against him.'

'I am dumb-founded with his incredible recovery in such a short time,' Spetzler told ABC News.

'You get incredible highs when you save someone facing neurological devastation or death,' said Spetzler. 'That is counter-pointed by the incredible lows when you fail to help someone.'

'In a way, his recovery was truly miraculous,' he said. 'It's a great Christmas story.'
Watch the video

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2077595/College-student-coma-recovers-hours-life-support-switched-off.html#ixzz21oQcN2T2>