



The drink that changed my life forever

By: staff writers

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For every person lost to drink driving there are innumerable others left behind to grieve, to clean up, to carry on. Meet 11 brave souls forever changed by this scourge...

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SAVE THIS STORY

Marianne Karius, 70, lost her son Michael, 49

IT'S been seven years now, but I miss my son every day.

Mikie was a perfect son and a beautiful, beautiful man. He was a wonderful son to me.

The sad thing is that before he went to work, he said good night to me and "I'll see you for breakfast."

I never saw my son again, not even in the coffin. The way he died made it so hard because I couldn't say goodbye. It's a burden I have to carry for the rest of my life.

It's not something I think about every minute of the day but every so often, it just comes over me like a cloud of sadness.

The useless piece who did this to Mikie should still be in jail, but he got out in two years.

He was a serial drink-driver and his car ploughed into Mikie's newspaper delivery van. It burst into flames. The drink-driver blew 0.149.

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If I had my way, they would have thrown away the key. Michael lost his life and he (the driver) got a slap on the hand, despite his terrible record. If he would have walked up to Michael and put a bullet in his head, it would have been the same because it was (effectively) murder. He was drunk and unlicensed. He got six years' jail and served two.

He apologised in court, but only because he was told to by his lawyers. It was too little, too late.

Drink-drivers just don't get the message about the heartbreak they can cause. They should be banned from driving for life, even for a first offence, because what they do is just so dangerous.

Michael has two children, Nicola, who's 27, and Benny, who's 14. Nichola is doing OK but Benny really misses his father.

We all have to live without Mikie and it's difficult.



Mariane Karius with a picture of son Michael



A Mother's Pain: Dangerous Driving

Bobbie Henry remembers daughter Kelly

MY DAUGHTER Kelly was born on the 6/6/1981 and she was killed on 8/11/1998.

She was one of those very vibrant personalities who just loved to be around people and loved everyone.

I still sometimes hear Kel running up the front stairs, because to Kelly every day was exciting. From the moment she hit the driveway, all I could hear was, "Oh my goodness Mum, you'll never guess what happened to me today" - and it could be anything from getting an A in an assignment to locking a girl in a cupboard and getting in trouble for it.

She was just a little bit of a larrikin but a beautiful-hearted person.

Clairvaux MacKillop College, where she went to school, is attached to a special centre. Kelly used to take spare hats for the special kids because they would forget theirs hats and they weren't allowed out in the playground unless they had hats.

You should never, ever lose a child before yourself. You should die first. If I didn't have my faith I probably might have just rolled over and died. Now I know that I'm going to see her when I'm gone. We'll be together again.

Over the years – and it has been just gone 16 years now – I still cry every day or every week. But some days are happy when you just sit down and recall all the happy memories.

Through my role with Citizens Against Road Slaughter, I've fought a few battles with getting legislation changed and I've done a lot of youth justice work. I talk about Kelly and her death. It breaks my heart, I cry every time I do it, but I think if I can make one person realise what it's like for a family that's left behind, they may actually change their mind and they might decide never to drink and drive or never to speed.

If they kill themselves, so be it. They don't realise they are destroying their family when they kill themselves ... but how dare you take away somebody else's life!

It's no different to swinging a knife or shooting a gun down the city mall, driving a car after drinking or speeding and often you can kill more people with a car.

Kelly was a passenger in a car that hit a pole with such an impact that the motor was torn out and thrown 20m into a neighbouring yard. It was one of the straightest roads you could imagine. It was eight minutes past 12 at night.

The girl sitting behind Kelly was nursing her dead body for three hours before they could cut the car apart.

She knew Kelly was dead but she just kept patting Kelly's hair and saying, "It's OK Kel, they will be here soon." It must have been absolutely devastating for her.

The court heard that the driver had been drinking that day. Back in 1998, Queensland didn't have compulsory blood testing and no sample was taken from the driver, who was critically injured. He was sentenced on the basis of a lapse of attention. He didn't get jail. He got a \$2000 fine and a suspended sentence after pleading guilty to dangerous driving causing death.

At first I didn't have any feelings, then I hated him and the hate was eating me alive and

destroying me and my family. Now I just simply prefer not to think of him at all. I would prefer to pretend that he is non-existent.

I want people to know that the hurt never ends. The pain and the sorrow never end.

Grant Gamble is a Gold Coast paramedic with 30 years' experience

I'M A critical-care paramedic with the Queensland Ambulance Service and have spent most of my career on the Gold Coast.

I would have been to hundreds, if not thousands, of accidents over the years, many of them fatal.

Alcohol has been a factor in many of the crashes that have stolen lives and ripped families apart.

The worst are obviously those involving young kids. One of the most horrific I attended was at Cotlew St, Ashmore, a few years ago when two young boys (Khye and Zac Ross) died.

(Khye, 2, and Zac, 8, were killed when the speeding car driven by their drunk and drugged father Alan Ross rolled and flipped in June 2007. Ross, who fled the scene, was later jailed for eight years for dangerous driving causing death.)

As a father myself, that was a terrible scene. Whenever you're confronted by a scene like that, it hurts you for a significant amount of time afterwards. You hope you never have to deal with



Kelly Henry was a bubbly teenager.

another one like that again.

You never become hardened to the things you see, but you have to learn to switch off. My wife, who's a registered nurse, will often reflect with me on the awful tragedies we see in our jobs. Saving lives keeps you going.

Alcohol is still a significant factor in many crashes, along with drugs and now, of course, people texting while they're driving.

Vehicles and roads are much safer than they used to be, but people are still making the wrong decisions when it comes to things like drink and drug-driving, speeding, fatigue and texting.

So many deaths and life-changing injuries could be so easily avoided if people just took a taxi or called a family member or friend to pick them up from the pub.

A serious accident doesn't just affect the people involved; it affects family members, emergency services workers and hospital staff.

There's a sense of loss and despair. You do have that feeling that 'if only they had done this – or hadn't done that'.



Gold Coast paramedic Grant Gamble talks to the Courier Mail about the dangers of driving under the influence. Pic by Luke Marsden.



Sharon Roneberg at the memorial for her daughter Tanya, killed by a drink-driver while cycling along the Captain Cook Highway just north of Cairns. Pic: Brendan Radke

Sharon Roneberg, 60, mother of cyclist Tanya Roneberg, killed by a drink-driver

I CAN'T forgive. I won't forgive.

If he had a gun and shot her dead, he'd been in jail for life.

But he got a year. He'll be out in six months. He's about to get his life back.

Tanya got a death sentence. We got a life sentence. This was no accident. It was preventable. To us, it was murder.

It's been 18 months since Tanya was killed. We can't stand the thought her life was stolen by a drink-driver.

I'm still angry. I still cry a lot. I can't let go. I see her everywhere. I think of her every day. She's in my heart the whole time.

It's not true. Time does not heal. Nothing feels any better.

We're lost.

It was 7am, May 11, 2013, on the Captain Cook Highway, north of Cairns, near the Thomatis Creek Bridge.

Tanya was on the side of the road fixing a punctured tyre on her bike. She'd got up early to do some training.

Lewis David Morgan, then 20, of Mount Isa, had been out all night. He admitted he'd drunk up to 15 rum and cokes. He'd picked up a female backpacker.

He knew he should have stayed in bed. He should have slept it off. But he got behind the wheel of his car to drive the girl back into town.

He was still drunk. He was falling asleep. His vehicle was seen veering over the road. On the way back home, he hit Tanya head-on in his utility van at nearly 110km/h.

His roadside blood-alcohol reading was 0.091 per cent. Later at the police station it was 0.076 per cent.

Tanya was hit so hard her body flew 30m through the air and ended up in a ditch by the creek.

I'd been waiting for her. We were going to train together. I knew something was wrong. So I went looking for her.

I drove past. Saw her bike. Saw her shoe. Time stops. Every now and again it slams into you. That moment in time still haunts me.

Brett, our son, says it helps to know Tanya died instantly. His sister did not know what hit her. She was not left dying in the middle of the road.

True, she was not raped and murdered. I feel for families who have to live with the horror of that nightmare.

But she should not be dead. She should still be alive today.

Her death was a catalyst for change. One thousand people rode for her memorial. I know people are today more bike-aware in Cairns.

Her death led to better road safety for cyclists. But Tanya was killed by a drunk driver. It's got nothing to do with road safety.

I want to change the laws. I feel helpless. I want justice. The consequences are minimal. The maximum sentence is 14 years. He got 12 months.

It probably devastated his family too. He told the court he feels remorse. Maybe he does.

I don't care. He's destroyed our lives.

I like to talk about her. Tanya did so much in her life. She was involved in triathlon, swimming, Taipans basketball, and her work as legal secretary.

Her friends put a white bike at the bridge as a memorial. She had lots of friends. They've put Christmas decorations on it. It's lit up like a Christmas tree.

People still comment almost every day on her Facebook page. She was a Facebook Queen. They write stuff like they are talking to her.

I ran a half-marathon on her birthday. It was November 9. I'm 60 years old. She would have been 39. I wanted her to be proud of me. It took me three hours and 13 minutes.

That same day, her friend wrote on Tanya's Facebook page: "I f---en hate you're not here".



Sharon and Geoff Roneberg walk along Trinity Beach, one of Tanya's favourite spots.

I feel the same way.



Tow truck driver traumatised after a fatal car crash scene at Glenview

Tow truck driver Glen Giles recalls the worst job of his career

I KNOW the accident to the day.

I've undergone several counselling sessions; but there are times when I speak about the crash and still get emotional. I don't know that that will ever go away. It will diminish with time but I'll never forget.

I received the call at 9pm on August 22 this year to attend a crash at Glenview on the Sunshine Coast.

We have police scanners in our trucks so I knew well before I got there that it was a bad one.

They weren't saying anything, but you could tell by the amount of units they were calling in.

People were coming from everywhere.

Later, I saw a policeman being interviewed on TV who said that particular crash — in which a mum and three of her four children died — was the worst one he'd seen in 25 years. Yet, officially, it was the first fatal I'd ever attended.

When I arrived at the scene, there were emergency crews everywhere. I didn't even know where the car was at that stage.

I was told to go 100m down the road, put my truck sideways, and just turn cars around. Two or three hours later, I left to go back home because it wasn't our company's turn to tow.

I was only home about half an hour when I got the phone call to go back because the other towing company hadn't picked up their phone.

The firefighter then walked me through the scene. It was so clinical.

A young boy who was deceased was still at the scene, under a tarp, and the mother was still in the vehicle. I had to recover the vehicle with her in it.

The car was in two major pieces. It was split by the tree. The third row of seats had come out through the bottom of the car, and that was resting against the young boy.

There was torrential rain and we were all drenched to the skin. It took me almost three hours to recover the car and unload it at the other end. The police and fireys filled up six or seven large garbage bags, containing mostly personal items like clothes and toys.

When you see bits of metal and plastic, it's just that — metal and plastic. But as soon as you see something like that, you know it's not just a piece of clothing, but there was a person who fitted it.

As it was such a horrific accident, my work tried to keep my occupied the next morning with small things, rather than sit at home and dwell on it. My boss then rang me to mention the photo of a baby seat headrest which had been left at the scene. I went back and walked the scene but couldn't pick anything up because it was too emotional. It still is.

I've followed (the investigation into the crash). My wife initially thought it was a bit morbid of me. But I wanted to know why. It was such a waste.

When it came out (that the preliminary police investigation showed the mum had cannabis in her system and may have been speeding at up to 160km/h), I wasn't surprised. But I was disappointed.

Of the number of accidents I've seen that do involve substances, quite often they all involve speed, too, because the driver isn't as conscious of their actions.

You might be making that decision for yourself, but by doing that you're making a decision on behalf of others and putting them at risk. For example, the passengers in your car, the innocent motorists driving past who you collide with, or the people who have to deal with the incident.

The ripple effect is huge and people don't understand how big it becomes. It's affected my family because of the way it has affected me.

Asti Savage became a paraplegic after being hit by a drink-driver. Then the unthinkable happened ...

IF ANYONE should know the dangers of drink-driving, it's me.

From my waist down, I have no feeling, no movement after being hit by a drink-driver.

I was barely 20 years old, out with friends to celebrate the 2001 new year, when I was hit, thrown 42m and somersaulted through the air before crashing down on the bitumen.

But this year, I was caught drink-driving myself.

It was only a small reading, a very small reading, but it's the fact that I was over.

It was a stupid decision – my own life had been changed forever by a drink-driver.

I spent my 20th birthday in hospital, in a coma for months then in rehabilitation, coming to the realisation I had been robbed of my legs.

I don't really have any recollection of the actual night it happened. I had been crossing the road when at that moment, the drink-driver was running from the cops and hit me, then kept driving.

I was knocked unconscious pretty bad. When I landed, I must have landed like a rag doll.

Police eventually caught up with him, he was jailed for six years and he supposedly served all six years.

But I don't know what he looks like. I could be walking past him on the street and I wouldn't know.

Now, I have to go the long way round.

Other people walk up a step and don't think twice, I have to look and try to figure out, how am I going to get up there?

I'm a schoolteacher and if I'm put in an upstairs room, it changes everything. Even if the classroom



The scene of the multiple fatality attended by Glen Giles at Glenview



Drink-driving has touched Asti Savage twice.

is too full with desks I can't get around in my wheelchair.

I have so many limitations, so many obstacles I have to face every day.

I'm going to be a sidelined viewer for the rest of my life and it will also have ripple effects on my kids.

When I was picked up drink-driving this year, I didn't even realise I was over the limit. I barely drink three times a year; I had been out with a girlfriend celebrating a night off from the kids.

I had champagne and two bourbons, it must have been the champagne that tipped me over.

I lost my licence for a month.

It's a lesson – even if you think you're OK, you shouldn't drive. It's not worth it to save a \$20 cab fare – if you hurt anyone like I have been hurt.

It was so embarrassing – I'm supposed to be the one advocating against drink-driving, I'm trying to tell people not to get behind that wheel and I did it myself.

All I know is that I won't do it again. And if anyone should know that, it's me.



Alex Calcagno, 15, who suffered brain damage when almost killed by a drink-driver, with mother Sharron at a memorial to two motorcyclists who died in the crash.

Sharron Calcagno's son Alex suffered a permanent brain injury in a crash 10 years ago

MY SON Alex was just six when a drink-driver slammed into the back of our family's station wagon.

The vehicle was pushed into the path of a motorcyclists Trevor Woods and Denise Webb, who were on a charity toy run on the Bruce Highway at Bellenden Ker, south of Cairns. Both were killed.

Alex barely survived. He spent more than a month in hospital and suffered a permanent brain injury.

The driver was 32 at the time and was likely to have had a blood-alcohol reading of 0.115 when he ploughed into our car.

It was his third drink-driving conviction and he was sentenced to five years' jail but paroled after

two.

Everyone makes mistakes, but when you're 32 and commit a third DUI (driving under the influence) offence, you kill two innocent people and seriously injure a little boy, well, what can I say?

Alex is a good kid but underneath it all, he has issues. He will always have issues. He has an acquired brain injury. But it could've been worse; he could be dead.

As a family we've had to deal with, try to solve and cope with Alex's issues for the past 10 years.

After the crash, Alex was flown to Townsville Hospital that day. He was in ICU (intensive care unit) for three days. He had surgery – a craniotomy – just before that Christmas and in total spent approximately four weeks in hospital.

It affected his motor skills to begin with, however by Grade 3 going into Grade 4, I thought "something's wrong". Alex literally had to be taken back to the beginning of his schooling life – Grade 1 – and then retaught all the things he had missed. He had hours of occupational therapy, tutoring for English and maths and dedicated teacher aide time in the classroom (all of which continues today) to be able to move forward with his learning.

He has issues with his working memory and concentration, and a wandering mind means it is hard for him to stay focused on the tasks at hand.

For him it's been hard at school; kids pick out the odd one and he's had the bullying. He's a sensitive boy. The school has been very supportive but it's been disheartening and at times demoralising for him as he gets left behind because of his learning disabilities. The brain injury means Alex is discounted now for careers which will require him to pass a medical.

But he's a very good, kind-hearted, eager young adult. For all that he has had to deal with he's done well and we are just very happy that he is alive and part of our lives.

When I reflect back, especially to the day of his court appearance, the overwhelming anger is just as consuming today as it was on that day when we learnt that this was his third DUI offence. He's hurt a lot of families as a result of his actions.

Andrea Garrison on her mental and physical scars

I WAS just driving to pick up a friend when all of a sudden he (the drink-driver) slammed into me from behind.

My car was pushed through three yards, I went through two fences, two trees, sideswiped three parked cars and went into seven palm trees. One of the trees got stuck under the car and stopped it from going into the house.

After he hit me, he actually left the scene. He didn't stop, he just took off.

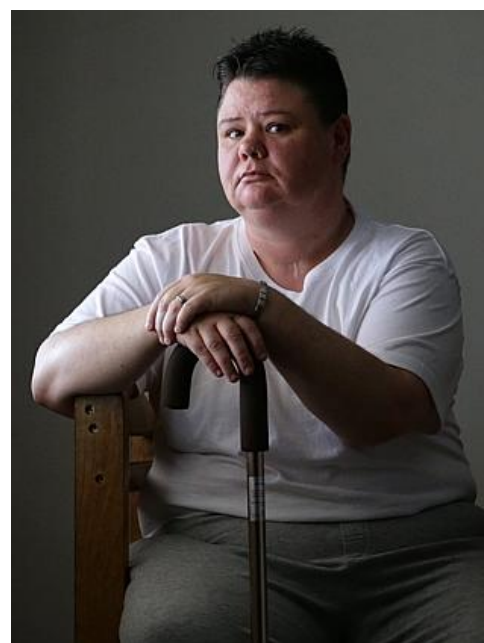
I extracted myself because I thought the car was going to explode. Three or four people came running over to help me. Someone told the police where the driver lived and they found him at home. His car was covered up. He told the police that he kept driving because he was worried about running into them because he had been drinking.

I had serious injuries to my middle and lower back, my neck, I had a haematoma. I had injuries to my legs, my chest, my ribs ... I was struggling to breathe.

I've experienced severe psychological damage. The post-traumatic stress disorder has been very bad since. I can't drive. It's bad enough getting into a cab to go to the doctor. I can't sleep at night. I'm always afraid of something running into me.

My wife and I are going through this alone. We have an autistic daughter and we've had to sell everything to cover medication, medical expenses, cabs and we've had a hard time keeping food in the house. The bills have been piling up and we have almost lost our home more than once.

We've sold the TV, our surround-sound system, Blu-rays, furniture, the lawnmower, the washing machine, even my daughter's iPad.



Andrea Garrison

I hope he thinks twice about getting behind the wheel drunk because to have my life flash in front of my eyes, wondering how my family would live without me and how my wife was going to tell my mother her daughter was killed in another country by a drink-driver ...

I used to be happy. I used to be able to wrestle with my daughter. I could carry all the stuff my wife couldn't carry. I used to be able to play with my dog in the park. I used to go out fishing and playing pool.

Now I can't do anything of those things.



If drink-driving victims are lucky they'll live to see emergency medicine specialist Dr Frances Williamson at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. Pic: Peter Wallis

Dr Fran Williamson, staff specialist in emergency medicine

IN MY role as a staff specialist in emergency medicine at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, we see people with injuries related to drink-driving every day - multiple times every day.

Obviously, people who get behind the wheel of a car or on a motorbike after drinking are at a much higher risk, but people on pushbikes are becoming a problem as well.

Most times if a patient makes it to us in emergency we can get them through to surgery or intensive care. But there are times when there is nothing we can do.

The family arrives at some later stage and you have the difficult job of taking them through what has happened and taking them through to their family member. But the reaction of people to news that someone's life has been changed forever due to massive injury can be even worse.

Giving that news that they are going to be incapacitated for the rest of their lives, you can see the shock and horror. Everything they are going to miss out on is flashing before their eyes.

It's so hard to have to break that sort of news to relatives, especially when it is the parent of a child - even if the child is 40.

There was a horrible case not that long ago where two brothers in their late teens/early 20s were in a car that crashed just north of Brisbane. The car went into a tree late one Friday night. Both boys were intoxicated.

Both ended up with spinal injuries. One broke his neck and ended up on a ventilator. He has just got two fingers functioning. His brother was paralysed from the waist down. That's a completely

life-changing experience, not just for them but for the parents who now have two dependent children who were in the prime of their lives and gaining their independence. It's devastating, not just personally, but for everyone around you.

Getting into care facilities for young people with spinal injuries is very difficult. Your ability to get a job, to live independently, potentially even to have children in future can all be compromised.

It is pretty powerful to see people in such a serious condition. You take a bit of it away every time. Obviously, you need to be professional and objective but you definitely go home and hug your family and re-remind them of the dangers.

I also work with the trauma service which ensures patients' continued care is well co-ordinated so we see people over days, weeks and even months as they begin to recover.

If you are involved in serious trauma, you put your life on hold for six, 12, 18 months.

You may well not be working for 18 months and if you can eventually work at all, you may well not be able to do the same job.

There are things people don't think about. If you are a young female and have your pelvis wired, it can impact on whether you can give birth vaginally later. Having some sort of marked force through a joint means you are much more likely to get arthritis or some sort of incapacity later so you may not be as active as you like.

When you are 17 or 18 you are not thinking years ahead. But life catches up.

We run an education program called PARTY for high school students. Of the 2000 young people who have gone through it, not one has presented with a trauma-related injury.

It is often so preventable. You don't have to get behind the wheel when you are intoxicated. Please have a designated driver or call a cab.

Everyone metabolises differently so saying you can drink to 0.05 is OK for some people, but for others they will lose the ability to make quick and rational decisions. While I appreciate we have to have a number, you can see clinically that some people are affected by even small amounts.

Obviously alcohol is far more common but drug-affected driving is more prevalent than it used to be. Certainly we do get a lot of people affected by methamphetamine and other drugs.

Gympie magistrate Maxine Baldwin

I'VE been a magistrate in Gympie for six years. When people come to court for drink-driving, I attempt to make them understand the "why".

I say, "Honestly, I wish I didn't have to take your licence off you because it's a horrendous impost in a regional area without transport."

I'd rather sentence them to sit in a coroner's court and listen to how accidents are reconstructed nanosecond by nanosecond.

I actually put up my hand and say, I think I'm a very a different driver since I became a coroner.

I tell drink-drivers that it takes one to one-and-a-half seconds if you perceive a problem – like a kid on a skateboard – for your brain to process all of that.

But alcohol is a relaxant, that's why people like it, and there's nothing wrong with that, we're not the fun police.

But it slows down your nervous system. So if your blood alcohol content is 0.05 per cent, it slows your reflexes by maybe a second. If you're 0.1 per cent, maybe one to two seconds.

And that doesn't sound very much, but if you're driving on the highway, doing 100km/h, how far are you driving in a second? 25m.

So 0.1 per cent over you need an extra 50m compared with someone who has not been drinking. You need an Olympic-size swimming pool more than the car beside you just to stop. And at



Gympie magistrate Maxine Baldwin

60km/h you need 33m.

That split-second, it's just so quick and I think that's what I came to realise doing that coroners work, there's no margin for error.

The problem is there are many on the roads who are not always as alert as they should be, and if you cannot react in time due to alcohol it is your problem.

Generally people respond with interest and seem to take it on board. Sometimes, when I detect a person who I don't think is taking it seriously, I say to them, "What would you say to me or any mother if you killed our child?"

They go, "I don't know. I wouldn't know what to say."



Triplets Teryn, Lauren and Emily Goodrich remembered their father a year after the tragedy.

Emily Goodrich lost her father Murray in 2009

YOU don't expect your dad to go to work and not come home.

Our dad, Murray Goodrich, worked night shifts as a road worker and would ring every single evening to say hello, check in and make sure that we had eaten dinner.

I was the only one who got to speak to him that night, August 3, 2009.

Just a few hours later, we heard there had been an accident (on the Bruce Highway at Burpengary, north of Brisbane). At the time we weren't really sure what had happened.

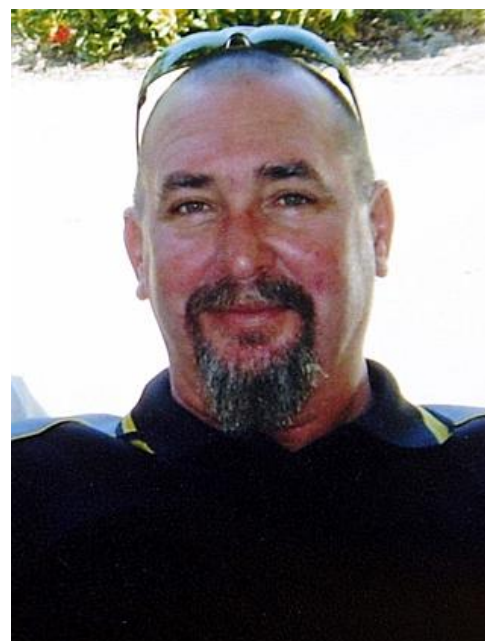
We just knew dad had been in an accident. Then we found out he'd passed away.

It was a blur. A shock. We didn't really know what was going on. We all slept in the same bed for a week just to be near each other.

The night of the accident, the police had suspicions (that the driver who hit him) was drunk.

When we first found out about the alcohol, I couldn't take a lot in. But the anger didn't take long to kick in.

We miss our dad very much and that was the driver's fault. That was solely on him.



Murray Goodrich

The driver was found to have a blood alcohol concentration of 0.185 per cent. He pleaded guilty to manslaughter.

We all got the opportunity to write victim impact statements. For some reason only mum's went through, so the judge gave us the opportunity to say them out loud in court instead.

It was probably one of the most emotional things I've ever done. It was very confronting saying the words straight to him, in front of our family and friends.

The greatest impact has been not having dad around – getting your licence and not having your dad there to be able to sit next to you in the passenger's seat. Finishing school and getting married soon.

I have a 14-month-old son Lewis who's never gotten the chance to meet his grandad – the big things that you expect to have him there for.

I'm a triplet and my sisters, Lauren and Teryn, have been similarly impacted.

You may think you're fine, but every drop of alcohol impairs you. I think having the legal limit at 0.05 per cent gives people this false belief that they can do it. They can have one or two drinks – which turns out to be three or four.

You can go out and drink and total your own car. That's on you. But to then go out and impact a thousand other people's lives through one death alone – let alone if you kill however many other people or disable in many ways.

That's not your call to make.

1 2 3

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Driving, dialling, distracted, dead

COMMENTS





11 comments

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Andy

9 hours ago

I see here the common thread is drink driving, occasionally, drugs and alcohol, I think alcohol is a drug as drugs are addictive, yes?. I used to enjoy a beer on the way home and yes, I've made the error of 'one too many' on occasion, so I changed my mind, yes, the way I think. I have a self imposed rule : If I'm driving-I don't drink alcohol period!. So many times at parties or functions I am offered and encouraged to drink, the old adage "come on, one won't hurt you or put you over the limit" Well, I believe the first one is the mistake, because 2 is right behind it and 3 and So, no alcohol for me when I'm driving. I can wait till I get home, then I can enjoy a drink and actually relax, and when I'm tired, my bed is close to me, not a 'short drive home". There is not a single reason or excuse for drink driving today, the very act is a criminal offense. The one thing that annoys me, if you lose points for speeding, you get 1 good behaviour point for 12 months,(and 3 years to get your points back). If you lose your license for drink driving-you get 4 points. Where is the incentive to NOT DRINK AND DRIVE, your better off if you are caught drinking. I had a serious car crash 30 years ago, I am in pain every day, I struggle with many aspects of life, I am happy, I choose to be happy. The problem is, if a person 'kills' a person, that is not murder, as there was no intent to kill, What we do have, is unlawful killing and this is where the law lets the survivors down, as that is not an indictable offense. When a 10 - 20 year penalty is imposed on unlawful killing, maybe the perpetrator or their families will disagree, but we should be promoting, "if you can't do the time - don't do the crime". At least that would give the bereaved some sense of closure, It's not like the drink driving campaign started yesterday. The biggest problem here is that some time ago, alcoholism was classified as a disease,

thereby allowing a clause of diminished responsibility for the guilty party and a 'slap on the wrist judgement". This has enabled the alcoholic to rid him/herself of any responsibility for their actions and forces the courts to be lenient. Alcoholism is not a disease, it is a choice, a personal choice, By the way, a decent sentence would actually help the 'alcoholic', by the time the sentence is served, they wont be 'needing a drink', now that's rehab, and counselling for the death they caused is very, very important!

Like Reply



Madelynn

2 days ago

You shouldn't kill people because that will be someone's best mate, friend, grandparents and family.

Like Reply



Lester

3 days ago

I remember Kelly Henry as I was one of the paramedics that attended that horrific scene. I remember the injuries....the smells...the cries. The anger which I felt at the senseless act this driver had just committed. I remember extricating Kelly's best friend and lifting Kelly off her.

1 Like Reply



John

3 days ago

It is time the time fit the crime. We still have the accepted attitude that it is okay to drink drive. It is almost something to boast about with certain age groups. I am not going to pretend that I have not been an idiot. I was one of the hero's who joked it is not a matter of if you get caught it was a matter of when.

Well thankfully I was lucky., damn lucky not to killed or injured another person by selfish hollow claims of bravado to be a drink driver. Growing up and family life has changed my perspective. But I do know the only thing that would have changed my mind 35+years ago was the threat of prison time. Some will say that is too harsh. Well go back to the top of the page and read it again. This time with your heart and your eyes open.

Like Reply



Bart

3 days ago

All the stories are so tragic, but one stands out. The learned magistrate seems ti feel genuinely sorry for the offenders. Why am I not surprised?

1 Like Reply



Another Greg

3 days ago

Just yesterday morning on the Gateway bridge a ute sped past me. I recognised the ute as we use their services to clean our roof. I glanced over. The driver was doing at least 100 in the 80 zone and texting. I feel like calling them and telling them off but with today's kind of people, they know where I live..... It's just so very very wrong.

1 Like Reply



Nathan

3 days ago

Should carry the same penalty as murder they chose to drive and ultimately destroyed several lives.

Also there is no reason for any blood alcohol limit when driving plan to drive plan not to drink.

Designated Driver, public transport or walk you drunk butt home how many people have to die before we have REAL action on this??

4 Like Reply



Paul

3 days ago

The slap on the wrist that is given to serial offenders makes one wonder why. Time and time again we see people who have killed others because of drink or drugs getting a couple of years in jail whilst the families of those who lost their love one have a lifetime of sorrow. Its time Justice became the catch cry with mandatory sentencing so the bleeding heart magistrates don't have the opportunity to make a mockery of the Justice System as they do now. It always make me wonder what those same Magistrates would say if it was their family member killed by some drink driver and would they feel that a sentence that lets the guilty party walking in two years was enough?

5 Like Reply



Dan

3 days ago

The story is very touching and personal. However, until we start punishing the perpetrators the victim and families will never be honoured. How can you get a suspended sentence for killing someone or just a year or two in a comfy jail. My hearts go out to these poor families.

9 Like Reply



Mani

3 days ago

we have a legal system, not a justice system. if you can afford an expensive lawyer, there is a good chance you will get off.

8 Like Reply



Colin

4 days ago

Don't give your family a Christmas they will want to forget. Support Citizens Against Road Slaughter (CARS), Australia's first victim support organisation.

10 Like Reply

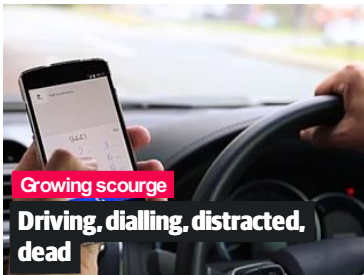
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