

This is what happens..

10 A.M, and there my phone was, ringing off the hook. With my tired and annoyed tone, I answered the phone to Monique's anxious voice saying "ITS PROM DAY BABY". We talked a bit about how our plans were looking for the day and night, and discussed what alcohol we would be drinking after the dance.

7 o'clock rolled around and I must say we all looked pretty damn sexy, (and, yes, my mother cried when she saw me in my dress). The Italian heritage center was decorated very nicely, dinner was delicious, and although Brett drove me up a wall, all in all it was a great prom. Geneva, Monique, Alyson, and I decided it was about that time to head out and get our own little party started. We drove back to Monique's house, and instantly started celebrating being out of high school forever.

By 11 o'clock every one was leaving the dance. I got a phone call from Brett saying that everyone was going to his camp and that we should drive up. He asked me if I already started drinking and told me he'd pick all four of us up if we needed a ride. I immediately lied and told him all the girls have, but I was waiting until later. I didn't want to deal with the hassle of not having a car for the night.

A little while later and a few shots more, we all piled in my car. Alyson called front, which probably wasn't the best idea because that gave her the right to DJ the whole way, and she had the music blasting. It was a fun car ride, and none of us could stop laughing at the ridiculous music she was playing – but we danced anyway.

Right as one of the red lights we were stopped at turned green, my phone started ringing. I tried looked down to see who it was, and right as I set my eyes back on the road, my heart instantly stopped beating... I was too far into the left lane to save us from hitting an oncoming car. The car hit us directly on the driver's side; I was killed before I had time to scream. Monique was dead behind me, and Alyson and Geneva were drowning in broken glass but still breathing.

2 months later, and here I am, with an opportunity to talk to you all about the regret and pain I feel about that night. If I could some how, by some miracle, see my friends and family again, I would break every bone in my body to make it possible.

I would start by apologizing to my parents. Not a day since I was born have you misguided me, or loved me less than 110%. You made me dream bigger than I imagined I could, which is why I would have been going to college for nursing next year, to pursue a career I thought I'd have for the rest of my life. I thank you for the love and encouragement you gave me for 18 years. I never want you to blame yourselves for the thoughtless, selfish decision that took me away from you.

To my beautiful, intelligent, and amazing sister, Maria. Words can't describe how envious I am of you and all you have accomplished. I remember reading the letter you got from Emanuel, saying that because of your outstanding academic achievement, you were chosen to be on the Deans' list. Nothing made me more proud. You showed me that with hard work, anything is possible. You have the heart of an angel, and I am so sorry I am not with you today to support you through the rest of you successful journey. Not only did you lose your little sister, but also your best friend. I love you.

I would especially like to apologize to my brother, Jojo. For 5 years now, my brother has been fighting an all too common disease, alcoholism. This disease had gotten so out of hand at times, it tore our family apart. For years on end Jojo lied to my parents

and threatened our family in drunken rages. On more than one occasion he was arrested and rushed to the hospital on the brink of death. His drinking was out of control, to the point that a lawyer wasn't of any help to him. He was in Juvenile hall by age 15. I remember being dismissed early from middle school just to say goodbye to him, through the window of a cop car. Listening to him drunkenly say 'I love you Angie, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry' over, and over. That was followed by years of relapse and rehab. Every Saturday, my family and I drove up to the rehabilitation center to see him. We'd sit in a circle with him and other addicts, to talk about emotions, strategies, and how they ended up where they are. I hated being so far away from him, I hated seeing the sadness in his eyes when we left, and I hated the next six days until I could see him again. Time passed and he ended up doing a two-month stint at the Cumberland County jail. At that point, after years and years of dealing with his addiction, I was overcome with anger. I didn't talk to him at all at first. I eventually decided to visit him, because I didn't know when he was going to get out. At the jail, I had to take off my hooded jacket, my jewelry, and my shoes. We would get an hour of time, to talk through a wired square in a glass wall. The closest I got to hugging my brother was putting my hand on the glass against his. Jojo is today on his 6th month of sobriety, and because of my careless actions, I am not able to be there with him as I always planned to be when he got clean. Jojo, I am so sorry that I didn't take the opportunities to learn from your hardships. I am incredibly proud of you, regardless of your past. You were able to come this far with a heart that still has hope. You are an amazing person and I hope that my death doesn't force your addiction to surpass your six-month accomplishment, that's my biggest fear. I love you more than words.

Lastly, I apologize to the class of 2012, who is so close to graduating, not only missing Garrett, but Monique and myself as well. Wanting to have a good time is okay. But being selfish enough to drive three of my best friends drunk and fooling myself into thinking I was fine to drive is not okay. I know that you are all still suffering, especially you Alyson and Geneva, but I pray that this tragedy leads you all on a better path. By getting behind the wheel that night, I ruined the hard work, dreams, and the future I had made for myself. I had just sent a letter to Endicott College, saying that I would be a part of the nursing program with the class of 2016. Now my family has to explain to them why I won't be there next fall. To the class of 2012, my friends, and anyone out there listening: Your future holds amazing opportunities. You are all amazing people and I have no doubt that you will soon be the next great doctors, lawyers, and teachers. Don't make the mistake I did, because no matter how invincible you feel, you only get one life. Make it the best- I love you all.