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11.08.2018

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### One Decision's Impact

Tomorrow is graduation day- the most exciting day of my life. The day I go from being a hesitant high school student to a daring college student. The day I can finally become a real-world adult. My grandparents traveled all the way up to Maine from Florida along with my Aunts and Uncles. A whopping sixteen hour drive. They are all so excited to see me. It felt as if everyone was exchanging hugs for hours on end. Anyways, I got a phone call from Hailey earlier about some party that Andrew was having tonight. Knowing Andrew, the party is going to have lots of alcohol. It does not seem too ideal to attend a party with alcohol the night before graduation, but I am going to go and live it up. You only live once, right?

8pm- I arrive at the party. Cars are lined up and down the block for as far as I can see.

8:30pm- I finally meet up with Hailey and our friend Jen, they hand me a Red Solo cup of beer and say, "It's the day before our graduation, you must drink! Everybody else is, c'mon! Don't chicken out!" I thought to myself that they are right. Just a couple sips won't hurt me. If I can drive without my contacts in, I can drive after just drinking one beer.

9pm- I am probably three or four beers in. I forgot to keep count. But hey, I feel fine! I reach for another beer without hesitation.

9:30pm- Everyone is playing drinking games. I don't participate, but instead cheer on the sidelines.

10pm- Everyone is starting to pack up and head out. Everyone has designated drivers to bring them home except for me and Hailey. I told Hailey that I would bring her home earlier, so she is my responsibility now.

10:15pm- We make it to my car. I feel a bit out of reality and think to myself, "Maybe I shouldn't be driving tonight," but the thought didn't completely sink in. I start up my blue Nissan and shift gears from park to drive.

10:25pm- Cruising down the road without a worry in the world, I hear my favorite song come on the radio. I blast it and sing along with Hailey.

10:30pm- SLAM. I can hear the metal around me crunching as if someone stepped on a bag of chips. I'm no longer in control of the vehicle. My passenger side hit a guardrail. I could have sworn that I was in control of the vehicle. I lose consciousness.

11:56pm- I wake up in a hospital bed with my parents leaning above me.

They usher a doctor in. He is asking me tons of questions like, "How do you feel?" and "Do you know what happened to you tonight?" My mind is clouded and my head is killing me. I can't even begin to think. The doctor told me that I only left the accident with a severe concussion and two medium sized scratches on my legs. He also told me, "You are extremely lucky, Michelle. Drunk driving kills." I look at him with confusion in my face. Drunk driving? What are you talking about? I reply, "I was completely in control, so I wasn't drunk." He responded, "Actually your blood alcohol content was .10- that is .02 over the legal limit." My parents looked hurt. I always told them that I would never drink and drive no matter the circumstances. But here I am, in a hospital bed hooked up to a machine.

A tall man dressed in all black came in to speak to me. He told me that there might be something I want to know. That was when it hit me. "How is Hailey?" I asked. He said, "Unfortunately she took the brute of the crash and didn't make it." Soon, I was unable to breath. My throat was closing up. I had killed

my best friend because of driving drunk? She was supposed to be my walking partner tomorrow at graduation. While everyone is walking with their partners, I will be walking alone.

Two Years Later: My hopes of attending an Ivy League school were crushed. I had court not long after the accident and got charged with Vehicular Manslaughter. Now, I am stuck in a jail cell for eight years. My best friend is gone, and nobody will speak to me. How will I live with myself? My special day was ruined. Not only for me, but for Hailey, my parents, grandparents, and my aunts and uncles. They all came to watch Hailey and I walk down the aisle together in our white graduation gowns and caps. Instead they got to watch me walk into a jail cell. My life is ruined, all because of a couple beers. One moment that changed my life forever. Drunk driving seriously kills. It ruins your life. Please, let this be a wake up call to all of you who think that drunk driving is okay. You are not invincible, and what happened to me can happen to you too.