

The Lucky One

It was 9:15pm on a Wednesday night in October and I was just leaving the pool. After a full day of school, a two hour practice and then working for an hour, I was so exhausted I could hardly keep my eyes open. I locked up the pool and walked out to my car. I turned on the air conditioning to keep myself awake and plugged in my phone and turned up my music. I turned out of the parking lot onto a deserted street. After a few minutes I could feel my eyelids start to grow heavier and heavier. The mix of the peaceful night, my soothing music and my tired eyes was too much and I was afraid I was going to fall asleep. I knew no one was around so I quickly picked up my phone and went to change my playlist to a more upbeat one in hopes that it would help to keep me awake. In the split second I made an attempt to change my music I didn't notice the light turn red. I assumed that with no one on the roads the lights wouldn't be changing. I assumed that nothing bad could happen in just a few seconds. I assumed that I wouldn't be another one of the stories told to high school students in hopes of raising awareness for distracted driving.

I don't remember the crash. The last thing I remember was the glare of headlights out of the corner of my eye. The next thing I knew I was waking up in the hospital with my whole body aching. My parents were asleep in the corner of the room; I had no idea how long they had been there. Almost as if they knew I was finally conscious, they stirred and upon seeing me awake, jumped up and ran over. They explained to me what had happened: I was t-boned in an intersection after running a red light. Luckily I had only suffered minor injuries and a concussion. I had been in the hospital for about two days and it would be another few days before I was discharged. I was lucky.

A moment's choice could have led to a list of nevers. I could have never gotten the senior night I had always dreamed of. I could have never walked across the stage at graduation and accepted my diploma. I could have never moved into my dorm at college and gotten to know my new teammates. I could have never had the life I had always dreamed of having. But I was lucky. Not everyone is.