

Sydney Connolly

December 1, 2021

Last Words Saved On Voicemail

9:47 p.m. Notification: One New Voicemail

“Uh, hi Mom. I’m just calling cause I’m um kinda freaking out and I needed to talk to someone. I don’t know...being on the phone just makes me feel safer. It’s snowing pretty bad. You know I don’t like touching my phone while I’m driving so you’re gonna get a pretty long voicemail. Hahaha. I’ll be home soon. The kids’ dad just came home from work so that’s why it’s a little later than I expected. Sorry I’m late. I shouldn’t have babysat, now you guys are all waiting for me to start decorating the tree.

Oh my God. Oh my God. Mom, I’m freaking out. The snow is really bad. My heart won't stop beating. I can't breathe. My brakes just stopped working. I almost ran through a red light. I slammed them over and over again, but kept sliding. I’m so scared. I just want to be at home. I’m lucky there wasn’t a car in front of me. I would have hit it. I hate driving. Why did I babysit? I'm freaking out mom. Why didn't you just answer?

Ok, it's green again. I’m just gonna talk myself through this. You’re ok. Just drive slow. Breathe. You know how to do this. Just remember what you learned in Drivers Ed. You know how to keep the car straight. It’s ok if there is no line, just follow the other cars’ tracks. Look, there is the last light you have to get through. Less than a mile until you're home safe. Breathe. Look, you're not alone. There is a car on the other side of the road in the same situation.

Mom, I did it. I'm almost here. We can listen and laugh at this when I get home. I can't wait to eat a cookie.

Wait, why is that car getting so close. Oh my God! Mo..."

9:00 a.m. Notification from The Portland Press Herald: New Article - Head-on collision in Gorham, Maine at 9:47 pm resulting in the death of a 17-year-old girl due to texting and driving.

Last night, at approximately 9:47 pm, two cars driving on Main Street were involved in a head on collision. As a result of the accident, a 16 year old boy was injured and a 17 year old girl died at the scene of the crash. Since they are both minors, we can not disclose their names. The two individuals were driving in opposite directions on Main Street in the snow storm that hit Gorham last night. While driving, the 16 year old was on his phone, assumed to be texting. With his focus on the phone, he drifted over the line into the incoming traffic. When he looked up, the snow created road conditions that made him unable to swerve back into his own lane. As a result, the 16 year old crashed into the vehicle of the 17 year old driver head on. The 16 year old's truck totaled the 17 year old's sedan. The impact killed the 17 year old girl instantly. The 16 year old was taken by ambulance to Maine Medical. His condition is still unknown.

"These accidents shouldn't be happening. A young girl lost her life due to a text. A text was more important than a life," says the Chief of the Gorham Police Force, "Next time you get mad

at us for pulling you over for texting and driving, understand this is why. We need to prevent this from happening.”

We are told by the individual who called 911 the following: “It was an awful sound. I ran outside of my house. From the sight you knew no good news was coming.”

“Two lives were ruined tonight. One was lost, another was sentenced.” stated the patrol officer on duty the night of the accident.

As for the 17 year old’s family, they ask for privacy as they grieve. The 17 year old was heading home to decorate the Christmas tree with her parents and siblings. Her family received the news of their daughter’s accident through a voicemail that was sent after the collision. She hadn’t wanted to touch her phone, so after no response, she left a voicemail. Not only did they lose their daughter, they experienced her death.

Use this accident as an example of the destruction and pain that can come from sending that one text. Drive safe. Stop texting and driving. The person who you are texting would rather be ignored than never see you again. Many people will never see this young girl again. And, as for the person who caused it, he will see her face in his memory, forever. A constant reminder that one text, that seems so innocent, can be so powerful that it can make a heart stop. No text, no call, no post is worth a life. Choose to stay safe and make sure everyone arrives alive.