

The Guilt Will Last A Lifetime

“I’m sorry.” “I didn't mean it.” “It was a careless mistake.” I say, staring into the eyes of a young mother who lost her youngest son to my “careless mistake.” I was 100 percent sure I could make it home. I was a good driver, safe and secure, always wearing a seatbelt. Reality settled in when my eyes had shifted, and I was dizzy. Minutes after, I stood on the street responding to questions from one of the six cops at the scene. “How much did you drink?” “What did you drink?” “What made you think this was ok?” The officers' questions were stern and straight forward, making it clear that this was my fault and my fault only.

The first ever Halloween party I went to was that night. My costume was laid out a day in advance on the pink desk chair in the corner of my room. Never had such excitement filled my body. Arriving at the party 30 minutes after it started, many were already on their second can. Kids in an arrangement of Halloween costumes staggered through the back and front yard. Slurred words, fallen eyes, and cans of alcohol could be seen and heard at every angle. One of the most popular girls in school asked if I needed a drink. “No thanks,” I replied. “You are no fun, take a sip,” she urged. “One can’t hurt right,” I said as I took a sip.

As I finished that beer, the feeling made it seem that I finally fit in. One beer led to three more. Three more led me to two shots of tequila. After an hour of never-ending drinks, the party ended. I watched cars flood the neighborhood as everyone left. Realizing that I was my own designated driver, sweat began to roll down my forehead. My thoughts were scattered. How will I get home? I convinced myself at that moment that it would be safe to drive home.

I pressed the brake and pushed the start button of my 2014 Nissan Altima. On that drive, the effects of the alcohol overtook my body. My eyes went black as I came upon a four-way intersection. Seconds after, tires screeched, and my windshield blew into pieces after colliding

with a vehicle coming from the left. I ran a red light and slammed straight into a gray minivan. Smoke and police sirens were blocking each road. I hit the car of a thirty-year-old single mother who was on her way home from a personal day with her son. Twenty minutes after talking to the police, the innocent little boy was pronounced dead. I burst into tears and knew this was nobody's fault but mine. The guilty thoughts flooded my brain.

The memories of this night will forever haunt me. My mom always told me to call her if I ever found myself in an unsafe situation and couldn't drive. I could have made the right decision to stay away from alcohol or to call my mom. After this night, there will never be a moment where I close my eyes and don't see the face of the mother whose son I killed.