

## Trust Your Gut

It was a typical Saturday evening, and Sarah, a 17 year old high school student, received an invitation to a friend's house party. Excitement coursed through her veins as she prepared to join her peers for a night of fun and relaxation. She had always been responsible and cautious, so she was pleased to have made arrangements to leave the party with Tom, a close friend who had assured her he would be the designated driver. As the night wore on, Sarah noticed that the atmosphere at the party was lively. The music was roaring, and the alcohol “was going down like water” as most would say at the party. Sarah, determined to make responsible choices, decided to limit her alcohol intake and rely on Tom to take her home safely. Tom, who had claimed to be sober, seemed like a reliable choice, given his reputation for being responsible. However, as the night drew to a close, Sarah couldn't help but notice that Tom's behavior didn't match his earlier assurance. His speech was slurred, and his coordination seemed off. To her horror, she realized that Tom was far from sober. It was a wake up call, and Sarah felt an overwhelming sense of panic and betrayal. Faced with the dilemma of whether to get into the car with Tom or find an alternative way home, Sarah had to make a swift decision. Peer pressure and her trust in Tom made her choose the former, even though she knew it would be a very risky decision. She hoped that they would reach home safely, despite the circumstances. The car started and they started to drive off. Nothing was off about Tom's driving, no swerving, no lack of reflexes, absolutely nothing. Sarah had calmed down, she was much more relaxed when she noticed how well Tom was driving. It was only until a few minutes later when everything started to go downhill. Tom said to his friend next to him that he was getting tired, his friend told him to stick it out and keep driving. Tom sped up to cut time off of the drive. As he got faster, the more dreary he became, the alcohol and tiredness was really getting to him. It was only a matter of time before he started

to swerve. Sarah and the other friends in the car started to panic, Sarah was yelling to Tom to pull over. Blood rushed to her brain from screaming, her eyes filled with fear and anger... BOOM. A loud crash followed by a bright light and ringing in the ears. Tom had swerved into the other lane and hit another car. Sarah, barely conscious, tried to look around at her surroundings but everything was just a blur. On the ground, face up, Sarah layed. Not a clue to what happened, she tried to feel around the close proximity for her friends, but there was nothing. The ringing faded, the sirens in the distance grew louder and louder. Help was finally here, all bodies were found and immediately brought to the hospital. A day went by... two days went by. No news about Tom or any of the friends. Day three arrives, Sarah still in the hospital. Doctors flooded her room with updates about the others. There was a blank stare on Sarah's face, you could only imagine the news that she had just been told. The rest had died from complications. Sarah was distraught, she knew she shouldn't have gotten in that car, she should've found a new way home and taken the others with her. The day Sarah got out of the hospital she immediately spoke out about the accident, she created a blog about distracted driving. Her closing line is always... Arrive Alive.