



WASTED LIVES

A Graduation Day Tragedy

It was a sunny day in May when Javier and his friends Pablo, Anthony and Jose hopped into his new sports car after graduation practice. The four boys were headed to the beach for their senior picnic.

Unfortunately, Javier and his friends never made it there.

Nobody knows exactly what caused the crash, but the police know that Javier was speeding when his car hit a tree.

By the time the ambulances arrived, Javier, Pablo and Anthony had all died at the scene. When the coroner tested the boys for drugs, they found that Pablo, Anthony and Jose had been drinking heavily. But Javier, the driver, had not.

Javier had very faint traces of alcohol in his system – but he had been smoking marijuana at the time of the crash.

Javier wasn't drunk, but he wasn't sober, either.

TEST YOURSELF!

What do you know about buzzed driving? Take this quiz and find out.

1. Buzzed driving is just as dangerous as drunk driving.
True or False
2. It's not safe to drive after you've been smoking weed.
True or False
3. Alcohol and marijuana are both depressants.
True or False
4. Marijuana speeds up your body and brain. True or False
5. It's okay to drive if you don't feel drunk. True or False

Answers: 1. True 2. True 3. True 4. False 5. False

ONE BEER = ONE TOO MANY

The Risks of Impaired Driving

Everybody knows that drunk driving is dangerous. When you've had too much to drink, it's hard to do anything: you can't walk straight, you have trouble talking, you're dizzy and confused – and you're in no shape to drive a car.

But what if you've only had a few beers? What if you don't feel drunk? You're not dizzy or out of it and you can walk and talk. At the most, you're a little buzzed. But you're definitely not drunk. If you're not drunk, you can drive . . . right? What if you haven't been drinking at all? What if you've just smoked a little weed, or had a bump of cocaine?

That means you're okay to drive, right?

Wrong. The truth is that driving with a buzz (or "impaired driving") isn't any safer than driving drunk. You may not be falling-down drunk, but if you've had a few beers (or any other mind-altering substance), you shouldn't get behind the wheel of a car – no matter how alert and sober you feel.

BUZZED DRIVING IS DRUNK DRIVING!

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE



STAY SAFE SERIES

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A DEADLY BUZZ

CRASH AND BURN . . .

After the Party

When you woke up in the hospital, the doctor told you that you were very lucky – if you'd been going just a little faster, you might have been killed. You didn't feel drunk or high when you left that party. You only smoked a joint . . . and you might have had one or two beers.

You didn't feel drunk or high when you swerved your car into oncoming traffic. The people in the car you smashed – a man and a woman and two little kids – all died instantly.

The tests came back and showed that your blood alcohol level was over the legal limit. You're facing criminal charges and there's a good chance that you'll go to jail.

You wish you would have called someone sober for a ride, or called your parents.

But you can't do any of that now. You can't take it back.

THE SHORT-TERM EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

When you drink alcohol, your brain . . . sloooooows . . . down. Your reaction time is slower, and you're less alert and coordinated. That's because alcohol is a depressant, a type of drug that messes with your brain's ability to communicate with your body.

When you drink alcohol, eventually you feel drunk – dizzy and out of it – and that's your body's way of letting you know that you've had too much alcohol. But alcohol starts to affect your brain after just one or two drinks. You might not be drunk, but you're buzzed. Drink a little more, and you start to feel some of the short-term effects of alcohol:

- Blurred vision
- Impaired judgment
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Loss of coordination



UNSTOPPABLE FEELING

Another side effect of alcohol is feelings of euphoria. When you drink, you feel confident and invincible – and you're more likely to do something dumb, like having unprotected sex, making embarrassing Facebook posts, or getting behind the wheel of a car.

That's the most dangerous thing about alcohol – that invincible feeling. Remember, if you've been drinking, even if you've only had one drink, don't drive. It's just not worth the risk.

"I DON'T EVEN FEEL DRUNK. I'M FINE."

You might know that it's dangerous to drive buzzed, drunk or high, but what if your friend insists that they're fine to drive, when you know they're not?

Simple. Don't let them.

Take their keys away. Find someone sober to drive them home. Call a trusted adult, or invite them to sleep it off on the couch. But no matter what you do, don't let them get behind the wheel.

STONED DRIVING

Driving and Marijuana Use

Some people think that it's okay to drive after smoking marijuana, even though it's illegal.

Those people are wrong: marijuana is a depressant, and it messes with your brain just like alcohol does. When you smoke weed, your brain and body experience many of the same short-term effects that you experience when you drink.

When you take a puff of weed, a chemical called THC travels to your brain and messes up the signals that your brain sends to the rest of your body. That's why stoned people have trouble talking, thinking and moving. This means they are buzzed and they shouldn't be driving. Period. When you're buzzed, you don't have the ability to think or react quickly in an emergency situation.



DRUGGED DRIVING AND THE LAW

Not only is drugged driving as dangerous as drunk driving – it's also illegal. Many states are now passing "drugged driving" laws to prevent people from driving after they've abused any type of drug: marijuana, cocaine, meth, prescription drugs, etc.

ZERO TOLERANCE

Drinking & Driving can Wreck Your Future

Just how dangerous is driving under the influence? The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) say that impaired driving accidents kill close to 30 people every day.

However, the dangers of buzzed and impaired driving go far beyond car crashes: In most states, there are zero-tolerance laws that make it illegal for teens and young adults under the legal drinking age to drive with any alcohol in their system. That means that it doesn't matter if your blood alcohol level is as low as .02% (less than one drink): If you're caught driving, you're going to get hit with some harsh penalties:

- Alcohol awareness classes
- Heavy fines
- Jail time or probation
- Community service
- Suspended driver's license

If you're arrested for buzzed driving, you also might have trouble finding a job, applying to college, or getting scholarships.

Think about it: Your whole future can change over something as stupid as a can of beer or a few puffs of a joint.

Is it worth the risk?