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A Modest Proposal: Drunk Driving

Erica Harvey

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The men got in the car right as I was climbing back into the front seat. They were hammered at this point, yelling out of the sunroof as we were driving off. The women were just as drunk as the men, and I think they were getting frisky back there but I heard the tinted window shut behind my head before I could get a glimpse. The engine started and we were finally on our way to drop these yahoos off at the hotel and get some food at an expensive place. I think I had decided on seafood. We got to the hotel and the men showed the ladies to the front lobby.

I saw them talking for a long time and finally he got in the driver's seat. "They want me to take them somewhere else."

"Do you have to?" I asked, pleadingly.

"It's my job."

We started driving again and someone rolled the tinted window down again. A man asked, "Hey driver! You know any places we find some good hookers? Come on, I bet you know places around this city! How long you been a limo driver? We'll throw some more cash your way if you can get us some ladies for the night."

"I don't know any of those places. I haven't been a driver for very long. I don't live around here."

After some arguing over that, they finally just told him to take them to the strip club we passed earlier. "That's a classy joint, right Kev?"

He didn't answer them, simply rolled up the tinted window.

We waited in the parking lot for these guys to finish what they were doing. Around 4 am, they come stumbling out.

The ride home was a rather quiet one. Up front we were listening to NPR, because that is what we like to listen to. The window behind my head was down and one of the guys managed to finally notice me sitting in the passenger seat.

"Who's that?"

"My daughter."

"How old is she?"

"Sixteen."

I don't know why he lied.

The man said, "I have a sixteen year old daughter too." He sounded sad and didn't say anything after that.

We got to the hotel and the man gave my father a hundred dollar bill. We left right after, and went to eat at Ihop. It was six o'clock on a Monday morning. On the ride home I fell asleep on his arm, wondering if all this meant I didn't have to go to school and what exactly his plan was when it came to telling mom.

A Modest Proposal: Drunk Driving

Erica Harvey

In 2006, the national number of fatalities from car crashes was 42,532. Of these, 15,829 deaths were alcohol related. So, 37% of fatal crashes in the United States that year were due to one of the parties involved being under the influence. The state of Texas had the highest number of driving fatalities due to alcohol out of all the other states. Out of the 3,466 fatal crashes, 1,544 were due to alcohol consumption. That's 45%, 8% higher than the national average! These outlandishly high numbers are ridiculous, and something needs to change. So I have a new proposition to offer the federal and state governments, and it will be so effective I suggest it be put into effect immediately. Statistics show that of the 45% of fatal crashes due to one person being under the influence, the fatality was not the guilty party. This means that innocent, sober citizens are being killed while the idiot breaking the law and drinking and driving survives! How can this be?

According to studies, this is because under the influence, as we all know, a persons reflexes (and judgments) become slower. So, upon impact, the driver is less likely to tense up, making themselves like Jell-O. As their car collides with another and spins and tumbles out of control, their body is flopping around inside, not breaking anything or damaging any organs. This is why, on average, the drunk driver walks away with a few bruises and mild soreness. The sober victim however, sees the impact about to happen and tenses up, "bracing themselves." Upon crashing, the force of impact goes right to their bones, breaking them and damaging crucial organs. In 2004, Cody Bilbraid was struck by a drunk driver head-on along the highway. With the severity of the crash, and the high speeds both parties were traveling, Cody died on impact. The drunk driver walked away. In 1996, Maria Hegg and her father Ted, who was driving, were traveling through an intersection when a drunk driver ran the red light and crashed into the car. Maria died on the ride to the hospital, Ted was in ICU for weeks, and the drunk

driver survived with minor injuries. Crashes like these should not be happening! Kids shouldn't have to be raised without a mother, and a father shouldn't have to live with the guilt of his daughter's death. I propose to make alcohol consumption while operating a motor vehicle legal. In fact, everyone riding in or operating a vehicle should have a blood alcohol level above .08, despite their age.

This way, though there may be an increase in minor vehicular crashes, there is a high probability in a decrease in fatal vehicular crashes. If everyone is drunk, no one will die in car crashes. The ramifications of this proposal are very minimal, and it will work best in actively getting the number of fatal drunk driving crashes. It will also heavily decrease the amount of tickets for Driving Under the Influence. If drunk is the new normal, then a driver should get a ticket for a blood alcohol level BELOW .08 (the legal check point of "intoxication")! If a law enforcement officer pulls over a sober citizen, the officer will have his or her choice of giving said citizen tequila shots, or engaging the law breaker in a game of beer pong. This will mean the law that states "no open containers of alcohol may be present in a vehicle at any time" will need to be changed. The police officer also has the right to detain sober criminals for their horrific offense. The uniformed officer should take the law breaker to the local bar and get him or her drunk (a blood alcohol level ABOVE .08) before sending the offender off on his or her way.

This will also clear up the local jails, since in 2005, 20% of all incarcerated persons were there on a drug/alcohol abuse charge. With less prison space being devoted to house people convicted of such petty crimes



Love Always Mary Crissa Battaile

like driving under the influence, there will be more space to fill up the prisons with people committing more serious offenses like smoking pot, being a stockbroker or lawyer, along with sex offenders, child abductors, robbers, and murderers. Also, with the up rise in alcohol intake (since everyone will have to drink a glass or more before every car trip), there will obviously be a major increase in alcohol sales. This benefits not only the sellers and brewers, but the consumer as well by bringing down the price of alcohol and adding jobs in the bar business. Overall, many people can benefit from this proposal. Sure, it will take some getting used to, but it will certainly be effective in the long run. All in all, this is a win-win situation, and law makers would be doing the right thing by making this new law effective immediately.

Intersection

Beth Turner Ayers

It was gone today.
 The frequent reminder
 I've passed on my way
 From here to there
 Has been removed.
 Was it by the hand of
 An employee who counts
 Hours for City pay?
 Or did the hand that placed it
 Cut the brittle tape to
 Take it down?
 Quivering fingers that must
 Pause to wipe leaking emotion
 That never dies but sinks until

A reminder pushes it to the surface
 Like that brilliant bouquet
 First faded, then browned
 Under hot Texas sun,
 Broiled upon a tall silvery stove
 That doubles to shine light down into
 Darkness. Illuminating regret.
 Connected to colored lights
 That direct us to stop or go.
 Some see Caution.
 Others must not let Care take the lead.
 I see that absent reminder.
 This is an intersection of Death.

**Cathedral de Toledo
 Up the Street**

Brian K. Williams

