

Blink of an Eye

By: Kiana Jackson

The average rate of a blink of an eye is four seconds. Your life could change even quicker than that. Let's paint the scene; your brother has just gotten married. You just turned twenty-one, and there's an open bar at the reception. Why not enjoy the occasion? You let loose, having a fun time with your family and friends. After hours of shots and taste tests you decide you can drive yourself home, after all it's only a short ten minute drive. You tell yourself that you will be fine, and convince yourself that because it is night-time, the roads will be empty. You stagger to your car, smiling and laughing at memories you are recalling from the evening. You pull out your keys to open up the driver door, starting the car without putting on your seatbelt. Oops, you must have forgotten this time. You pull out of the sparse parking lot with ease, so you know that you're fine. Your half-way conscious brain begins the route that leads to your house instinctually. Man, it's late and the excitement you felt keeping you awake is dying down. The adrenaline and good vibes are now subsiding. Your eyelids drift shut, but only for a second. Only five more minutes. Blink. *One... two... three...* Instantly you are shocked awake by the horn of a car! A truck? A vehicle. Where is it coming from? Why aren't your hands on the wheel anymore? Are you on the right side of the road? What is happening? Why is it so bright?

Crash.

Four...

There are so many different endings to this story. None of them are good. So the question remains, why do people continue to drive under the influence? The answers to that

question are unsettling. One reason, as shown in the story above, is because of a special occasion. Some drunk drivers who would never drive drunk decide they can, just one time. A car company surveyed their drunk drivers to figure out why they would put themselves behind a wheel under the influence. One answer is “well, I’ve done it before.” Wait, people are drunk driving multiple times on the off-chance that it’ll work out? Scary. Another startling reason is that most people think that *they* can drink more than the legal limit and be just fine. Maybe other people can’t, but they won’t make a drunken error. One statistic shows that people *let* drunk friends, family, and spouses behind the wheel simply because they don’t want to argue with them.

These “reasons” however, are just excuses that can and should be confronted. The best way to stop drunk driving is to teach everyone, all ages, the dangers of driving under the influence. Another study shows that 31% of drunk drivers are 18 -19 years old, 15% are 20 – 36 years old, and a whopping 62% are 37 – 52 years old. All ages should be taught that there will be consequences to their actions. As a teenager in high school we have lectures on the consequences of drunk driving, but as the statistics show, the most incidents of drunk driving belong to the older population. Education and awareness lectures should be taught in businesses, at jobs, and in places that will reach the older adults.

In this day and age, people forget that a car is not just a luxury item, like a silk covered pillow that can’t hurt you. It is a machine, a weapon. A car can do more damage than a knife could. A car can take out a wall of a building and destroy the entire place. A bullet cannot. There is a disconnection somewhere that people think that a car is not dangerous. That disconnect needs to be reformed. Another topic that should be brought up and spoke about in both school and in the workplace more is the effect alcohol actually has on the brain. Alcohol is

a depressant substance that leads to not being able to concentrate, to react, or make clear judgements. Impairment to even just one of them is very bad for driving, but impairment to all three could be fatal.

All too often, stories like the one you have just read are not fiction. They are an unfortunate reality for far too many. The average rate of a drunk driving accident injury is ninety seconds. In the span of you reading this essay, it's frightening to wonder how many people's lives were tragically changed, in the blink of an eye.

Citations

“Figure 2f from: Irimia R, Gottschling M (2016) Taxonomic Revision of Rochefortia Sw. (Ehretiaceae, Boraginales). Biodiversity Data Journal 4: e7720. <https://doi.org/10.3897/BDJ.4.e7720>.” doi:10.3897/bdj.4.e7720.figure2f.

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