

Van driver violates Melissa's right-of-way Quality riding gear reduces injuries

In Columbus, Ohio, on May 19, 2015 while riding my motorcycle home from a doctor's appointment, I was involved in an accident (about two miles from my home). I was riding southbound on Cleveland Ave. The speed limit there is 45mph. When approaching the intersection at Lauralwood, I noticed a tan SUV turning and I adjusted my speed and slowed to avoid an accident. He should have waited to turn, but he didn't.

The driver of a minivan behind him, did not pause or stop before she proceeded to turn left in front of me as well. At this point, there was nothing I could do. I had no room to stop or avoid the collision. The driver of the van had no license and no insurance. The only reason I am still alive is because I wore my helmet and all of my safety gear worked to protect me. I was wearing a full-face, bright white, HJC CS-R2 model helmet with a bright pink pony tail stuck on it,



a pink and black leather jacket and a pink vest with Olypmia Gel reflector gloves (also in pink and black). I was wearing jeans and Justin Gypsy pink boots and it was their first ride. They were brand new.

I tried to contact the Columbus Police department to find out why she wasn't arrested for driving with no license and no insurance - or at least not ticketed for no insurance, but I never got any response back.

I was unconscious at the scene and transported to Riverside with a broken right wrist, cut in my leg and a serious concussion. I also had a torn ligament in my left hand, black eye, fat lip and

several hematomas on my body. One of the witness reports, according to the nursing staff at the hospital, said I slid under her van.

She never got out of her van to see if I was okay (she admitted this to the police) and it is my understanding she is also not the one who called 911. I have had two surgeries, metal plate and screws in my right wrist to repair the fracture and surgery to repair the ligament in my left hand (ironically from honking at her when we collided). I just returned to work on August 3rd.

The driver of the van got \$30 ticket for failure to yield, and a \$100 ticket for no license. No driving classes mandated, no jail time and no ticket even for no insurance. I do not feel this is fair. Motorists turning left in front of motorcyclists are an epidemic and is something I want to try to help change. I will be maimed for the rest of my life due to this accident. I now have metal in my body because of her carelessness.

This is a letter I have written, but not sent her yet.

“Dear Minivan Driver,

I want to introduce myself to you. I am Melissa, the motorcycle rider that you hit on May 19, 2015. I am a Business Analyst, a girlfriend, a mother, a daughter, a grandmother, and a sister. My road name is Tink. The decisions you made on this day have changed me and my life, for the rest of my life.

I know that riding a motorcycle is a dangerous endeavor however; it is up to each of us to mitigate the risks involved, which I did. This is why I am still alive and the only reason you did not kill me on that day. I take motorcycle riding courses about every other year to make sure I'm up on my skills and I learn something new with each class I take. I have ridden my pearl white Honda Shadow Aero across the country and back and have used my love for riding to raise money for fallen police officers, firefighters, and cancer patients. I have ridden for domestic violence victims and raised thousands of dollars doing something that I love to help other people.

While my riding gear and safety equipment on my bike did their job to save my life and protect my body as much as can be expected, my injuries and scars will last the rest of my life. As of today, I have had surgery on my right wrist to put in a metal plate and screws, I've had stitches in my right leg, a serious concussion, and I will be having surgery next week on my left hand to repair a torn ligament - ironically it's the ligament in my left thumb - the same thumb I used to blow my horn at you. So far, every day since the accident has been very painful. Things like being able to eat, brushing my hair, petting my dog - all things that cause pain. I go to physical therapy 3 times a week to try to get full use of my right hand back.

As for riding a motorcycle again, that is still very much up in the air. I get around a motorcycle and start shaking like a freaking leaf. To put this into perspective for you, there has been very little that has ever scared me about driving anything. I have driven a semi-truck in all lower 48 states and 3 providences in Canada, in all kinds of weather and in all kinds of traffic. I have ridden my motorcycle in all kinds of weather and all kinds of traffic and never have been scared

of it. You took a basic part of who I am away from me. My best friend's grandchildren call me "Aunt Tink". The majority of my friends call me Tink.

Part of the reason I am writing to you is that I am angry. Not so much at you, but at the decisions that day, and the lack of responsibility both from you and from the law enforcement. I laid in the intersection of Cleveland Ave and Lauralwood for quite a while and you never got out to check on me. Another human's life meant that little to you? I have heard every excuse in the book in your defense but YOU made the decision to drive that day. Driving is a privilege and it comes with great responsibility. Automobiles are death machines and you can end (or change) your own life or someone else's life in the blink of an eye with the decisions you make behind the wheel. YOU made the decision to drive without being licensed and without insurance. You broke laws and just about cost someone their life. \$130 fine is not punishment enough for what you did and how you impacted my life and the lives of my family and friends.

You left me in the middle of the road, broken, bleeding and unconscious. I am pissed that anyone would think my life is worth so little. I woke up surrounded by people I didn't know, in a tremendous amount of pain and not being able to move at all.

After the accident, you were able to call your family and let them know what happened and that you were okay. You got to go home to your family. My family had to worry and wonder about why they couldn't get a hold of me and why I wasn't coming home. After several failed attempts to try to call me and text me, my boyfriend did a find my friends to find out where my phone was. That is how my family found out I was in the hospital. He didn't know what had happened. He didn't know if I was okay. He didn't know why I was there.

The fear and panic he felt is something that's also not fair. He didn't know what to expect or what was going on, and they wouldn't let him see me right away...and then I was taken away almost immediately for more tests."