

Life
changing surviving
life's unexpected
events



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Jerry Bruneau October 26, 2010 Personal Narrative Essay Life ChangingSurviving Life's Unexpected Events My life was outstanding after moving to Dallas. It was like something you read about in magazines or watch in a movie. I had the dream job, car, house, and social life. I worked as a bartender at the hottest nightclub in town and made a lot of money. I bought a beautifully restored 1961 Porsche, a lot like the one that James Dean had died in. My car had a pearl- white paint job, a red-leather interior, and aluminum alloy wheels with low-profile racing tires.

I was living in a guesthouse on the estate of the nightclub owner; he lived in the mansion in front. We had parties there almost every night around the swimming pool. Suddenly the dream life I had known came to an unexpected and abrupt end. One night while driving home after work, I got into a terrible car accident. It was just after 2: 30 a. m. when a brand-new Cadillac slammed into the passenger side of my car. The car had come out of nowhere and hit me so hard that the front-end of the car ended up where my gearshift had been. The impact was so intense that it bent my car in half like a horseshoe.

It made me hit the windshield with my face, and broke my seat belt. There was so much blood! I could hardly see, not realizing at the time that I had knocked my left eye out of the socket. The pain was unimaginable! The only thing on my mind after the impact was that I wanted to get out of my car and kick this person's ass. When I tried to open the door of my car, I realized I could not move my left arm. I could smell gas, and see smoke, and fire coming from the front end of his car. I yelled for someone to get me out of the car before it caught on fire. Several people had seen the accident.

One man came with a fire extinguisher,; he managed to put the fire out quickly. I knew I would have to wait for the fire department and the ambulance to arrive before I could be removed from the car. The firefighters arrived on the scene first. They used the Jaws of Life to pry open the driver's door, attempting to remove me from the car. Then the paramedics arrived and took over. The first thing they did after giving me a quick look over was to inform me my left eye had been knocked out the socket. My eye was lying on my cheek and they needed to put it back in the socket. They told me this was going to be very ainful, and they would not be able to give me anything for the pain until I was at the hospital. They put something in my mouth that resembled a rubber dog bone, to keep me from biting my tongue, and endure the severe pain. After getting my eye back in the socket, they bandaged up my head, and. my face.. I could still see with my right eye, and I noticed the police had arrived. They were handcuffing a man in his late thirties or early forties, and putting him into the back of their police car. The man had just hit me with his car. The firefighters and paramedics tried to remove me from my car.

I screamed out in pain and begged them to stop. I was pinned in the car. My legs and feet were tangled up with the clutch and brake pedals. They had to remove the driver's door, the windshield, and the steering wheel. It took the firefighters and paramedics quite some time to free me from the vehicle. When they finally succeeded, I was rolled on a stretcher into the ambulance and raced towards the hospital. I remember the sirens screaming and the paramedic told me, " You're going to be all right, just holding on. " Hell, I had a death grip on that stretcher.

I was in excruciating pain it seemed like an eternity; however, I did have my rubber doggy bone to bite down on. It was only about fifteen minutes before we arrived at the hospital. They rushed me into the ER where a small army of nurses and doctors were already waiting for me. They started cutting away my clothing and inspecting me from head to foot. After they removed my clothing, I sat up to see why my left leg hurt so intensely. I only got a quick glance before the nurses pushed me back down. My leg looked like it was put on backwards; my foot was facing the wrong direction, and it was the size of a football.

It did not take them long to assess the amount of damage my body had received. The doctor in charge of the ER told me I needed surgery immediately, due to life-threatening injuries. He also told me that they might have to amputate my left leg. He wanted me to sign a waiver for them to do whatever surgeries I needed. "Do whatever you need to save my life," I replied, "but I will not sign a waiver to have my left leg amputated." I want to wake up in one piece, I told him. Then I was wheeled down the hall and up the elevator to the operating room. Once I was on the operating table, it only took a few moments for them to put me to sleep.

Suddenly I woke feeling as if I was strangely floating above the operating table. I was watching them trying to shock me back to life. I remember thinking to myself, "I'm way too young to die!" I wondered how it would affect my family if I did. The next time I woke up, I was in the ICU with tubes coming out of me everywhere. Both legs were in traction, but I was still in one piece, thank God! The only thing I could move was my right arm. I used it to try to pull the tube out of my throat. I wanted to get someone's

attention. It did not take long; when I started to pull the tube out of my throat, all kinds of alarms went off.

One of the nurses painstakingly finished removing the tube from my throat so that I could talk. A doctor came to my room and informed me of my current condition. Both hip joints were broken. My left kneecap was crushed and all the ligaments were torn. Both ankles were broken and all the bones in my left foot were crushed. They had managed to save my left leg from amputation; however, I would need more surgeries. They were going to fly two specialists in to finish the work on my leg; I would have to sign a special waiver for experimental surgery.

They also told me I would probably never walk again, at least not without crutches or a cane. A plastic surgeon stitched my face and head back together; plus some internal injuries it took over 1, 100 stitches. He did such a good job you would never know it to look at me today. Additional injuries included broken ribs and, which punctured both lungs, plus some internal injuries. I spent the next five or six months in the hospital. My rehabilitation was going excessively slow for me. They had just finished the last operation on my legs, and I was beginning to wonder if they were ever going to let me out.

Then one night a friend of mine came by to visit, and we devised a plan to sneak me out the hospital. First, he found an orderly's jacket and put it on. Then he put all my valuables into a laundry hamper and brought them out to his car. After that, he pulled his car around to one of the side exits then came back to get me. He helped me into a wheelchair, snuck me out to his car, and drove me home. I spent the next three months rehabilitating myself

at home. I had made up my mind that I did not care what any of the doctors had told me. I was going to do whatever it took, but I was going to walk again.

In the beginning, I would hang off the diving board of the swimming pool just kicking, kicking my legs back and forth until I was in so much the pain and became unbearable. After two months, my legs were finally strong enough to start walking around in the swimming pool after two months of this. I went back to the hospital after my recovery. They The doctors could not believe their eyes when they realized I walked in there they without the help of crutches or a cane. They never thought they would never see me again but, let alone see me walking. The doctor asked where I had been, so I told him the whole story.

The doctor had to remove the forty metal staples I had in and three screws from my legs. , which This was going to be extremely painful, since the skin had grown over the top of them. The doctor had to cut back the skin and pull them all out. I could not believe it when the nurse came up behind me and asked me to open my mouth, only to shove that damned rubber doggy bone in my mouth. She said, " You'll need this; it's going to hurt a lot! " After the doctor was finished, he recommended that I go to a professional physical therapist to finish my rehabilitation, which I did.

During my rehabilitation, I had a lot of free time on my hands. Therefore, I practiced flipping liquor bottles around until I perfected the tricks I had seen other bartenders do. Three months later, I was almost as good as new. I did not have any problems getting around at all. I went back to work and became one of the best bartenders in Dallas. In fact, I was voted the best

bartender in Dallas five years in a row. This unexpected event had taken almost a year of my life. Not only did I survive, but also I made a complete recovery despite my doctors' doubts.