

DID YOU KNOW???

“YOU ARE NOT INVINCIBLE”

Last week's article was about the need for a cultural change on how we view speeding as a major factor in crashes, injuries and fatalities. Today's article ties into last week's with an emotional letter from an arresting police officer to a teen driver caught speeding at 100 mph. The Ohio police officer stopped a teen driver going 100 miles per hour in a 65 zone, and then penned an emotional letter to the 18-year-old, warning him about the dangers of reckless driving. The following is from the National Sheriff's Assoc.

"I'd like to believe that you were minutes away from creating an unspeakable Christmas tragedy when I stopped you," the officer wrote in the letter. "If not only killing yourself, you were well on your way to killing some innocent person who was minding their own business doing nothing else wrong but being in front of you."

The officer's message is drawing attention to a harsh reality: teens aged 16 to 20 have more fatal crashes and more injury and property-damaging crashes than any other age group, according to a recent study. Researchers from UCLA concluded that "the relatively high accident rate of younger drivers (especially male drivers) is most likely due to inattention to safety considerations rather than lack of technical driving ability."

In his letter, the officer said the teen told him he didn't realize how fast he was going. "That's a lie," the officer wrote to the teen. "You may not realize when you're doing 45 in a 35 but you are fully aware of every mile per hour at 100. You realize it with every bump you hit. You realize it as you pass cars so fast the wind moves your car. You realize it every time you drift over the line and when you move the wheel the car reacts a lot quicker than you're used to. You absolutely realized it," he wrote.

The officer said the teen was scared when he was pulled over. Unfortunately, that feeling came too late – and for the wrong reason, the officer said. "You should have been scared that you were trying to kill yourself."

The officer said that while the teen driver likely felt "invincible," he's seen all too many "dead and broken 18 year old bodies" pulled from cars. "They thought they were invincible too. They weren't," he wrote. "They were gone so they missed the part where I had to tell their parents that they were dead."

"Part of your soul disappears every time you have to tell parents that their kid is dead," the officer said. Though he doesn't personally know the teen's parents, he's sure they must say "Be careful. Drive safe," every time the teen leaves the house. He told the teen to heed those warnings, so his parents don't one day hear their 18-year-old son is dead from a car crash. The officer went on to explain that, when you leave the house, the biggest chance of dying is by a car.

Research suggests *older* teens are more likely to be distracted drivers than younger teens. A study commissioned by Liberty Mutual Insurance and Students Against Destructive Decisions found older teens tend to be more distracted by their cellphone while driving. While 32 percent of high school seniors admitted using Snapchat behind the wheel only 19 percent of sophomores admitted to it, the study found.

To end his message to the anonymous 18-year-old, the officer simply wrote a final warning: "Slow down. Please. You are not invincible. I promise."

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1/24/2019

COMPLAINT ON Pass
 COLOR _____ MAKE Chrysler
 YEAR 2009 LICENSE # RTJ SR
 UPON A PUBLIC HIGHWAY, NAMELY North Ridgeville/A-44
 AT/NEAR Root OF STATE OF OHIO AND COMMITTED
 IN THE Root City
 COUNTY (NO.) 47

SPEED: 100 MPH in 65 MPH zone
 Over limit Air Unsafe for conditions
 Radar Under the influence of alcohol/drug of abuse VASCAR Pace ACDA
 Prohibited blood alcohol concentration Laser
 Blood Breath Urine

Prior OVI: None Not on license
 # of prior OVIs: _____
 Years of prior OVI: _____

OVER LICENSE: None Not on license
 BAC: _____
 License Type: _____
 FELT: _____

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