



Shonta' "Shawn" High, crash survivor:

On May 7th, 2019, at 3:07 pm while riding a 49cc motor scooter on my way to pick up my youngest daughter from school, I was struck by a motorist at the intersection of 500 Rock Creek Church Road NW.

It was by the grace of God that there were witnesses. I later found out they were my Park Morton neighbors. They called the ambulance for me. The driver who struck me fled the scene. I was told that she came back later. No charges were filed against her because she returned to the scene. I, on the other hand, was rushed to the hospital with multiple life-threatening injuries.

I sustained a concussion that gave me double vision and vertigo for months, a broken left scapula, a broken right femur that now has a permanent titanium rod that goes from my hip to my knee with screws that holds it in place, 6 broken ribs, and both my lungs collapsed. First responders performed CPR to resuscitate me. I literally died that day. For a moment in time, I was dead.

My crash and its aftermath have forced my oldest child to grow up in a split second. She was a legal adult at the time (19), however, it made her have to deal with the type of crisis that she was not ready for. The amount of distress, duress, anxiety, sadness, and overwhelming frustration that she experienced having to take on responsibilities that were not meant for her at this time. She should have been focusing on a relaxing college-free summer. As for their father, it was tiresome for him. He was mentally fatigued. He worked at night, came by the hospital during the day, then went to check in on the children in the evening. Then he would go to his home to get what little rest he could to repeat the routine the next day.

My life has changed dramatically. Today, I can't bend at the waistline for too long to tie my younger daughter's shoes or I get dizzy. Vertigo onsets at any time. I have low blood pressure, headaches, fatigue, and memory loss. My body aches more now than it ever did before. When it rains, my leg tightens up and gets stiff. It hurts. It makes it hard to walk. I have to apply heat or wrap up in bed after taking over the counter pain relief. It has been a nightmare.



Shonta’ “Shawn” High, crash survivor:

I don’t retain information the same way I used to. I’m more agitated than usual. My memory has been affected. I just don’t feel like I used to. I don’t feel like the person I was. The crash has changed me. I find myself clenching my leg whenever a motorcycle, scooter, or anything passes by on my side of the vehicle abruptly. I feel a lot of tension having to ride through that intersection. It’s like reliving it over and over again.

The police report asked, “Was the driver distracted?” The answer was checked, “No.” If the driver was not distracted, how did she not see me? I’d like drivers to pay attention. It’s people like me that follow traffic laws, guidelines, rules and regulations that get hit, damaged, and suffer.

Our elected leaders and public officials are responsible for my tragedy and every single one like it. Every life lost, every life changed due to a crash, they are responsible. Some of them will pass legislation to protect some, but not others. This is socially and racially unjust. They speak about equality as if they are part of the fairness of the world when they are not. I lost my life that day. I’ll never enjoy an amusement park with my youngest daughter due to the pain and the vertigo. My depression has worsened since this crash. Leaders don’t think it affects them, until it does. Leaders and legislators never do anything until it happens to them or their loved ones. This is a crisis to be handled right now.

Working with Families for Safe Streets means support for traumatic experiences and a near loss of life. It means building a bridge to a safety net of people who can relate to a cause that will be supported wholeheartedly. It means comradery. A band of brothers and sisters in arms that can patch each other up by screwing together each other’s nuts, bolts, pins, and rods to build each other back up in the hardest of times with understanding, sympathy, and compassion.



DC Families for Safe Streets confronts traffic violence and its epidemic of tragic injuries and deaths. We are comprised of victims of traffic violence and families whose loved ones have been killed or severely injured by aggressive or reckless driving and dangerous conditions on District streets. We represent the full breadth of the District’s diversity and demand an end to traffic violence.

We bear witness to our pain and suffering to press for the elimination of fatalities and injuries on our streets. Through our stories and advocacy, we seek cultural and physical changes on our streets and the rapid implementation of Vision Zero.

We envision a city where people who walk, roll, bike, and drive can safely co-exist, and children and adults can travel freely without risk of harm – where no loss of life in traffic is acceptable.

We advocate for life-saving changes and provide support to those affected by deadly crashes in our communities. We seek changes toward safer streets that might have saved our loved ones, or prevented injuries, as a meaningful way to channel our grief and honor our family members. We work so that no other families suffer the loss or life altering injuries that have impacted our families.

dcfamiliesforsafestreeets.org

