

The Pedestrian (A Short Essay)

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A 59-year-old Florida woman was struck by a car and killed Thursday while trying to cross the intersection at Pennington and Ewingville roads, authorities said today. This is how the news article started. We knew that there was a serious incidence when we drove home from our daughter's evening school event; the intersection was partially blocked by multiple police cars. But after reading this article and the readers' comments, I became more uneasy with some conflicting feelings and thoughts.

According to the article, "the woman was crossing the street outside of a crosswalk when she was struck by the oncoming motorist who seemed not to have enough time to stop" and the incidence was referred to by the police as an "unfortunate accident." It was a short article. Then, the first few comments were critical of the victim, basically saying that it was not an "accident" because the woman jaywalked and broke the law. Since I ride a bike, I often feel more like a pedestrian and think that some motorists are exceedingly aggressive. Then, what is the purpose of the law? Would we blame the people under the Nazis who broke the "law" and helped the Jews? Blaming and referencing the law do not seem to be the most productive paths in this case.

According to another comment, including an unconfirmed story, the woman asked to use the restroom at the 7-Eleven and was refused. She then headed for another business across the intersection. Was her physiological need so overwhelming that her judgment was impaired? I recalled the time we were stuck in the traffic for hours. We were on an elevated highway. Basic physiological needs surely can change our behaviors.

In this unconfirmed story, there also is a reference to her husband. I can easily recall a number of similar situations that happened while I was traveling with my wife. I cannot imagine what kind of ordeal that husband went through.

Another comment was about the driver of the car. He was driving a registered and insured vehicle within the speed limit and taking his daughter to a church meeting. He was extremely remorseful and his daughter was severely traumatized from witnessing the incidence. We too passed the same intersection with our daughter, without any awareness of what had happened.

The last significant comment referred to the woman as her mother. She accused the earlier comments as “devoid of any compassion or humanity.” She also wrote that the world is “so unforgiving and rigid.” She was also empathic to the driver and his family. This reminded me of my mother in Tokyo. About three months earlier, she was walking on a sidewalk and hit by a bicycle. She fell, lost her blood and consciousness, and was paralyzed neck down for a while. Now, we are relieved as she can walk with a walker. But she will never regain her original ability.

As I cross the intersection regularly, by car and by bicycle, different emotions and thoughts come up. Although things will never be the same, I wish peace for the people involved in the incidence.