

Drunk-Driving Diversity

Immigration brings real danger and risk to our nation's roads

BY BRENDA WALKER

These days, the well-informed citizen will wisely tighten up seat belts when driving and use extra care while crossing the street. The reason is increased danger on the nation's roadways caused by permissive immigration policies. Many of America's new residents come from societies where drunk driving is a cultural norm. Worse, many newbies have not gotten the message that American law and custom demand responsible driving, i.e., sobriety.

The problem is often a case of cultural baggage imported from societies where booze-enhanced driving is not only accepted, but is considered a sign of desirable manliness, particularly in the case of Mexican males. Juan not a real man unless he can knock down a dozen beers and then stagger off to his pick-up for the trip home without passing out — “Mui macho!”

Even the ultra-liberal National Public Radio has admitted that Hispanics are “responsible for a disproportionate number of DWI arrests and alcohol-related car accidents.” State statistics routinely show that to be the case. For example, in 2007, Hispanics constituted the largest ethnicity among California's DUI arrests at 45.9 percent, compared with the group's percentage (35.8) in the state's adult population.

A 2002 fact sheet published by the National Highway Safety and Traffic Administration (“Drinking and Driving and...Hispanics”) quoted a recently arrived Hispanic immigrant who said, “I can do anything or handle anything when I'm drunk.” The publication further noted a study showing Hispanics believed that the number of drinks needed to affect driving was generally higher (four to eight drinks) than what white and black Americans thought.

Glorification of extreme drinking affects behavior. Assistant Dean at the University of Texas School of Public Health in Dallas Raul Caetano put it this way: “The profile of a drunk driver in California is a young Hispanic male, and I bet you have a similar situation all over the Southwest.” He referred to a national survey, saying, “The traditional pattern of drinking in Mexico is

one of infrequent drinking of high amounts.”

Not all diversity is worthy of celebration. Some ethnic customs are downright dangerous or objectionable in other ways.

Meanwhile on the home front, even after years of too many Americans killed on the highways by drunk-driving illegal aliens, the authorities still don't consider the crime to be a serious one. The truth is that DHS has never taken drunk driving seriously, because it is so common. If every drunk-driving illegal alien were required to be deported, it would take up more resources than the government is willing to expend on public safety.

There are no available statistics from the government on the number of citizens killed by drunk-driving illegal aliens, but it would be a good bet that the category would outnumber all other deaths caused by unlawful foreigners.

Most such crimes get only local attention in the media, with no national accounting. In addition, police may not know the immigration status of the perp at the time of the crash when much of the reporting occurs. If a plea deal is arranged with no trial, the crime will likely be forgotten quickly by the public, with only the friends and family remembering the terrible loss and its cause.

Consider for a moment the 2001 Chandra Levy murder, one of the most publicized crimes in recent decades, partially because Congressman Gary Condit was the suspect for a time. The killer, Ingmar Guandique, was finally revealed as a sexual predator illegal alien, who should have been deported when he committed earlier crimes. But he wasn't, and an innocent young woman paid the price of permissive immigration enforcement.

You could practically feel the discomfort and disappointment in the media at the final outcome. Many press accounts downplayed or ignored completely the preventable-crime angle, that Guandique was an illegal alien who should have been deported at the time of an earlier arrest to protect the public. The trial was helpfully informative in one aspect, however. While mainstream reporters recited the mantra that he came for the usual

“better life,” the trial revealed that he came to America to escape a charge of attacking a woman with a knife.

The trial of Ingmar Guandique should have been a reminder that keeping out criminals is an important function of legal immigration. But that lesson was lost.

A drunk-driving death that did get national media attention was the August 2010 crash which killed 66-year-old Sister Denise Mosier, a Benedictine nun living in Virginia. Two other nuns were critically injured but survived. The accident occurred in Prince William County, close to the Capitol, and the story received extensive coverage by the *Washington Post* and other



Sister Denise Mosier



Cpl. Brian Mathews

Beltway news outlets. There was shock that a nun could be killed by a drunk-driving illegal alien who was freed even after two previous drunk-driving convictions. The driver, Carlos Martinelly-Montano, had been out of jail for nearly two years as he awaited a deportation hearing for those crimes. He had been imprisoned for 20 days for his DUI convictions, so he was clearly a bad crash waiting to happen. An obviously dangerous illegal alien was released with deadly consequences.

The malfeasance of federal agencies must have been pretty bad in the case, since it sent DHS Secretary Napolitano into cover-up mode by conducting a secret investigation. In February through April 2011, Judicial Watch filed several FOIA requests, but was stonewalled by the administration, which finally sent a sketchy draft report. Nevertheless, the report indicated that the Obama administration had decided not to detain the illegal alien after he served his earlier jail sentence for drunk driving, and released him onto the streets.

The Obama administration likes to say it is “prioritizing” deportations to repatriate the worst criminals first. That’s a nice-sounding theory, but drunk-driving illegal aliens endanger all Americans, because everyone travels the roadways and navigates crosswalks.

The nun case shows how careless our justice system can be when dealing with drunk-driving foreigners. Even dangerous serial drunk drivers have been repeat-

edly turned loose on American streets instead of being prosecuted, jailed, and deported. In one shocking case, the 2006 deaths of Tennesseans Sean and Donna Wilson, the illegal alien killer had not been deported even after at least 14 arrests before he collided head-on with the couple’s car.

The Wilson example is one of the most egregious, but it is hardly unique. Consider other illustrations, from a list which only touches the surface:

- In Aurora, Colorado, three-year-old Martin Kudlis was killed, along with two women unrelated to him, Patricia Guntharp and Deb Serecky, after a drunk Guate-



Tessa Trenchant and Alyson Kunhardt

malan created a swath of destruction in a shopping area. The driver, Francis Hernandez, was traveling at an estimated 80 miles per hour. He had been arrested 16 times but never deported.

- In 2009, four-year-old Josie Bluhm was killed by an illegal alien as he ran a stoplight in Omaha. The driver, Eleazar Rangel-Ochoa, had four earlier DUI convictions and was refused a state ID because he had a fraudulent Social Security number (a felony), but nobody bothered to deport him.

- Marine Cpl. Brian Mathews lived through a tour of duty in Iraq, but was struck down in his own country by a drunk-driving illegal alien. He was killed Thanksgiving night 2006 near his parents’ home by a previously arrested illegal whose blood alcohol was 4 times the legal limit. Eduardo Raul Morales-Soriano, a Mexican national, had refused a breathalyzer test after an earlier accident which should have suspended his North Carolina drivers license, but a police error allowed him to keep it. He later used the NC license to obtain a Maryland DL.

- In Huntsville, Alabama, 19-year-old Tad Mattle and 16-year-old Leigh Anna Jimmerson were killed in a fiery auto crash caused by illegal alien Felix Ortega. The high school sweethearts died when their car was rear-ended by the drunken Ortega, who had outstanding DUI warrants and had been arrested earlier using one of his several aliases.

- High school best friends Tessa Tranchant and Alyson Kunhardt were sitting at a stoplight in Virginia Beach when their car was rear-ended by drunk driver Alfredo Ramos. Both girls were killed in the crash. Ramos had been convicted twice of alcohol-related crimes but was not deported.

- Grandmother Barbara Barben was run down and killed as she crossed a Denver street. The driver, Alberto Alvarado-Barojas, was drunk at a level (.39) that can cause a coma or death. He had been arrested the previous year for DUI, but was released without being deported to Mexico.

- Seven-year-old Marcus Lassiter was killed in a hit-and-run in North Carolina by a drunk driver with several

ity for ethnic activists as well as the business owners who want their cheap labor to get to their jobs.

The trend is moving against public safety and justice. The list of sanctuary cities is expanding, not decreasing. In May, San Francisco Sheriff Michael Hennessey announced he would defy the federal Secure Communities program by releasing illegal aliens with minor charges instead of holding them for deportation. Mayor Ed Lee of the city followed a few days later by laying out an expanded sanctuary policy under which the city would no longer report illegal immigrant youths to federal authorities when they are arrested on felony charges.

The sheriff and mayor must not have received the memo that immigration is a federal responsibility,



Josie Bluhm



Martin Kudlis



Marcus Lassiter

prior arrests who hadn't been deported.

The preceding crimes were all preventable by tough immigration enforcement to remove observably dangerous foreigners from this country.

As British politician Enoch Powell wisely observed in 1968, "The supreme function of statesmanship is to provide against preventable evils."

Furthermore, many of the sentences handed out (even when they are the maximum allowable) are not adequate to the crime and the pain that families suffer. If it were up to me, any drunk-driving illegal alien who causes a death should get a mandatory life in prison.

It is truly shameful that public safety has such a low level of importance for our elected leaders and law-enforcement officials, particularly when illegals are in the mix. There have been exceptions, like Rep. Sue Myrick, who authored the Scott Gardner Act (named after a victim) in 2005, which would have required that any illegal alien convicted of a DUI would face automatic deportation. Sadly, the common-sense bill has never been passed into law. Ease of travel for illegal aliens remains a prior-



ABOVE: Grandmother Barbara Barben seated next to her husband Paul A. Barben. BELOW: In 2006, Sean and Donna Wilson died from fatal injuries in a head-on collision after an illegal alien crashed into the couple's car.



as we heard throughout the controversy over Arizona's AB1070 enforcement law. Identification technology has improved in recent years, but if police are directed not to ask questions about citizenship, big databases don't help.

We citizens pay billions of dollars in taxes to support a legal system of police, courts, and prisons to protect our safety. But in the area of illegal alien criminals, we have been poorly served indeed. ■