

# Mexicans and Drunk Driving

*The sociobiological and cultural factors underlying this ongoing tragedy*

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While Americans are now quite aware of the dangers illegal aliens from Mexico and Central America pose to all of us who use this nation's roads and highways, most are likely unaware that there is a genetic component at work in every alcohol-fueled crash caused by one of these invaders.

A 2015 National Institutes of Health (NIH) study reported the following results:

Hispanics who choose to drink are more likely to consume higher volumes of alcohol than non-Hispanic Whites.

42.4 percent of Hispanics who drink on a regular basis consume 3+ drinks "per drinking day," as opposed to 31.6 percent of their "non-Hispanic White" drinking counterparts.

The average Mexican man drinks 15.9 alcoholic drinks per week (Mexico has the second highest rate among Latin American nations, with Puerto Rican men consuming an average of 16.9 drinks a week.)

33 percent of Hispanics who become alcohol dependent have recurrent or persistent problems compared with 22.8 percent of non-Hispanic Whites.

Among Hispanics who drink, Mexican American men and women and South/Central American men are most likely to receive a citation for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Hispanics with severe alcohol problems are less likely than non-Hispanic Whites to seek the treatment they need. Hispanics also are less likely to join Alcoholics Anonymous

(AA), even though AA groups are available for free and in Spanish.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, the NIH reports the following on genetic predisposition to alcoholism and the genetics of alcohol metabolism among "Southwest California Indians:"

"Alcohol is metabolized by several pathways, the most common of which involves two key enzymes—alcohol dehydrogenase (ADH) and aldehyde dehydrogenase (ALDH). Genetic differences in these enzymes may help to explain why some groups of people have higher or lower rates of alcohol-related problems. For example, certain variations in the genes that produce ADH and ALDH have been shown to have a protective effect in that they lead to an increased production of acetaldehyde, a toxic byproduct of alcohol metabolism that can cause adverse physical reactions, such as facial flushing, nausea, and rapid heart beat. This article by Dr. Howard J. Edenberg examines the role ADH and ALDH variants play in alcohol metabolism and the risk for alcoholism. This article also discusses the correlation between occurrence of these genes and alcoholism risk in various ethnic populations.

"Native Americans and Alaskan Natives are five times more likely than other ethnicities in the United States to die of alcohol-related causes. Native Americans are predisposed to alcoholism because of differences in the way they metabolize alcohol. In this article, Dr. Cindy L. Ehlers examines studies that test this hypothesis. Individuals can be protected against or predisposed to alcoholism by variations in the enzymes that metabolize alcohol (i.e., alcohol dehydrogenase [ADH] and aldehyde dehydrogenase [ALDH]). Dr. Ehlers examines the frequency with which these variants occur in one particular group of Native Americans, the Southwest California Indians. The findings suggest that it is unlikely that Native Americans carry a genetic variant that predisposes them to alcoholism. Certain variants of ADH and ADLH do have a protective affect against alcoholism in some Native American people; however, these findings do not explain the high incidence of alcoholism in the tribes that were studied."<sup>2</sup>

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Unfortunately, due to the fact that we are now living in a time of dictatorial and needless “cultural sensitivity training;” when so-called “ethnic studies” majors are being passed off as science courses in this country’s universities; and when the national press places more of an importance on political agendas, rather than the truth, it has become increasingly difficult to find recent studies on the role ethnicity and genetics play in abhorrent behavior.

One must examine research conducted decades ago to find hard, scientific study on the subject, as most of today’s research focuses on “environmental,” and “economic” conditions, and even “racism” in order to explain a group’s inordinate susceptibility to alcohol abuse and addiction.

In June 1980, Joseph E. Seagram and Sons Inc. donated \$5.8 million to Harvard Medical School to conduct research into the “biological, chemical, and genetic aspects of alcohol metabolism and alcoholism,” reported the *Harvard Gazette* on June 27, 1980.

Dr. Bert Vallee directed the study.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Vallee and his team found 15 distinct forms of the alcohol dehydrogenase (ADH) liver enzyme, discovering that the combinations and variety of these enzymes varied greatly from person to person. Furthermore, the patterns appeared to be genetically pre-determined, and the different races had a “typical variation and type of these isoenzymes.”

The study presented abundant evidence confirming widely different physiological reactions to alcohol consumption among the different races.

A very important work on this subject, entitled “Under the Influence,” written by Dr. James R. Milam and Katharine Ketcham in 1981, contains the following excerpt on the subject:

Another interesting finding of recent research is the discovery that a direct relationship exists between the length of time an ethnic group has been exposed to alcohol and the rate of alcoholism within that group. Jews and Italians, for example, have had access to large amounts of alcohol for more than 7,000 years and their alcoholism rate is very low. Alcohol was first introduced in quantity to the Northern European countries, including France, Ireland, and the Scandinavian countries, some 1,500 years ago, and the rates of alcoholism are relatively higher there. Native Americans, who suffer from extremely high alcoholism rates, did not have large supplies of alcohol until approximately 300 years ago. These differences in susceptibility are exactly what we should expect given the fact that alcoholism is a hereditary disease. The implication

is that the longer an ethnic group is exposed to alcohol, the lower its members’ susceptibility to alcoholism. This relationship is consistent with the principle of natural selection whereby those people with a high genetic susceptibility are eliminated over many generations, resulting in a lower susceptibility rate for the entire group (pgs. 43-44).<sup>4</sup>

## HOW DOES MEXICO DEAL WITH DRUNK DRIVING?

An examination of Mexico’s driving laws expose a rather frightening culture, and lack of regard for human life...

As for DUI laws, only 17 of Mexico’s 32 states have legal driving limits for a driver’s blood alcohol concentration (BAC).

Those states are Aguascalientes, Chiapas, Distrito Federal, Estado de Mexico, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacán, Tamaulipas, and Vera Cruz — .04; Chihuahua — .05; Guanajato, Morelos, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, and Sonora — .08; and Colima .08-.10. (Source: [icap.org/BAC LimitsWorldwide](http://icap.org/BACLimitsWorldwide))

According to the United Nations’ Pan American Health Organization, a total of 200,000 people drove under the influence of alcohol on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights in Mexico City, in 2008 alone.

As to simple proficiency among Mexican drivers, the testing (or lack thereof) may provide the rather frightening answer.

In six Mexican states, as well as in Mexico City, issuing agencies do not administer any sort of test before handing out driver’s licenses. In these locations, one need only pay a fee to obtain a license (about \$60 in Mexico City).

Three other states require the applicant to sit through a class, after which all attendees are issued licenses, while many other states give tests consisting of rather easy multiple choice questions.

Many years ago, testing was universal throughout Mexico. However, due to widespread corruption among local bureaucracies, testing is being phased out throughout the country.

And what happens when a driver is pulled over in Mexico, say, for speeding?

The Mexican travel website [travelyucatan.com](http://travelyucatan.com) gives the following advice:

Speeding is, as a rule, easily taken care of by offering to pay the fine on the spot. If you cannot pay on the spot, one of three things will occur:

- The officer will accept less money. The officer will accompany you to an ATM while waiting around the corner.
- The officer will take your driver’s license and

you'll receive a ticket. You will need to pay the fine to retrieve your driver's license.

- Sometimes the officer will simply let you off with a warning if you have a good attitude. You will NOT be arrested.<sup>5</sup>

### WHAT IS THE RESULT OF SUCH LAX POLICIES?

In October 2011, *The Economist* announced that 24,000 fatalities occur on Mexico's roads annually, while another 600,000 people are injured.<sup>6</sup>

According to the World Health Organization, pedestrians account for 21 percent of Mexico's road fatalities.

Such was the case in June 2008, when Mackenzie Maddox, 6, was hit and killed while crossing the street in a suburb of Milwaukee. The man behind the wheel was previously deported Mexican national Jose Rodriguez.

As little Mackenzie and her mother crossed the street at S. 84th St. and W. Cleveland Ave. in West Allis, Wisconsin, the car driven by Rodriguez came speeding through the intersection, striking both the little girl and her mother Andrea. Mackenzie died at the scene and her mother sustained serious injuries but survived.

Rodriguez, who had four prior driving convictions including a DUI, had been deported back to Mexico only four months prior to the fatal accident.

The lack of standardized testing, the absence of drunk-driving laws, and corruption all add up to make Mexico's roads, perhaps the most dangerous in the world. Of course, as Mexican nationals make their way to the U.S., it is safe to assume that they bring their country's culture with them.

On March 30, 2007, a Mexican national named Alfredo Ramos slammed into the rear of a vehicle in which Allison Kuhnhardt, 17, and Tessa Tranchant, 16, were sitting, while waiting at a traffic light.

Ramos, 22, was traveling at least 65 mph, when he hit the Plymouth Duster, and had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .24, according to court documents.

The two high school students had to be cut from their crumpled car and both died a short time after being transported to the hospital. Ramos suffered only a busted lip. Tessa's brother, Dylan, was tasked with identifying his little sister's body.

Dylan, a Marine, had only been home from Iraq for two weeks, when his sister was killed.

Ramos had been living in Virginia Beach for quite a while and worked at a local Mexican restaurant known as Mi Casita. He was previously convicted of three separate charges of public intoxication and identity theft as well as a DUI.

Despite his criminal history and illegal status in this country, Ramos was never reported to federal immigration officials, and continued to live in the area. He speaks only Spanish and required an interpreter at all of his court proceedings.

The case gained national fame thanks to the reporting of *Fox News*' Bill O'Reilly, who called Virginia Beach a "sanctuary city" for illegal aliens.

O'Reilly placed the blame on that city's Mayor Meyra Obendorf and Police Chief Jake Jacocks, and characterized the resort town as a place where foreign criminals were allowed to roam freely.

Chief Jake Jacocks went on the offensive and claimed that O'Reilly was wrong in focusing on the fact that Ramos was an illegal alien. He accused the *Fox News* commentator of turning the girls' deaths into a "political issue."<sup>7</sup>



**On March 30, 2007, Tessa Tranchant, 16, and Allison Kuhnhardt, 17, died after Alfredo Ramos, an illegal alien and multiple DUI offender, slammed into their stopped car at an intersection on a Virginia Beach street. Ramos is serving a 24-year prison sentence.**

However, shortly after the girls were killed, information on how the Virginia Beach Police Department deals with illegal aliens came to light.

"A 2005 Virginia Beach Police Department policy forbids officers from asking the immigration status of defendants charged with misdemeanors. Police Chief Jake Jacocks Jr. has said the policy is meant to encourage



illegal aliens to report crimes without fear of retribution,” the *Washington Times* reported.<sup>8</sup>

Ramos pleaded guilty to two counts of aggravated involuntary manslaughter and was sentenced to 24 years in prison, and ordered to be deported upon his release.

Minutes before Ramos was sentenced, Allison’s dad, David Kunhardt, had a very blunt message for the man who killed his daughter.

“If I were to have one wish, it is that Alfredo Ramos would have to visit Ali and Tessa at Princess Anne Memorial Park Cemetery for the rest of his life.”

In 2010, Tessa’s dad, Ray Tranchant penned an op-ed piece for *Fox News* about his daughter’s death.<sup>9</sup>

My 16-year-old daughter, Tessa, was killed by an illegal immigrant in Virginia Beach three years ago while sitting at a stop light. Her friend Ali Kunhardt, 17, also perished instantly.

Beautiful girls with tons of future plans, they had just stopped at a convenience store for a pack of gum at 10pm on a Friday night. I can imagine that they were giggling about something as they waited for the red light to turn green. Tessa was in the passenger seat. I’ll never forget her laugh.

The explosion was so loud that witnesses said it sounded like a bomb going off, hit from behind by a black Mitsubishi going more than 70 mph. They were tiny, skinny little girls stuffed somewhere in the floorboards when the police and EMT crew arrived.

When I got to the hospital in what seemed like a dream sequence, Tessa’s bed was lying next to Ali’s, separated by a privacy curtain. Both girls were perfectly still, skin cold to the touch.

Tess was covered with a hospital blanket, and her clothes lay in a bag by her bedside, cut off by the EMT and the ER doctor who tried to revive her, to no avail. I looked at her large brown eyes, pupils dilated, eyes wide open, staring at the ceiling. She still had a mask taped to her mouth with a long rubber tube. The center of the tube was filled with bright red blood. Amazingly, she had only a little bruise on her forehead, and her big toe was bleeding. I noticed that she had had a couple of her nails done with glitter, probably had just enough money to do two. She worked at the Golden Corral; Ali worked at The Fresh Market.

I hadn’t seen Tessa in a few days, and I had to laugh at her forearm. Hard to believe you can laugh with such horror around you, but I did. She had previously told me that she suffered

from the “Tranchant curse” — dark hair on her skinny little perfect arms — and apparently she had shaved it all off (her way of getting even, I guess).

Alfredo Ramos, a previous DUI offender and alcoholic, seemed invisible in a system that was good at looking the other way. Virginia Beach and Chesapeake were being accused of being “sanctuary cities” as Bill O’Reilly and Geraldo Rivera screamed at each other during the national news hour. O’Reilly was right.

I know what sanctuary means more than most ever will.

We don’t share a border with Mexico, so the awareness here isn’t as great as Arizona or California.

Alfredo Ramos is currently housed at the Greensville Correctional Center in Jarratt, Va., and has a scheduled release date of March 14, 2028, according to the Virginia Department of Corrections.

You see, when you import millions of people from one particular region of the world, you are not only gaining the cheap labor they may supply, but you are also importing their habits, culture, and genetics. You are, in fact, creating “a nation within a nation.”

Of course, if we are willing to tolerate this ongoing, inevitable tragedy in our country, we can continue to allow large numbers of Latin Americans to immigrate here, both legally and otherwise, and eventually the problem may alleviate itself...In a few thousand years, that is. ■

### Endnotes

1. <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/HispanicFact/hispanicFact.pdf>
2. <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh301/3-4.htm>
3. <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/nytimes/obituary.aspx?pid=142650164>
4. <http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/114310/under-the-influence-by-dr-james-r-milam-and-katherine-ketcham/9780553274875/#>
5. <https://travelyucatan.com/things-to-know-driving-in-mexico/#SPEEDING>
6. <http://www.economist.com/node/21531484>
7. [http://pilotonline.com/news/virginia-beach-leaders-strike-back-at-fox-s-bill-o/article\\_78e155ab-9336-52a1-a210-0e7655ee4901.html](http://pilotonline.com/news/virginia-beach-leaders-strike-back-at-fox-s-bill-o/article_78e155ab-9336-52a1-a210-0e7655ee4901.html)
8. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2007/apr/15/20070415-104656-5932r/>
9. <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2010/08/10/ray-tranchant-daughter-killed-virginia-beach-dui-illegal-immigrant-mexico.html>