

Car-Ma

Category: Motor Vehicle Accidents

written by R. Lynn Barnett | March 3, 2026

Karma is the idea that the universe is ruled by cause-and-effect associations: that actions have consequences, good or bad. My mom instilled in me the idea that sometimes you need to be the voice, the conduit, for karma.

Years ago, I was indirectly hit by an impaired driver. This person hit the car behind me, and that driver in turn hit me. We could smell the alcohol on the impaired person's breath. The police were called, but the police officer was reluctant to take the driver in question to the station for further testing, because there were no beer bottles in the car and they could walk a straight line.

The other injured driver and I tried to reason with the officer, pointing out that maybe the impaired driver had been drinking at a friend's house or a bar, and that was why there were no bottles in the car.

And in terms of walking a straight line, I know nondrinkers with knee injuries, who, due to those injuries, can't walk a straight line, so I'm not sure that test is an accurate gauge of sobriety. Be that as it may, the other driver and I persevered. Since I had friends who had been severely injured by a drunk driver, I knew the consequences of someone driving in that state of mind.

I asked the officer what would have happened if we had been lying in the street, dying in the street. They said they'd then take the driver in for further testing. That made me mad. At this point, the other driver and I knew that we weren't speaking up only for ourselves, but were also advocating for people who couldn't do so. The officer reluctantly checked with a supervisor, who agreed with us, and justice was, deservedly, served.

Necessity may be "the mother of invention," as they say, but in this case, advocacy was "my mother's inspiration." I guess she passed that sense on to me. Thanks, Ma.

*R. Lynn Barnett
Alpharetta, Georgia*