

I Almost Didn't Survive

Category: Motor Vehicle Accidents

written by Michele Walsh | March 13, 2026

I almost didn't survive the accident that I can't remember. It was New Year's Eve, 1979 and my parents, both nurses, were headed home when a drunk driver ran a red light and T-boned their car on the passenger's side. Their dog was frightened and ran away. My mom was taken to the hospital to evaluate for internal injuries. My dad was not harmed, but he stepped in a jar of honey that was broken in the accident. At the hospital, he remembers squishing and sticking down the cold, clean tile floors to get to his injured wife.

Back then, a urinary pregnancy test wasn't routine. So even though my mom told them she suspected she was pregnant (four weeks), it didn't get tested or recorded. Later, the doctors came in. "We have a problem," they said. "You got pelvic X-rays, and you are pregnant. The fetus could be severely damaged. You should take care of the problem." My mom was otherwise okay and was discharged. But then her OB said the same thing at her first appointment. "Take care of this before it's too late. Who knows what could be altered?"

Eventually, Mom changed OBs. She and Dad had already had one miscarriage and wanted me no matter what. Turns out, they later learned those X-rays were never performed. Someone had read the chart and never completed them. Still, I grew up staying in for New Year's Eve. It wasn't worth the risk to my parents.

This history of mine, part of me before I even had a strong heartbeat, has impacted how I care for patients who are stuck in hard situations, trying to listen and understand rather than dictate. It has made me grateful for strangers who rescued my parents' dog and returned him safely. And finally, it has helped me appreciate all who work at the hospital. I'm sorry my parents had the accident and a distasteful experience with their doctors. I'm so grateful they kept me alive and told me my story!

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