

My Heart's Not the Same

Category: Emergencies

written by Nan Jackson | November 1, 2022

The clerk at city hall told me I had to fill out a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request if I wanted to see the accident report. In the midst of dealing with claims for my vehicle (now totaled) and medical expenses, I wanted to see in black and white an acknowledgement that the other driver was at fault. And there it was: "Failed to yield."

That was the reason for the crash and the airbag deployment, the reason the police and fire engine and EMT were called out, the reason the urgent care doctor put my neck in a brace and sent me to the ER, the reason for my sternum fracture and upper body aches and pains, the reason I was kept overnight in the ER to monitor my abnormally high heart enzymes.

At the scene of the accident, I'd sat on the grass holding my hand to my chest, dazed by the sudden turn of events in an ordinary day a few blocks from my house, thankful that the other driver (50 years younger than I am) had suffered no injuries.

When the officer arrived, he saw I was cold and led me to his patrol car for shelter. He gathered the data he needed to write his report. The EMTs who examined me gave me a choice of going directly to the ER or not. I hadn't been able to reach my husband by phone, so I chose to have the officer take me home and had my husband drive me to urgent care to get checked out. I was grateful to be walking and talking. Maybe I was okay.

Ten days after the accident, I got the FOIA report. I'm still a little off-kilter as I study what the officer wrote that day. There I am, as part of "Unit 1": no injury, no ambulance. I wish both were true. I can't yet move without pain the way I used to, and my heart still believes I've experienced an emergency.

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