

“I died three times after being hit by a drunk driver”

After a horrific road traffic incident, Angela McShane spent a year in hospital and was left with life changing injuries. Now she is using her experience to help others overcome adversity.

It was September 2001 when I was involved in a road traffic incident. I was 23, I had my own flat and I was working as a Nursery Nurse. I loved my job and it felt like everything was coming together in my life.

I took the bus home from work as usual, nothing was different that night. When I got off, I waited for the bus to drive away so that I could see in both directions to cross the road. It was a residential area and I was about to cross into a cul de sac, so the road was quiet. I remember stepping off the pavement and the next thing I remember, I was lying across the road on the ground and I couldn't get up. I couldn't understand what was happening.

I was hit at 70mph in a 30mph zone by a drunk and drug driver. While I was lying on the ground unable to get up, the driver got out and stood over me. Then he got back in his van and drove away, leaving me at the side of the road. I know that because a neighbour came out of her house and saw the white van. To her it looked like the driver had done an emergency stop and had maybe thrown something out of the window by mistake and was looking for it. When he drove away, she went back into her house – she didn't see me.

I was pretty much left there to die. My face was dislocated, my eyes were set out of the sockets, I had bones sticking out of my hips, my right arm was at the back of my neck, my legs were twisted and my ankle

and foot were taken away. When the driver walked away, he saw all that – that's quite hard to say.

There was no one around that saw this happen. I lived near a hospital and a nurse was coming back from her shift. Her husband had picked her up and she was in the passenger seat. She told her husband that she could see something at the bottom of the road, he thought it was leaves but it was actually my hair blowing in the wind. As they got closer they saw me, she came out and stopped as much bleeding as she could and phoned an ambulance.

I was taken to hospital and was in theatre for 16 hours. While I was there I died three times and they didn't know if I was going to make it. I actually wasn't supposed to come out of it because of the severity of the injuries.

I was pretty much out of it for several weeks due to the shock and the number of surgeries I had sustained. When I started coming round, I realised that I was in hospital. I kept asking for a mirror but the doctors had told everyone not to give me one. My face had blown up to such a magnitude that I was unrecognisable. They told me all the mirrors were broken – and I believed them!

My older brother told me I had been in an accident. He told me that I would walk again but I didn't know what he meant. I



just thought, 'of course I'll walk again,' but then I saw his face and I knew it was serious, but somehow I just knew I would. I couldn't comprehend it all, I just knew that whatever was wrong was pretty bad. My injuries were so severe that I couldn't sit up and look at myself. I couldn't look at my arms or legs but seeing everyone's faces was the only reflection I needed to know how bad it was. It was very surreal.

After the incident, the van driver was seen driving in the local area. The van was stained with blood and the windscreen and bonnet were badly smashed. When the police picked him up, he wouldn't give his name or tell them anything. The call then went out to the police station to say that they were looking for a young male as there had been a hit and run. Even when they had matched him to the incident, he wouldn't give his name because he was driving without insurance or a licence.

Eventually the police got the details they needed but during all that time, as far as the driver knew, I was still lying at the side of the road. There are times when you make the wrong decision but he could have said what had happened and he didn't. He was so focused on making sure he was okay. That's quite hard to understand, that

I couldn't look at my arms or legs but seeing everyone's faces was the only reflection I needed to know how bad it was. It was very surreal.