

Brenna's Party

Brenna Davis was a young mother in the upscale suburb of Frisco. On the day of her death, she had planned to attend a girls-only luncheon party for her best friend. The party was to be held in Plano at the popular and trendy La Madeleine restaurant. She left home, bound for the La Madeleine, with time to spare, but, at the last minute, she decided to stop by Macy's department store. Macy's was on the way, and she wanted to dart in and buy the scarf she had admired the evening before. It would be the perfect match for the expensive new blouse she was wearing. To save a little time to offset the unplanned stop at Macy's she opted to use the high-speed Dallas Tollway to make the trip south to Plano. Shortly after entering the Tollway, she made a quick lane change and bumped the car next to her. Brenna's car careened out of control, and she slammed into a bridge pillar.

The impact jostled some yet unknown, but very vital organ loose and she died within minutes, still strapped securely in the seat of her Porsche 911. Later, an autopsy would identify that organ and the cause of her death.

Responding units had to use their Jaws of Life to gain entry into the crushed vehicle. Brenna never showed any signs of life during the prolonged rescue attempt, and an EKG, performed on her by the paramedics showed she had no heartbeat or pulse. Nor did she have any respirations. Frisco's EMS crew, with the approval of the Emergency Room physician, declared her to be deceased, and the local medical examiner was summoned to the scene to formalize that declaration.

I was the Plano Battalion Chief in the northern district that day. I was out on the air (out riding in district as opposed to being in quarters) and heard some of the radio chatter. Knowing the MVA had occurred close to the border of our two jurisdictions, I headed up to see what was going on.

When I arrived, I saw my good friend, Frisco Fire Chief, Mack Borchardt. I walked over to say hello. Mack greeted me and said we had a single car MVA with a fatality. He asked if I wanted to take a look and I said, yes. We walked the few paces to the wreckage where Brenna, discreetly covered with a blanket, was still in the car. It was our custom, as a matter of respect, to shield deceased persons from the view of gawkers that may pass the scene. Mack pulled the blanket away and I saw an attractive young lady, that for all practical purposes, showed no visible signs of the trauma that had ended her life.

Later that afternoon, Mack called to get some numbers from me, as I was listed as an on-scene responder. That's where I learned the details that preceded the collision.

That night, as I lay in bed and pondered the day's events, I thought a long time about the fragility and the uncertainty of life and how it can be taken from a person in an instant.

I was starting to grow weary of seeing good people perish before their time.