

Melanie Murrin

Melanie was driving home

on October 2, 2007 from an errand and had stopped for a red light at the corner of Highway 63 and Gregoire Drive. She pulled up behind a gravel truck with pup (second load) and waited for the light to change. That is the last thing Melanie remembers.

A second gravel truck with pup slammed into the back of her vehicle – pushing her car into and underneath the gravel truck in front of her. Her car was crushed into a C-shaped ball that took Emergency Services 3 ½ hours to extract her from with the Jaws of Life. Her car was so demolished that dispatch initially told Emergency Services that they would be responding to a fatality. Although Melanie remembers nothing of the collision, First Responders told her they could hear her screaming in the car.



Melanie Murrin
Critically injured by an impaired driver

Melanie was transported to Northern Lights Regional Health Centre where she was put into an induced coma to stabilize her. She had suffered a panoramic facial fracture, 4 broken ribs, 3 broken vertebrae, and an enlarged hematoma on her knee. She had severe swelling of the brain, they had to staple her face back together and re-attach an ear that was almost completely severed. Every bone in her face had been broken except for her nose and left eye socket. Three days later, she was medi-vac'd to Edmonton and her family was told that she might not survive the trip.

One week later, Melanie woke up in Edmonton with her sister beside her. Her eyes were swollen shut but she heard her sister tell her that she had been in a collision, she wasn't at fault, and that she would be OK. Melanie then endured 12 ½ hours of reconstructive surgery to the injuries on her face which included 17 titanium plates & 68 titanium screws. She also had reconstruction surgery on her upper and lower palettes and had wires inserted into her gums. She was released from hospital in Edmonton on October 28th.

Returning home was not an easy ordeal for Melanie. Unable to travel by plane, she had to return to Fort McMurray by car and suffered several panic/anxiety attacks along the way. As well, without the round-the-clock care the hospital could provide, Melanie now had more pain and required her husband to assist her with bathing, dressing and basic care. As a mother of a 4 year old boy, Melanie relied on the help of grandparents and friends to assist with childcare and cooking. Her painful injuries prevented her from spending quality time with her son and she was unable to play with him, pick him up, or even read to him. Three years later, Melanie is still

having follow-up surgery, is unable to return to work, and has suffered significant emotional and financial hardship as a result of this collision.

September 2009, two years after the collision, the driver of the gravel truck was convicted of impaired driving. The case was settled before trial and resulted in a sentence that is not acceptable to Melanie. The driver is on probation & has lost his license for 5 years, was under house arrest for 12 months and is now currently under a curfew. The driver has moved away and is finishing his sentence in a community that Melanie is not even sure is able to enforce his probationary terms. Next year, when his curfew is lifted, he will move on with his life. Meanwhile Melanie will still be attending specialty appointments in Edmonton and will be lucky if she's able to return to work.

Impaired driving is a criminal offence. The impaired driver committed a crime.

Melanie is the one serving the life sentence.