

PBA MEMBER TELLS COMPELLING STORY AND OFFERS HEARTFELT THANKS TO THOSE WHO SAVED HIS LIFE AND HELPED HIM RETURN TO DUTY

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My name is Chad Penland. I work for the Cary Police Department, assigned to the Traffic Safety Team Motorcycle Unit, and I am a motorcycle crash survivor.

On July 15th, 2011, my day started out like any other day on the job as a police officer. However, before this work day would come to a close, my way of life as I had known it for 32 years would be changed forever. On this date, at 4:57 p.m., I was involved in an on-duty motorcycle crash with a full size pick-up truck. As I was proceeding through an intersection in pursuit of a violator, with my emergency equipment on, the driver of the vehicle turned left in front of me at the intersection of Morrisville Carpenter Rd and NC Hwy 55. I collided with the vehicle and was thrown from my bike. I received major injuries as a result of the collision. Some of those injuries were near fatal. A nurse who was traveling the same route witnessed the accident and immediately came to my aid. She opened my obstructed airway and provided words of comfort until EMS arrived. I remember nothing of the events of that day from the time the accident occurred. My mind “woke up” again four days later when I found myself in Duke University Medical Center. It was

only then that I learned I had been involved in a crash and had come within mere minutes of dying on the highway. Over the next twelve days, I underwent numerous surgeries to repair my broken jaw, broken arm and the de-gloving

still conscious and asked questions about the seriousness of my injuries. I also wanted to know if I was going to die. According to these doctors, I had about a 90% mortality rate and they were concerned about me living through



Chad Penland, in his hospital bed after the accident thanks Jessica Elliott for stopping to help save his life.

the night. The force of the collision and the trauma exerted upon my body was nearly equal to me being dropped off a three story building. One doctor told me that had it not been for the nurse that came to my aid that I would have died in less than three minutes. I would have drowned in my own blood due to the severity of my broken jaw and facial injuries. He said he

injury received to my right arm.

Before leaving the hospital, I was told of the seriousness of my injuries by some of the medical doctors that were treating me. Some of them were also there the day I came into the emergency room by way of ambulance. On the day of the accident, my injuries were so severe they immediately called for Duke's "Life Flight" helicopter to transport me. This plan was changed, however, when it was realized that there was no time to spare. The decision was made to transport me by ambulance. I also learned that upon my arrival to Duke, I was

hoped one day I got to meet the woman who was now known as the "Angel in Orange" for the orange shirt she was wearing on the day she saved my life.

Two weeks after being discharged from the hospital, I met the woman who had saved my life that day as I lay dying on the highway. Her name is Jessica Elliott, and the events that brought her to me that day are amazing and a true testament to the work of our Lord and Savior. Jessica had left her home in Lynchburg, Va. on that day as she headed to her brothers home in Cary. Before this day, she had never taken the