



# The Legal Killer

By Averie Vick

**I**t is illegal to kill in any way, aspect, or circumstance. It is also illegal to consume drugs, buy drugs, or sell any type of drug due to the fact that their strength is unbeknownst to many, and often takes lives. It is illegal to consume drugs because they alter one's mind, and may cause people to put themselves and others in danger. It is illegal to kill and it is illegal to be involved with drugs, yet a killer of over 88,000 Americans each year is legal. Alcohol is a legal killer. This deadly substance impacts millions of people worldwide; it alters the brain in so many ways and some don't even get joy out of it, but simply must fulfill the strong addiction it causes.

I was fifteen when I met my best friend. He's funny, charming, always laughing, and can always make any situation, good or terrible, enjoyable when he's around. He seemed to always be happy, and he still always tries to cheer me up. However, it didn't take long for me to learn what was underneath all of the smiles.

*"My mom is drunk again, lol",* read a text I received one night. I asked him what he meant, but he continued to tell me not to worry, and that he's used to it. I knew there was something I wasn't being told, but sensing the topic bothered him, I dropped it and changed it to something a little lighter. However, that subject always seemed to bring itself back up in our daily conversations. There always seemed to be more I didn't know about him. I knew he had moved from Texas; and had moved around a lot before that, but anytime I'd ask him exactly why that was so, the story always seemed to change. So one night, I asked him if he'd tell me the whole story. My best friend, who seemed like a happy go-lucky person, with barely any cares in the world, ended up being completely different under the curtain he held up called a smile.

That night, I learned that in fourth grade, his parents divorced because of his mother's drinking problem. I never really understood

alcoholism and its impacts before because it had never affected me. I learned that he had bounced between her home, to grandparents', to uncles', to his father's while his mom was attempting to get the help she needed. I learned that there were horrible fights and how he had had to push his own mother down their stairs to try to protect himself and his siblings. His mother appeared to get her life back on track, had gotten engaged, and he had thought their life would be normal, until he came home to find her almost dead on the ground. He swore that he would never see her like that again. That night I learned that my best friend had fought more battles than any 16 year old should, and that he was even better at hiding them. He always told me how "she was better now" and "it's only beer".

On June 28th, 2015 at 8:19 in the morning, I received this text from my best friend: *"My mom died... I don't know what happened, Averie, she's dead, she's on the ground."*

One of the most beautiful, loving, and caring women I've ever come across in my life, had her life taken due to something that seems to be harmless to too many, and something that almost no one knew about. Narcotics are not the only danger in the drug world, and too many people take the legality of alcohol to their advantage. It doesn't receive the proper attention it needs. The media doesn't warn against alcohol as it does hard drugs, but the truth is that alcohol is just as dangerous.

Alcohol is a killer. ☒

## ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Averie Vick is a high school student from Minnesota. *Alert Magazine* congratulates her for winning the Alert Scholarship and we encourage her in the pursuit of her academic goals. We would also like to encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program.