

## "I Read the News Today (Oh Boy)"

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A phone call led me to an Internet search to find an article about a health care practitioner who had just been arrested. Unlike the people in most of these kinds of articles, he is someone I've known for quite a few years. He is not a practicing chiropractor, but instead has spent most of his career sharing information about nutrition and selling nutritional products. He did a lot of ground-breaking work in the area of nutrition therapies. While my own expertise is decidedly limited, I sensed a certain brilliance in many of the concepts and ideas he developed.

He was well-established in some parts of Europe and had a following in the United States. He was someone who was always willing to buck the system, especially if he thought it was the right thing to do. Unfortunately, bucking the system is probably what brought on the 11 felony counts he is now facing.

Is he guilty? All of his records have been seized for careful scrutiny. The court will have much to look at in making a decision. As I pondered the news, I had to wonder how someone gets in this kind of situation. Be they a DC, MD or CEO, I believe there is a pattern of living that puts people on a path that ultimately leads to junctures such as this.

With more than 20 years and 500 issues behind me as the editor of *Dynamic Chiropractic*, I have seen many in our profession rise and fall, undoubtedly with more to come. As I've looked into each story, it has become increasingly easier to see the slow but persistent nature of a person's demise. The path to destruction is exemplified in the story of 22-year-old Andrew Gallo. In case you don't recognize the name, he was the drunk driver who allegedly crashed into the car containing promising Los Angeles Angels' rookie pitcher Nick Adenhardt, who had just finished pitching six scoreless innings in his first start. [Nick and two others died in that crash.](#)<sup>1</sup>

As most Southern California teenagers do, Andrew Gallo probably got his license just after turning 16. While I really don't know, it's probably safe to assume that, like most of us, Andrew began as a relatively safe, conscientious driver. But that all changed. It probably didn't take long for him to begin driving faster than the speed limit. After all, doesn't everyone drive at least 5-10 miles over? It's pretty much expected for most people.

His apparent drinking problem probably began around the same time. A few beers at parties on the weekend obviously led to much more.

Andrew's driver's license was suspended on 2006 on a DUI conviction. He was ordered to take alcohol education classes. One report says he actually [admitted the following in writing](#): "I understand that if I continue to drink and drive it may result in death or serious bodily injury to another person."<sup>2</sup> Andrew was only 19 then.

His situation apparently worsened. And while he probably thought he had everything under control, he was ignoring the warning signs as he headed down the path to destruction. Now, three years after his first drunk-driving conviction, Andrew is charged with three counts of murder, hit-and-run and drunk driving in connection with the accident. If convicted, he faces 55 years to life

imprisonment.

Rather than driving 5 miles an hour over the speed limit, Andrew was going 50-65 miles an hour in a 35 mph zone when he ran the red light and struck the sports car broadside. Beyond a few beers, his blood-alcohol content was three times the legal limit of .08 at the time of the crash. To top it off, he fled the accident scene with people injured and dying in order to try to escape arrest. Decidedly not what he was looking forward to when he successfully passed his driving test, the decisions Andrew made and the path he took led directly to his current situation.

The lessons here can be applied to every walk of life. Decisions to "bend the rules" or break the law "just this once" eventually become a way of life, even if they seem justified at the time. Old-fashioned values have many rewards; most of these can be categorized as "bad things don't happen to you when you follow them." To new practitioners who are just starting out in practice, I strongly suggest that you constantly review the decisions you are making and the way you are running your practice. Doing it the right way may not make you rich overnight, but it will keep you from making headlines for wrong reasons down the road.

To established doctors, I would encourage you to re-examine how you operate your practice and the instructions you have given your staff. Would you be comfortable if your records were reviewed? If not, you may want to make some changes now. Every day, each of us is challenged by seemingly insignificant choices that persistently provide us the opportunity to continue to do the right thing. Many times doing the right thing means making less money or being less successful.

Each decision takes us down a path. The end of that path, in retrospect, is pretty predictable, but most of us are blind to it. Like the victims of the accident, Andrew didn't see his demise coming. For my friend, his day in court is still ahead.

### *References*

1. ["Charges Filed in Death of Angels' Pitcher."](#) *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2009.
2. [Andrew Thomas Gallo, Charged With Murder of Nick Adenhardt and DUI.](#) Now Public, April 9, 2009.

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