

YouTube drunk-driving confessor goes to prison

WASHINGTON, USA: The young Ohio man whose remorseful video claim of responsibility for a fatal drunk-driving accident went viral on YouTube was sentenced to 6 years and six months behind bars and imposed a US\$1,075 fine.



Matthew Cordle. Image: Facebook

Matthew Cordle, 22, stood passively and attentively as gravel-voiced Judge David Fais sent him to jail after replaying in court the emotional video confession that has now been seen online more than 2.3m times.

"It should have been me (who died) that night, instead of an innocent man," Cordle told the court as he publicly apologised to the family of the victim, Vincent Canzani, 61.

"The true punishment is simply living - living with the knowledge that I took an innocent life. That pain and weight will never go away," he said.

Cordle had been out drinking with friends when his vehicle collided in the pre-dawn hours of 22 June on an Interstate highway near Columbus, Ohio, hitting Canzani's car head-on.

In September, with the help of BecauseISaidIWould.com, a website where people can go public with promises, Cordle posted on YouTube a sombre video in which he took responsibility for Canzani's death and urged others not to repeat his tragic mistake.

Public appeal and apology

"I'm begging you, please don't drink and drive," he said. "I can't bring Canzani back but you can still be saved. Your victims can still be saved."

Canzani was described in his obituary as "a gifted photographer" who attended art school in Ohio and later served in the

US Navy as a submarine missile technician.

Under Ohio law, Cordle could have been sentenced for up to eight years for aggravated vehicular homicide but judge Fais opted for a six-year sentence, plus six months for drunk driving and a US\$1,075 fine.

Cordle will also lose driving privileges for life and undergo three years of parole-board supervision following release from prison.

Local news reports at the time of the accident said Canzani died at the scene and that medical staff described Cordle as "very, very drunk."

Every day in the United States, almost 30 people die in motor vehicle crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver, amounting to one death every 48 minutes, according to the Centres for Disease Control.

It put the annual cost of alcohol-related crashes at more than US\$51bn and the total number of drunk-driving fatalities in 2010 at 10,228 about a third of all traffic deaths.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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