

The Tragic Perils of Alcohol Consumption Manifesting in America



By Frosty Wooldridge

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Last week, the U.S. Surgeon General stated that imbibing alcohol in all its forms, causes 100,000 cancer diagnoses annually and 20,000 deaths in several different forms: colorectal, breast, throat, mouth, liver, stomach, and other organs.

Those are some “heavy”, if not sobering statistics for anyone drinking beer daily, or on weekends. For those college students who “binge” drink, nothing like a colorectal cancer diagnosis to spoil your entire life. For the individuals who get “smashed” at parties, drive drunk and kill themselves or others, what a way to ruin your life and the lives of others.

All sorts of different kinds of drunks live in America. One of my old college girlfriend’s father drank only at home. His wife attended Al-Anon meetings to help her cope because she wouldn’t divorce him. One of my friends drank two bottles of beer nightly, seven days a week, until he read in a medical journal that two beers a night constitutes “alcoholism.”

During my youth, my Uncle Scott and Uncle Jack drank themselves silly. But they expressed their drunkenness in two different ways: Uncle Scott drank seven days a week. At milking time, he would beat the cows with a 2 by 4 wood club

to get them to move into position. He beat his dog "Puchie" until the dog hid out at our farmhouse across the road. He beat his wife and daughter until they both fled, never to be heard from again. When Scott drank, I left the area. Uncle Scott was a mean, nasty drunk. One weekend while fishing on Hogback Lake, my brother Rex and I heard on the transistor radio that Uncle Scott got into an argument over the size of a window being fitted into the garage. It got so heated that Uncle Scott's friend pulled out a shotgun and blew Uncle Scott in half. We sat there in the boat, traumatized. We'll never forget it. Scott was 44 at the time.

Now Uncle Jack proved himself a "funny" drunk who would tell jokes, dance the jig, and generally make a fool of himself. His wife and kids could not have anyone over for dinner or to visit. He drove only 30 miles per hour in his 1949 GMC pickup, but he would top a hill on the left side of the road. I sat in "shotgun" one time when he drove that deadly habit, but never again. At only 15, I rather enjoyed living. Because Uncle Jack smoked two packs a day, plus 15 to 20 beers at a clip, he died of cirrhosis of the liver, along with lung cancer at 52.

One of my old college buddies drank himself from a 6'1" 180-pound stud-muffin into a 280 pound ball of flab. I didn't see him until 50 years later by accident-- to witness his grotesque body. We didn't possess much in common because I'd rather ride a bike or play tennis than drink. He's still alive, but smoking and drinking turned his body into a walking cadaver.

Because of Uncle Scott and Uncle Jack, at 15, I decided I didn't want to be like them. So, I never got drunk. I've been a "Teetotaler" all my life. Does that make me boring? Heck the ladies used to line up to dance with me because I took all that money for dance lessons.

In fact, when I talk to high school kids with my "Living Your

Spectacular Life" program based on my book, I invite them to save over \$250,000.00 without working. How? "I haven't drunk, done drugs, smoked or drank coffee for my whole life. If you add up the minimum costs of steady drinking, smoking, drugs, and coffee, you can save a quarter of a million dollars by the time you're 60-70." While they sit in the audience, they figure up what it costs on their cell phones, and they whisper, "He's right...he saved a quarter of a million dollars."

Then I say, "What did I do with all that money? Well, I've bicycled across six continents, 15 times across the USA, stood on the South Pole, stood on the Wall of China, scuba dived all the oceans, explored the Galapagos Islands, and eight biking trips to Alaska. And, I stand before you today with clean lungs, healthy heart, healthy liver, and fit to do more."

I've had students who followed my program write me years later, "Your book changed my life. I found my dream, chased it, caught it, and I'm living it." It feels good to help others find their path.

On the perils of drinking besides cancer, 42,000 people die on our highways annually. An average of 13,000 die from being drunk while driving and/or kill others. Another 4,000 die from "texting" while driving, plus 362,000 injuries and wrecked cars. The costs grow astronomically.

"On average, 37 people die in drunk-driving crashes in the United States every day, which is about one person every 39 minutes. In 2022, 13,524 people died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes." (Source: Alcohol Abuse Inst.)

Additionally, alcohol becomes a license to kill your female partner in many cases.

"Every day, nearly 3 women are killed by an intimate partner – making the United States one of the deadliest countries for women and girls. Honor killings in Islamic countries account for 20,000 female deaths at the hands of family members,

annually.” (Source: www.Sanctuaryforfamilies.org)

If you look at the 540,000 homeless in America, you’re looking at alcohol and drugs as the main culprit.

Excessive alcohol use can lead to:

- High blood pressure.
- Heart disease.
- Liver disease.
- Stroke.
- Alcohol use disorder—this affects both physical and mental health.
- Digestive problems.
- Weaker immune system—increasing your chances of getting sick.

Alcohol and Divorce

If you’re married to an alcoholic, you face twice the chance for divorce and violence.

How many alcoholics in America?

According to the 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 28.9 million people in the United States ages 12 and older had alcohol use disorder (AUD) in the past year. This is about 10.2% of people in this age group.

In the end, we all see those beer, wine and whiskey commercials. Sexy women and handsome men! What we don’t see are the incredible tragedies that beset 28 million American people and their families. I must thank my Uncle Scott and Uncle Jack for turning me into a “Teetotaler.”

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