

M.A.D.D: Mothers against Drunk Driving

The Fight of a Grieving Mother

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"Death caused by drunk drivers" said Candy Lightner to *People* magazine, "Is the only socially acceptable form of homicide."¹ In and before 1980, drunk driving laws throughout the states were lax with sanctions that were as low as a few hours to none; Lightner was robbed by this injustice when her 13-year-old daughter was killed by an intoxicated Clarence Busch who had been charged of DUI just 2 days prior. She was enraged and stood up, quit her job, and formed M.A.D.D (mothers against drunk driving.) It was majorly disregarded at first, being a grassroots organization, but it quickly snowballed into the poster child of the cause with immense size and success.

Clarence Busch spent 48 hours jail time for this offence.² Is a life worth only 48 hours? Clearly there is fault in the legal system for such unethical punishments to be acceptable. In the US alone, 28 innocent people with families and friends are killed in DUI accidents daily.³ These regularly low sanctions flew past public knowledge until any faced individual injuries and deaths, as was the unaware Lightner. The grieving mother was filled with grief and fury subsequent to Busch's sentencing when she had a moment of vision and envisioned an organization, MADD mothers against drunk drivers (the name was later changed.)⁴ She stood up for the hundreds of thousands of lost children, mothers and fathers, victims, and for those yet to be killed and have but the justice of two days jail time for their perpetrator.

Candy Lightner's Time with M.A.D.D

Unexpectedly, notable landmarks approached at a fast rate since MADD was first founded, growing out from local areas to a broad stretch across the globe. In 1981-82, Lightner took to action and unremittingly lobbied California Gov. Jerry Brown daily until he gave in to her requests creating stricter state penalties and injunctions for DUI offenders, as well as a state commission to which she was the first appointed.⁵

¹ Wilhelm, Maria. "A Grieving, Angry Mother Charges That Drunken Drivers Are Getting Away with Murder." *People*, 29 June 1981. *People*, people.com/archive/a-grieving-angry-mother-charges-that-drunken-drivers-are-getting-away-with-murder-vol-15-no-25/.

² *Ibid*

³ "The History of MADD Mothers against Drunk Driving Saves Lives." www.sr22insurancequotes.org/history-of-madd/.

⁴ "Carime Anne 'Cari' Lightner." *Find a Grave*, 4 Aug. 2009, www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=40253045

⁵ Biography.com Editors. "Candy Lightner Biography." *The Biography.com Website*, A&E Television Networks, 23 May 2016, www.biography.com/people/candy-lightner-21173669.

MADD branched off into hundreds of chapters and preached their message from the rooftops of California, finding many analogous accounts involving drunk drivers. And even then, 2 years after her death, Lightner burned with the pain of her daughter's injustice shown through her intense devotion to her cause above everything else in her life, perhaps including her other living children.

In 1983, a TV movie was made about the life and struggles of Lightner called M.A.D.D.: Mothers against Drunk Drivers. Aired on NBC, it gave MADD a boost in publicity that helped it to gain a rapid growth in size. Finally some of the public heard of the organization, and those inspired could help MADD get on its legs. Perhaps it helped in what came just a year after.

In 1984 Lightner became a member of the National Commission of Drunk Driving after being requested to join by the current President, Ronald Reagan. The commission soon proposed to raise the minimum drinking age to 21. After asked, the president agreed with the suggestion and made a "law to cut federal highway grants for any state that didn't increase its legal drinking age to 21."³ (See Appendix 1) This achievement still stands today as one of MADD's greatest accomplishments for keeping hundreds of teens off the road, therefore saving the lives of thousands of people as the states slowly accepted the law. As the committee later said in 1985, "The efforts of grassroots citizen groups and enlightened public leaders at every level of government has proven that a common concern can provoke uncommon unity. Now, 37 states have this law due to MADD, the National Safety Council and other national and local groups that worked to secure this legislation."⁶

Finally in 1985, her career at MADD came to a stop. That year MADD was accused of misusing their money on fundraising more than advertising the cause and helping victims (as they were credited as a nonprofit grassroots organization.) Whether Lightner agreed with the allegations and didn't want any more association with the organization, or wanted to go another way than MADD was headed, is up for debate.

³ "The History of MADD Mothers against Drunk Driving Saves Lives."
www.sr22insurancequotes.org/history-of-madd/.

⁶United States, Congress, National Commission against Drunk Driving. *National Commission against Drunk Driving*. Government Printing Office, 1985,
www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/100801NCJRS.pdf.

But what is certain is that she split ways with Mothers against Drunk Driving that year. She continually advocated for anti-drunk driving even after she left later in 1990 writing a book about her grieving process called Giving Sorrow Words: How to Cope with Grief and Get on with Your Life.

M.A.D.D after Lightner's Departure

Subsequent to Lightner's exit MADD's relentless determination and passionate fury dropped slightly, but even still the organization attempted to continue to grow the roots of her fight against drunk drivers, save lives, and bring justice to victims. In 1988, there was what was reported to be "the nation's worst alcohol-related crash." A drunken individual sped down a road in Kentucky and collided with a full school bus. Almost 30 children were killed and countless more were severely injured leaving hundreds of family members in bitter grief, one of whom later became a president of MADD. This gruesome news shocked the entire nation and brought awareness of the cause to state governors and officials, and at last all states elevated the minimum drinking age to 21. Funny that such a success comes from such a horrific tragedy. In addition to that accomplishment, in the year 1994, DUI fatalities reached an all-time-low in the US; 13,390.

In following years, MADD shifted focus to encompass anti-underage drinking, creating many advertisements targeted at teens, depicting the hazard of drinking at parties (see appendix 2.) Slowly, MADD seems to be having a more Neo- Prohibitionist motive to the original vision of its founder, Lightner.⁷ "I didn't start MADD to deal with alcohol. I started MADD to deal with the issue of drunk driving." As said earlier, MADD's divergence from its founder were from the accusations of increased fundraising which still stood true following her leave. Still they have made changes Lightner would have probably fully accepted their victim impact panel and increased support to those wronged by drunk

drivers. Despite this, the heart of the organization and its original passion shine through the questionable changes expressed over the years.

In the year 2000 MADD on its 20th anniversary, displayed its independence and growth since 1985 when Lightner left. Much like the law signed in the 80s raising the minimum age for alcohol consumption, MADD lowered the BAC (blood alcohol content) required for arrest to 0.08. Again it was signed by a president. This time Clinton authorized the papers. And soon the states started adopting the 0.08 standard. Moreover, since the birth of the organization, drunken driving fatalities had dropped an astounding 40%, or thousands of innocent people. MADD, at this point, is the most substantially recognized anti-drunken driving association nationally and is one of the most successful grassroots organizations ever. Celebration was well deserved; a mighty battle had just been won.

M.A.D.D's Impact on Our Nation's View of Drunk Driving

All the way back in 1980 drunk driving is an accident, those under the influence of alcohol were all but slaves to it and utterly un-responsible for actions taken while under its effects. A consequential death or two wasn't *their* fault, just a bad accident. Not now. Not today. MADD says otherwise. Social norms change based on trends and discoveries; the social acceptance of DUI has become crime not accident. A crime must be taken to court and those accused must receive sanctions base upon the crime committed. Drunk driving is reckless manslaughter. The general public looks down on drunk drivers like Clarence Busch who kill 13-year-old girls intentionally or not. Our youth are educated on the effects alcohol has on people and to never drink and drive lowering the drunk drivers of the next generation. Today, MADD is globally recognized for its patriotic efforts against drunken driving and our shaped planet today.

MADD is respected for its drive and all the more is inspired by its message and decides to join the organization even if they have never had the hardship of a drunken driving crash. State and national governments have experience with MADD's law requests which have changed what was considered right to what we think is wrong. Today drunk driving isn't the socially acceptable form of homicide it once was just a normal justifiable occurrence...because of MADD.

MADD is the fury and passion of hundreds of grieving mothers who stood up for the rights of their children and family who suffered a fate as painful as murder. But it was ignored by the legal system because of the easy money they make off DUI fines, and because it was only an "accident." The organization challenged this terrible injustice with relentless determination and success, dispersing their message throughout the world. They created hundreds of laws maximizing sanctions, lowering the amount of intoxicated on the roads, and educating the youth. Mothers against Drunk Driving save lives.

Because of this organization's effort, an overlooked crime has been brought out before the legal system and many lives have been saved.



Appendix 1

This shows Candy Lightner by President Ronald Reagan's side as he signs the paper allowing states to raise the minimum drinking age to 21.



Appendix 2

An advertisement made by MADD to discourage underage drinking.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Interview. *You Tube*, uploaded by A Forever Recovery, 24 July 2015,

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrNb0n1ya_g. Accessed 10 Nov. 2016. This interview gave me a personal story of a drunk driving crash which I infer is why many join MADD. This information will help me explain MADD's rapid growth and success as an organization in my paper as one of the factors in its favor.

Lightner alongside President Reagan as He Raised the Legal Drinking Age to 21. 5 Feb. 2015.

Quoted, The Zebra, www.thezebra.com/insurance-news/802/car-accident/. Accessed 22 Jan. 2017. This photograph serves as good evidence to show the signing I described and to show what Candy Lightner looked like.

MADD. *Cargo Collective*, cargocollective.com/sachiedesigns/MADD-Ad-s. Accessed 22 Jan.

2017. Advertisement. This advertisement helps me display the thought process of MADD by the various ads they have created and their main demographic.

United States, Congress, National Commission against Drunk Driving. *National Commission against Drunk Driving*. Government Printing Office, 1985,

www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/100801NCJRS.pdf. Accessed 22 Jan. 2017. This Government document is **huge** for my paper it has such good and trustworthy information confirming the information found in some of my other sources. It even lists Lightner under the members.

Web page with several articles and information on the organization. *MADD - Mothers Against Drunk Driving*, 2016, www.madd.org/. Accessed 19 Oct. 2016. This site contains a large archive of drunk driving victims and information about the organization like volunteering, victim services, and donations. It gives me information straight from the source which makes it reliable and informational. I consider it a primary source because

though it was made years after MADD's founding, it is still made by the organization and it still expresses the same views and opinions that MADD is built on.

"Why I Support MADD: Alex Otte." *YouTube*, uploaded by MADD, 12 Aug. 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6zS3DIeUY. Accessed 20 Oct. 2016. This video shows the experience of a drunk driving victim Alex Otte who lost one of her legs and had to replace part of her jaw and her femurs with metal. This shows that a key part of MADD's strategy definitely is empathy.

Wilhelm, Maria. "A Grieving, Angry Mother Charges That Drunken Drivers Are Getting Away with Murder." *People*, 29 June 1981. *People*, people.com/archive/a-grieving-angry-mother-charges-that-drunken-drivers-are-getting-away-with-murder-vol-15-no-25/. Accessed 15 Jan. 2017. This article by *People* magazine is filled with many direct quotes reflecting Lightner's coincident opinion on drunk driving as a crime. These can be used as evidence in my paper. I consider this magazine article a primary source because it was published concurrently to the rapid growth of MADD.

Withers, Jan. "Q & a with Jan Withers, National President of Mothers against Drunk Driving (MADD)." Interview by Sarah Ford. *America's Charities*, 9 Apr. 2014, www.charities.org/news/blog/interview-madd-national-president-jan-withers-shares-best-kept-secret-madds-success-more. Accessed 3 Nov. 2016. This interview showed me a personal perspective of MADD, the direction they are going to eliminate drunk driving (targeting youths), and the dedication involved in the career (at least for the president) which includes supporting victims, traveling all over the globe, and participating in important ceremonies and speeches.

Yi, Grace. Letter to the author. 22 Dec. 2016. This letter was very exciting to receive and to know MADD would actually take the time to respond to a letter. The content advised me on ways to learn more about the organization and collect more primary resources.

Secondary Sources

A.A.A.S. "Alcohol and Your Brain." *Science NetLinks*, 2016, sciencenetlinks.com/student-teacher-sheets/alcohol-and-your-brain/. Accessed 11 Nov. 2016. This web page says what the mind is like under the influence of alcohol, which I found is the perfect recipe for a drunk driving crash. This will aid as evidence when I explain a person's thinking during intoxication.

Biography.com Editors. "Candy Lightner Biography." *The Biography.com Website*, A&E Television Networks, 23 May 2016, www.biography.com/people/candy-lightner-21173669. Accessed 20 Oct. 2016. The website's biography offered information on Candy Lightner's life (founder of the organization Mothers Against Drunk Driving) including her youth, founding of MADD, and some quotes that will come in handy when I write my paper. Overall, the information will help triangulate my sources.

Brown, Beckie, and Anne Russell. "MADD and Traffic Safety: Grassroots Success." *Schaffer Library of Drug Policy*, www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/misc/driving/s8p1.htm. Accessed 7 Nov. 2016. This article helped me by providing the old sanctions of drunk driving and how MADD used to be seen a novelty that would never actually achieve a difference. It also shows many details of MADD's history that will be useful.

"Carime Anne 'Cari' Lightner." *Find a Grave*, 4 Aug. 2009, www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=40253045. Accessed 9 Nov. 2016. This article provided lots of information on Cari and Candy Lightner like Candy's determination and her very interesting grieving process. It also named a book written by Candy (*Giving Sorrow Words: How to Cope with Grief and Get on with Your Life*) that I may use as a source if I find it at a library. It also shows Candy's reason and decision making as she ran the organization.

Chestney & Sullivan. "DUI Glossary." *Dui-lawyer.com*, 2016, www.dui-lawyer.com/dui-law/dui-glossary/. Accessed 3 Nov. 2016. This website was useful because it helps

expand my vocabulary of drunk driving terms so I can sound more educated when I write my paper. In addition, it gives definitions to explain the words and acronyms to give them meaning and context.

Editorial Staff. "History of MADD." *LifeSafer*, 11 July 2013, www.lifesafes.com/blog/history-of-madd/. Accessed 22 Nov. 2016. This is a pretty basic summary, but it had some good information like the change of term from "accident" to "crash" and the legal BAC.

Galloway, Paul. "Booze and Death Travel Our Roads, Courts Look the Other Way." *Chicago Tribune* [Chicago], 30 June 1985, articles.chicagotribune.com/1985-06-30/features/8502120240_1_drunk-cari-lightner-candy-lightner. Accessed 22 Oct. 2016. This web page told me about the extremely coincidental second trial of the dastardly Clarence Busch who through his killing of Cari Lightner had become the icon of drunk drivers. He had injured a girl of the same name and around the same age as Cari just 20 minutes after Candy and her daughter had left the area. This source contains many quotes by Candy that I can use in my paper along with a highly interesting anecdote of the court case.

Hanson, David J. "Mothers against Drunk Driving: A Crash Course in MADD." *Alcohol Abuse Prevention: Some Serious Problems*, 2002-2014, www.alcoholfacts.org/CrashCourseOnMADD.html. Accessed 19 Oct. 2016. This web page acknowledges the righteous goals MADD is founded on, but expresses concerns about the organization's current motives.

Hickman, Charles. "When Driving, What Does "One Beer Too Many" Mean?" *LifeSafer*, 22 Nov. 2016, www.lifesafes.com/blog/too-many-beers-for-driving/. Accessed 22 Nov. 2016. This post is helpful sharing the common mentality of drunk drivers and the large amounts of drunk drivers that used to be on the roads and some of the progress made to take them off the road.

"The History of MADD Mothers against Drunk Driving Saves Lives."

www.sr22insurancequotes.org/history-of-madd/. Accessed 14 Nov. 2016. Infographic.

This infographic proved very informative look at MADD's history year by year, several interesting facts, and some **really** useful charts and graphs.

Hrebenar, Ronald J., and Bryson B. Morgan. "Candace Lynne 'Candy' Lightner (1946-)."

Lobbying in America: A Reference Handbook, 2009, doi:1598841122. Accessed 11 Nov.

2016. Page 149 of *Lobbying in America: A Reference Handbook* offers a brief summary of Candy Lightner's life founding MADD and named an award and film she received as well as some relations to famous figures such as Gov. Jerry Brown and president Ronald Reagan. These connections and things which she received will be of use when I write of her recognition for her actions.

LeadRival. "MADD Definition - What Does MADD Mean?" *Myduiattorney*, 2015,

www.myduiattorney.org/Glossary/madd. Accessed 29 Nov. 2016. This web page addresses MADD's strategy of educating the public and cashing in on the factor of empathy with appearances from victims' families. It also describes the BAC law as MADD's largest accomplishment as of now. Both will come in use as I illustrate the organizations strategy and progress.

Main, Douglas. "30 Percent of Americans Have Had an Alcohol-Use Disorder." *Newsweek*, 3

June 2015, www.newsweek.com/30-percent-americans-have-had-alcohol-use-disorder-339085. Accessed 3 Nov. 2016. This web page shows America's alcohol problem which affects many people. I can use this to stress the issue of DUI and the importance of MADD's founding, to take a stand and address the vast amounts of unjustified fatalities.

Times staff. "Pasco Motorcyclist Killed in Tampa Crash, Driver Faces DUI Manslaughter Charge." *Tampa Bay Times*, 9 Mar. 2016. *Tampabay.com*,

www.tampabay.com/news/publicsafety/motorcyclist-killed-in-crash-overnight-in-tampa/2268538. Accessed 3 Nov. 2016. The content of this newspaper article showed me

how these events do occur locally and currently at any time. It can serve as an anecdote for my paper too further express the sadness and large extent reached by drunk driving fatalities.

"United States Drunk Driving Fatalities." *MacGregor & Collins, LLP Criminal Defense*

Lawyers, cmcddefense.com/drunk-driving-fatalities-data.php. Accessed 27 Oct. 2016.

Infographic. This infographic helped me visualize the death rates and provides statistics and charts that will provide evidence for my paper. The percentages are revealing and express the severity of drunk driving which will help me explain the large issue that convinced Candy Lightner to found MADD to take a stand in the injustices presented before her.

WPA Section on Addiction Psychiatry. "Don't Drink and Drive: The Successful Message of Mothers against Drunk Driving (MADD)." *NCBI*, World Psychiatric Association, Feb. 2005, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1414720/. Accessed 27 Oct. 2016. The web page summarized success of MADD's mission as it changed the widespread norms to a more negative connotation in regard to drunk driving fatalities as well as acting for the satisfaction and resolution for the families of victims. The directions taken by the grassroots organization given in this article help me provide a detailed description of how MADD achieved it's recognition and success through strategy.