

21 Seconds

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Video Link: <http://www.brainline.org/content/multimedia.php?id=769>

Laura Napier: I crash into thick glass

This is my life

The first day of my new life

I am the 5.3 million people in the united states living with traumatic brain injury

I am no longer a son, a daughter, a husband or, a wife

I am no longer the old me I have a lost identity

Every 21 seconds someone in the united states suffers a traumatic brain injury

By the time you finish watching this film another 100 people will join this silent epidemic

How will I find this person deep inside who cannot speak as I did

Who must pause to think

How can I slow the world so I can hear the difference between the screeching truck breaks and the whispers of kindness the difference between the music and the noise

How will I walk with my gait, incontinence and poise.

This story began for me, when a drunk driver pummeled through his 3rd red light in Philadelphia in 1993. This story continued for the next year as I repeatedly got lost only blocks from my apartment then it continued when I decided I would not abandon myself I would let required innocence fall into my arms, embrace the space that was not empty with despair and anger.

I tried to participate in the afterlife of life and not lose my sense of ground. By being remaining grounded one can actually live in the world even when the bright light and cold temperatures of rebirth can become unbearable.

I walked alone for years embarrassed I had become a suffering body, for the leation in my soul wants to run, and then I discovered there are others exactly like me only different thisis the story of 8 of the 5.3 millino, this is our story.

My name is laura napier, I'm the filmmaker. For the last 12 years I have been living with traumatic brain injury.

(title: Every 21 seconds...or why I scream at the refrigerator)

(title: I. waking up)

I was 15 years old. I was out partying with some friends and um that evening I took a ride in my dad's corvette I was uh hit by a drunk driver and um flew out of the car 137 feet on the pavement. My name is Joe Aniah, I am from Sante Fe New Mexico. 25 years old.

Explain to me what you see what you see from like a from your perspective Of this place. Like you would see in the cell what would stike you.

(folky music)

The only way I could put it is I feel like, I was house sitting, in me. That this wasn't really me, that this was...a place I stayed at. And it was a great place and all had nice things but it really wasn't mine, I didn't feel connected to it. My name is Brian Patterson I'm 38, about to turn 38, and I was 29 when I got assaulted. And um from that assault I was in a coma for about a month.

(Folky Music)

Joel: You paint, right. You went to school for paiting. I just want you tell us about your paintings they are really beautiful and interesting.

I just paint cause I don't, can't remember anything. That's why I paint. My name is Jessica Guttmann my roommate from boarding school was drivng and I guess she hit a tree. And then my spleen busted...burst and my brain burst.

(folky music)

Joe: I need to show people that, ok maybe we can't, I can't do my job. You know I'm not physically disabled, I can walk, I can talk. I had decided I would walk from the very spot they found me laying in Demming, during my injury to Chimeyeo in San Antonio, 360 miles. My name is Joe Zimmorra.

(folky music)

I had finally decided I was just developing Alzheimer's or I was just going crazy. I'm Barbara Zimmora I had just gotten off a city bus and was walking along the sidewalk to get to the corner, and the sidewalk had buckled up where there had been a big crack in it and it had buckled up. And I was striding, I used to stride all the time when I walked and I wasn't looking down until I hurt myself, I never looked down when I walked. And I hit that and I went flying through the air at about 3 ft off the ground. and then realized I was going down and gonna smash my face so um decided to see if I could turn in mid air and came down on this side of my head (grabs left half of head)

(folky music)

There's a misconception that children who are shaken and suffer a TBI because of being shaken is always being done this monstrous child abuser and usually it's someone who has never hurt a child ever in their life. It's a moment in time. She was injured by her birthmothers boyfriend through shaken baby syndrome. And im Cathy Salazar and this is my daughter Chloe grace Salazar.

(folky music)

So what I can't distinguish between one or the other, you know the head injury or the PTSD. The PTSD can be cured, but the head injury its gonna take, it'll take a while for me to distinguish the difference between both of them. PTSD for the laymen is post traumatic stress disorder. My name is Charlie Gallagos, I was a staff seargent in the army national guard.

(folky music)

First it was thick gray fog, then it started to lift and hover like cataracts. Then it was now, and now is sort of like white. But you stand out, and everybody sees you stand out and you know you will never fit in. You have been where no one else has. And you wonder if you will ever fit in again because you have been where no else has and it makes you feel insignificant.