

# Please Help My Family

Something interesting happened weeks ago, and I haven't had the time to blog about it until now...

My husband and I were driving down a main drag in our small town, kid-less because it was date night, when we came across a guy standing on the corner across from Walgreens with a sign saying "Please help my family". Our movie didn't start for awhile, so we pulled over to talk to the guy who looked to be about our age. We asked him about his circumstances, and what brought him to our town. We learned that he was the father of two who had just been laid off from a factory job and couldn't provide for his two children or for his wife who had also lost her job. He had come to our town in hopes of finding work or resources to help his family. We learned that he had a daughter, just a little bit older than our oldest daughter, and a younger son, so we went home to gather things he said his family needed – clothes and food. We told him we would be just a few minutes, and we went home and gathered up what we thought would be a treasure trove for someone in need who has kids: coats (brand-new, donated from my husband's wholesale business), food, clothes for his daughter, even some clothes we could scrounge up for his son. We returned in less than 10 minutes with the items, but the man was gone!

I still can't figure out what went wrong! Perhaps he was lying about the needs of his family, and he really wanted cash instead for something else, possibly drugs (this is why I always try to avoid giving cash to those in need but rather try to find necessary resources for them instead). I hate to be skeptical, but I have read a bunch of stories in the news about panhandlers who try to swindle and deceive, mostly for the purpose of supporting drug or alcohol habits and not seeking for their own well-being or that of their families.

This happened probably over a month ago now, and we haven't

seen the guy since... If I did, I would probably pull over again, but this time it would be to ask him what it is he REALLY wants!

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## **10 DUI's in 16 Years**

I feel very strongly against drunk driving. It's one thing to make the choice to drink too much; that's up to the individual, but when they make the choice for others and expose them to the danger of an intoxicated motorist on the road, that's extremely selfish and dangerous. It's also very preventable; if you really want to drink enough to make yourself unsafe behind the wheel, there is absolutely no reason why you can't plan ahead, find a driver ahead of time, walk home, call a cab, call a friend, take a bus, stay home and get drunk in the first place... the list of ways to prevent driving under the influence goes on and on. That being said, there was a story on [dailyherald.com](http://dailyherald.com) (suburban Chicago newspaper) recently that caught my interest. It was about a man who had been caught drunk driving 10 times in the last 16 years. How does this happen? I believe the guy had a serious problem, and I'm a person who believes in getting people help before throwing them in jail, however, it seemed that this guy was not going to learn until he killed someone... and unfortunately, that's just what happened – and it was himself that he killed. I don't know why he was out roaming the streets still after getting busted that many times; especially when you read the article and see that in 1996, he had drunk driving arrests on April 7, April 14, April 26, and May 1. 4 times in less than a month?!? I don't understand how he was released between each of these instances and not only that, but after all this, he was sentenced to a total of one year in DuPage County jail. He got out early, of course, had a few

more busts, and then this latest one on July 2 of this year, which is when his story caught my attention. A few weeks later, he died while in police custody. In the article, they say he had seizures and a brain bruise, and it's my theory that his alcohol withdrawal caused his seizures, which led to him hitting his head and causing the brain bruise. Whatever happened to him, it's a very sad story; a man with a severe problem who never got help. At least his family never had to deal with the added grief of his causing injury or death to another person. Here is the story and the mugshot, he's not the healthiest looking fellow. And note the oxygen tank; he had cirrhosis of the liver but still kept drinking:

Patrick J. Kolman, who was arrested for DUI at least 10 times in the past 16 years, died from chronic alcoholism Wednesday night, the Cook County medical examiner's office said.

Besides alcoholism, the Arlington Heights resident also suffered from a brain bruise and seizures, the medical examiner said. It was unclear when the contusion occurred.

Kolman, 58, had already been convicted of DUI nine times when police spotted his car weaving between lanes a few blocks from his home around 2:30 a.m. on July 2.

Kolman had DUI convictions dating back to 1993. Though he'd been in and out of jail, he received one-year sentences for many of his drunken driving crimes. He had also been convicted of bank robbery, for which he got a much longer sentence, and faced domestic abuse charges.

Kolman's downward spiral began in spring 1992. He was arrested for DUI in Rolling Meadows with a blood-alcohol content more than three times the legal limit at that time.

"I am an alcoholic," he told law enforcement officials then. "I can't drink at all."

Kolman was once diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver, but continued to drink after treatment and against medical advice. He appeared in his July booking photo with an oxygen tank.

Details about the length of some of Kolman's DUI sentences is sketchy. A 1995 DUI arrest resulted in a one-year jail sentence and placement in a drug and alcohol program. But in 1996, he was charged with DUI on April 7, April 14, April 26 and May 1. He was sentenced to a total of one year in DuPage County jail.

Kolman likely served only half that time because of good behavior credits. He was stopped again in mid-1997 for driving after his license had been revoked. He was sentenced to two years and served time at the Dixon Correctional Center, according to corrections department records.

Kolman, of 124 S. Vail St., appeared in bond court for his most recent DUI arrest in Rolling Meadows just last month. After he told the judge he was unable to post the \$150,000 bond, he appeared to suffer from a medical problem and was rushed to Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights.

After the bond court hearing, Kolman was transferred to the Cook County Jail's infirmary where his health likely declined, said Cmdr. Nick Pecora of the Arlington Heights Police Department.

Kolman's car, a 1991 Lincoln, is still in police custody where it will remain until one of Kolman's family members pays the \$500 fee to get it released, Pecora said.