

Thoughts in Slo-Mo

June 5, 2020

"Oh my God," my wife gasped after that eerie instant of calm when things stopped. She told me to call 911 just as I was pressing "9."

We had been navigating the less-than-usually-clogged interstates up the East Coast when suddenly dirt and debris swept across the asphalt. As we quickly stopped, a small vehicle flipped back onto Interstate-84, rolling over twice, throwing its occupant — a 21-year-old woman — out of the car and onto the road some 30 feet in front of us.

As another man and I got to her, we saw she was breathing. Thankfully, a nurse

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came forward from the traffic, which would be stopped for hours. Within minutes, emergency personnel were on the scene.

The woman was airlifted to a hospital; she later died.



Those slow-motion seconds of the accident stay with me, along with the surrealism of the aftermath, standing on a stopped superhighway — helpless — feeling amazingly connected to someone's precious life.

And death.

Back on the road, after giving a statement to police, my wife wondered aloud if, what with the current pandemic, the young woman's parents would even be able to get into the hospital to see her.

Throughout this coronavirus crisis we have heard stories of people dying all alone because of policies designed to "keep us safe" — by keeping relatives and even spouses out.

We like safety, but if either my wife or I lies dying in a hospital, regardless of the COVID-19 risk, each of us would wish to be with the other.

It's "till death do us part," not "till quarantine do us part."

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.