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## Hit And Run Drivers Kill Nearly 1500 People Annually With Pedestrians At Greatest Risk, According To AAA Foundation Analysis

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 17-- On the evening of Friday July 23rd, 2004, Sade Baderinwa, a News Anchor at WABC-TV New York, was covering a story about a flood in New Jersey. The street was dark, covered by water and blocked off by a police barrier. A car went around the barrier and struck Sade with such force that she was thrown ten feet into the air and landed, submerged in a pool of water, unconscious. This driver never bothered to stop to see if she was alright. Instead, he kept on going without ever turning back. The driver was never found.

Fortunately she survived – unlike the fate of 1,557 killed nationwide in hit and run crashes in 2003, according to a new analysis by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

"I am thankful that I lived to tell my story in hopes of bringing attention to the dangers of hit and run drivers," said Baderinwa. "If it weren't for my two cameramen calling for immediate medical attention, I would not be alive today."

"Hit and run is a cowardly and heinous act. It is an issue that should not fall beneath the radar. We need to expose it and create awareness. People need to take responsibility for their actions and be aware that if they do hit someone and flee the scene, the end result is much worse. An accident is bad enough, but don't let an accident become a crime. Additionally, those that witness a hit and run should step forward to report it. "

The AAA Foundation analysis showed that approximately 11 percent of all police reported crashes involve a hit and run driver, and that the problem is especially alarming for pedestrians. "About 60 percent of the people killed in hit and run crashes are pedestrians, " said Peter Kissinger, President and CEO of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, adding that "1 in 5 pedestrian fatalities involve hit and run drivers."

From 1994 to 2003, a total of 14,914 people were killed in hit and run crashes in the United States, according to the Foundation's analysis of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System and General Estimates System databases.

"Deadly hit and run crashes most often occur on weekends and during the evening," said Peter Kissinger. Fifty-eight percent of fatal hit and run crashes occur on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday; forty-seven percent of fatal hit and run crashes occur between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m.

"The best way for pedestrians to avoid being a hit and run victim is to be an alert pedestrian," said Kissinger.

The Foundation offers the following tips to help keep pedestrians safe around traffic:

- Obey traffic signals
- Look left, then right, then left again before crossing the street even when in a crosswalk
- Watch for turning vehicles when crossing
- Remain alert and aware of cars as they approach and pass you
- Do not assume drivers see you because you see them
- When sidewalks are not present, walk as far away from the roadway as possible

- If walking at night wear retro reflective and light-colored clothing

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety is an independent, publicly funded, 501 (c)(3) charitable research and educational organization established in 1947 by the American Automobile Association. The AAA Foundation's mission is to prevent traffic deaths and injuries by conducting research into their causes and by educating the public about strategies to prevent crashes and reduce the impact when they do occur.

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