Subject: Re: DUI Laws
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 29 Jan 2004 09:36:41 GMT
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It's a tough problem, that's for sure.One place I'm familar with beside my home town is Odessa, Ukraine. They have pretty strict DUI laws but they aren't enforced. I understand that's the way most Russian (and former Russian) places are. They're like what we Americans would call the "wild west" in that things are more anarchist, not fully, but a little bit more that way. It has a sense of true freedom, but of course with that, you have to take on more personal responsibility.You can't expect Russian (Ukrainian, Moldovan, Belorussian, etc) laws to necessarily protect you, and you need to protect yourself. A guy that's pulled over for DUI might be able to get off by giving the cop a bottle of vodka. Or it may cost fifty bucks. Or if he's known to be rich, it may cost more. If unliked, he may get his butt kicked pretty badly. But the law is determined right then and there, between you and your cop. You two negotiate the consequences, and it is largely a personal matter between you that determines what your fate will be.Another part of this is that if you're on the road, you better make sure that you're alert. If someone plows into you because they're drunk, you may not have any recourse. Even if you sued, which you probably wouldn't, but if you did and won, there may not be any funds to be awarded. You probably shouldn't expect the guilty party can help, nor wil the government likely be much help. You're really on your own.Something else to consider is that if you ride a motorcycle, no matter where you are or how many laws are in place, you're still very much on your own. No matter who's at fault, if you take a hit on a bike, you're probably dead. So you really need to take matters into your own hands, no matter what laws are in place to protect you and no matter how fairly they are enforced. If you're on a bike, your life is very much in your own hands. And while you're not as vulnerable when you're in a car, this same kind of thinking can be adopted there.When I hear stories from people who have lost someone, I become pretty angry at the drunk that caused the accident. I was friends with a guy in a wheelchair that was crossing the road and was slammed by a drunk in a pickup truck. He and I were in the same college class, and he was a very bright student and very funny. It was shocking to hear the news. He just wasn't there one day. I went by the intersection where he was hit and found myself wanting to run everyone off the road that I thought was driving like idiots because I was so angry.As an aside, that's so bad of me, this kind of reaction and I'm embarrassed of my tendency to react this way. But I was just really sad about the senseless death of my friend. I could visualize him rolling across the crosswalk when the light turned, and seconds later having the truck nail him at 50 miles an hour, knocking him flying 20 meters into the air. My first feeling is that of shock that turns immediately to anger. So I can understand the reactions of the no-alcohol-tolerance guys, and I have more in common with them than I have differences with them.I find myself being more angry with blatant DUI offenders as idiots and piss-poor drivers than I have with them as drunks. Then again, if I spent ten minutes with them in a bar and heard their silly conversations, I'd probably be a lot more focused on their drunkeness than their driving ability. But I think that in each case, it's the behavior I'm focused on. Certainly, there are many people in my life that can drink - some even pretty heavily - and still be wonderfully charming people. Not everyone that drinks heavily acts alcoholically, and I think this is where my focus lies.I guess the thing is that - at least for me - I have to always remember that my input isn't required here. I mean, it's an interesting conversation, but I know that my opinions are so volitile, I don't really need to involve myself. It is best for me to throttle my actions completely and take no side except maybe in casual conversation. Maybe the laws with strict blood alcohol levels are right and work best. I'm glad it's not my call.But my opinion is that the behavior and performance

of these guys is what disturbs me, and not their blood alcohol level.I don't go when the light turns green, I always look both ways for these morons. I always expect that some fool is going to fall asleep and careen straight for me. I have a very low expectation level of every driver I meet on the road, and am pleasantly surprised when they manage to stay in their lane. This is an admittedly paranoid and low-expectation outlook, but it keeps me watchin' for 'em.Now I'm the one that rambled on enough. It's an issue that always brings up extremely emotional reactions and I fully respect the strong feelings of both sides.