Driving Script (Stephanie Lehto, PsyD)

**The Scene:** I am in my car during golden hour, the sun is setting but it is not too bright and not too dark. I am driving to a friend’s home. I am turning on a protected green, as a pedestrian steps off the curb to cross the street. I did not see them.

**The thought:** I cannot have done this and I cannot have hurt someone. I need to keep driving, I cannot risk getting in trouble for this. There is no one around.

**What might happen:** I killed someone. There might be emergency vehicles on the scene when I decide to turn around. There are people everywhere. Someone saw me. I have to turn myself in, go to jail, or kill myself.

**The emotional reaction:** Panic. Freeze response. Depression. Hopelessness and helplessness. Uncontrollable sobbing.

**What it says about me:** I’m a terrible person. I’m a murderer. I could have helped this person and I didn’t, because I didn’t want to get in trouble. It was an accident.

**The ultimate consequence:** I have to live with this for the rest of my life, that I’ve harmed someone else or destroyed their life if they survived.