

The HIGH ROAD

This year, statistics indicate that nearly 4,000 human beings now alive and active will be dead — in traffic accidents in Australia. About 100,000 will be injured. You could be any one of them.

by Robert L. Kuhn and the Ambassador College Research Staff

WE ARE not trying to be sensational. But we do want to shock you. Shock you into thinking about your driving.

Some months ago an American magazine published the pictures of 250 or so men who had been killed in one week in Vietnam. It was sobering to gaze at those zestful, living faces — all now dead.

Suppose we published the pictures of the 292 Australians who statistically will have been killed in automobile accidents by this same time next month. The photographs would cover about the same space, but instead of young soldiers, the faces would belong to newly-weds, expectant mothers, parents, young

children, teen-agers, university students, the elderly, and whole families!

It would be as sobering as strolling through a morgue or viewing tombstones in a graveyard.

Anatomy of an Accident

Picture yourself, for the moment, in the following situation. You are doing the driving.

Bumper-to-bumper traffic, a 15-minute delay — and you and your wife are already 25 minutes late starting out. Your mind begins to whirl. The boss had said that this dinner was important — and he's always a stickler for punctuality. Now — a break in the traffic. You are soon burning along at 55 miles per hour.

A fine rain begins to fall. Should you slow down? No — this is a good road, the speed limit is 50. Anyway, you're almost there. You wish your wife would be quiet. Who cares about how her make-up looks... Your boss's face fills your mind... Uh, oh, where's your wallet? In the *other* suit. Your heart-beat quickens. You reach for your handkerchief to wipe your face just as your wife insists you slow down. You quickly respond by giving the accelerator an extra push — when suddenly an oncoming car skids out of control and swerves into your path. Instinctively, you turn sharply to the left, never seeing that solid, immovable tree.

You've had it! Collision! But it wasn't your fault. The other driver skidded; you turned to avoid him. Right? Dead right. And you will soon be very dead.

Let's take a look at what happened to you and your wife, as graphically pictured in an article that appeared in the



SYDNEY

9th March, 1971.

I am grateful to Ambassador College for this opportunity to say something to the people of Australia about road safety.

It is to be regretted that in this country over 3,000 people are killed and many thousands more seriously injured as a result of nearly 60,000 road accidents each year. Unfortunately, the same needless slaughter is going on in other parts of the world where the motor vehicle occupies pride of place in business and family circles.

In an effort to find the answers to what must surely be regarded as a phenomenon of the twentieth century, highly qualified researchers are busy at work. However, I do not see the solution to be that complicated.

I take heart from the fact that throughout the centuries civilisation has faced many stumbling-blocks, but time and again the way has been made clear by the discovery of a fundamental law of nature. The answers have not come from the application of complex formulæ. So, with road safety, I believe there is a simple solution.

Every day, Police reports on road fatalities are placed on my desk and by far the greater number of deaths result from the irresponsible actions of some driver or pedestrian.

It is true, of course, that better roads, improved street lighting, safer cars and education and training schemes all contribute to a reduction in road deaths. However, it is my view that, until each driver and pedestrian makes a daily personal decision NOT to be involved in an accident, road deaths and injuries will continue.

We all know what such a decision means - it means that at all times we need to have regard for the safety of everyone about us; our passengers, very often wives and families; pedestrians, particularly children and old people; and, of course, ourselves.

This, then, is my simple message. Make a decision now as you read this to act with care, commonsense and courtesy to those around you in the traffic scene. If we all did this, there would be no road toll. This is the uncomplicated solution - it does not involve governments or citizens in heavy expenditure of manpower, money or resources - it involves only you.

To assist in making such a decision, I commend the article 'Death Rides the High Road' - it is informative, telling and educational.

M. A. Morris
Minister for Transport.

February, 1957 U. S. edition of *Reader's Digest*, titled "Slow Motion Picture of High Speed Death" by Edgar A. Walz III and Carl Wall. Instantly upon impact, the front bumper and chrome of the grill-work collapse. Slivers of steel penetrate the tree. The bonnet rises, crumples and smashes into the windscreen. Spinning rear wheels become airborne. The mudguards are driven into the tree, forcing the car's rear parts out over the front doors. *But it wasn't your fault, was it?*

You and your wife continue to move forward at the vehicle's original speed (developing 20 times the normal force of gravity, 3600 pounds for you, 2400 for your wife). Your legs, ramrod straight, snap like toothpicks at the knee joints. Your body is lifted off the seat (no time for seat belts tonight), torso upright, broken knees crushed against the dashboard. Your grasp on the steering wheel has convulsed into a terrible death-grip. The plastic and steel frame of the steering wheel buckles under the pressure. Simultaneously, the tendons and ligaments in your hands and wrists are stretched beyond their limits. Your head is now near the sunvisor, heading on a tragic trajectory. Your chest is just above the steering column, about to be impaled. But it wasn't *your* fault.

It has been only 4/10 of a second since the impact. Your car's front 24 inches have been demolished and the rear end is *still* travelling about 35 miles per hour, pummelling and compressing the rest of your car into its already accordion-pleated front end. Your body, still conscious, continues hurtling forward at 55 miles per hour. The half-ton motor block — that screaming monster which used to gratify your ego — crunches into the tree and is then driven backward, about to crush you like a raw egg in a vise. But it *really* wasn't your fault.

Your fear-frozen hands bend the steering column into an almost vertical position. The law of inertia impales you on the steering wheel. Bones are *shattered*, not just broken. Jagged steel punctures lungs and intercostal arteries. Your lungs collapse. Your head shatters the windscreen. The rear of your once shiny car begins its downward plunge,

spinning wheels digging into the ground. But nobody will blame you.

The entire body of the car is twisted out of shape. Hinges tear, doors spring open. In one last convulsive crush, the seat rams forward and the massive engine bulldozes backward, cementing you against the cruelly cold steel of the steering shaft. Still, it wasn't your fault!

You are now dead. All this occurred in less than one second — 7/10 of a second, to be exact.

Your wife, that lovely little girl whom you had once continuously dreamed about, has likewise been transformed unrecognizably. She had been sitting in the "death-seat," next to the driver. Almost immediately after impact, she rocketed through the windscreen as if shot from a cannon (seat belt lying idle — it would have wrinkled her dress). She is dead.

The police arrive. But it is hours before they can identify the car (which had subsequently burned). The bodies were beyond recognition. Though forewarned, one of the policemen, fresh from the academy, fainted. Decapitated, dismembered, burned bodies were too much for him. He'll have to get used to it. He's going to see hundreds more.

Your children had been allowed to "wait up" for Mummy and Daddy. They loved to do that. But this would become a long, horrible night for them — one which would be indelibly branded on their innocent memories. Who would tell them? And how? What will they think? One thing is sure. Your children will never be the same again. They will soon learn what life without parents is all about. They will have to grow up fending for themselves, hardened by a cruel, parentless world. Your darling children are now orphans. Oh, yes, we almost forgot — it wasn't *your* fault!

What Was Your Reaction?

The human mind is funny. It "habituates" or "gets used to" things very quickly. The commonplace, no matter how tragic or traumatic, grows unimportant and unnoticed. A rampaging river that kills 17 is front-page news. But the average Australian day, a "nor-

mal" 24-hour period, witnesses 10 dead on the highways — and no bulletins. The average month sees 292 take their final ride — and no headlines. "What else is new?" you ask.

Then consider!

In 1969, 3,502 thinking human beings died in Australian auto accidents.

Don't just read "three thousand, five hundred and two." Think of that one accident, and see it repeated thousands of times. Visualize the exploding mushroom of permanent personal tragedy.

DEAD: 172 children, 0-6, torn apart as cute babes, barely having lived and laughed.

DEAD: 898 youngsters, 7-20, cut off having just tasted the fruits of life.

DEAD: 1,066 young adults, 21-39, killed in the prime of life, leaving behind bereaved mates and orphaned children.

DEAD: 702 adults, 40-59, cut short at the height of their power, shattering families and organizations.

DEAD: 664 mature adults, 60 and over, cut off at the pinnacle of their wisdom, depriving others of their experience, counsel and love and ending careers when they should have been reaping the blessings of full lives.

Of the 825 pedestrians *killed* on the roads in 1969, seventy-two were *under five years of age*, and 328 were 60 years or older. Another 9,964 pedestrians were injured — and the numbers are steadily rising. But is this really so strange when you consider that the Police Department of New South Wales alone handles nearly 850,000 traffic offences each year? That's at the rate of TWO per registered vehicle!

Guns vs. Cars

It may seem incredible, but the number of Australians killed on the roads from 1939 to 1969 is nearly double the total number of Australians killed in wars during the same years — 34,451 soldiers have died on the battle fields and 65,251 civilians on Australian roads!

Of the nearly 63,000 road accidents that occurred in Australia in 1969, almost 34,000 were COLLISIONS BETWEEN VEHICLES that killed 1,406 people and injured 52 thousand more! And to that you can add thousands of

collisions in which no one was hurt. Cars hitting cars, trucks, motorcycles!

The terrible fact is that nearly 90,000 Australians are injured in automobile accidents every year. That's about 7,500 a month or 247 a day — about ten an hour, or ONE EVERY SIX MINUTES!

You might think it is better to be "just" injured, but seeing horribly crushed bodies and gazing into the pained expressions of burned faces, one honestly wonders who is really better off, the dead or the hideously injured.

Are Accidents "Accidents"?

The word "accident" is a convenient excuse. It absolves us from any responsibility — an "accident" happens all by itself.

Sorry, that just isn't true.

Every "accident" has a cause. Laws have been broken. Penalties must be paid. The motorist is at fault or the car is defective — plain and simple. The overwhelming majority of all accidents (over 98%) could have been prevented by safe defensive driving or proper automotive maintenance.

Most of us violate the traffic laws every day. Police officers say that for every citation given, scores of violations have gone undetected. We always complain about that one infringement notice, but we are strangely silent about the times we escaped.

Many people believe that traffic rules were made to be broken, that they were devised to inhibit "creative driving," to suppress "driving freedom," and to give the police a job catching violators. This kind of reasoning is characteristic of human nature.

Traffic regulations were designed by experts — men familiar with local conditions, men dedicated to preserving your life. The local policemen put their own lives on the line by continuously travelling the roads — to serve no matter what the weather or road conditions.

If you go ahead and break all the rules you want, you may not get caught immediately — but you're headed for a rectangular wooden box under six feet of freshly dug dirt.

Let's talk about speed limits. Are they made specifically for women — but well below the safe minimum for a

PANIC Preventers

What to do in an EMERGENCY situation

- (1) YOUR BRAKES FAIL**
Pump brakes. Coast in low gear, then use parking brake. On a hill — sideswipe the bank or head for a shallow ditch if available.
- (2) YOU GO INTO A SKID**
Take foot off accelerator. Never hit brakes, but pump them rapidly. Turn wheels into—not away from—the direction of a rear-end skid.
- (3) YOUR ACCELERATOR STICKS**
Try to pull the pedal up with your toe — not your hand. If unsuccessful, turn off ignition and apply brakes. But remember, with power off, steering and braking will be hard work in models with power steering and braking.
- (4) YOUR HEADLIGHTS GO OUT**
Hold a straight steering course and brake hard. Ease off road. Use torch to warn oncoming traffic.
- (5) YOU HAVE A BLOWOUT**
Keep a firm and steady grip on steering wheel since car will pull to one side (front tyre out) or weave (back tyre out). Don't slam brakes — brake smoothly.
- (6) YOUR BONNET FLIES UP**
Brake smoothly, ease off road. Use side windows for steering reference.
- (7) YOUR POWER STEERING QUILTS**
Learn what to expect by switching off ignition at slow speeds in a deserted area. It's work — like driving a truck with flat tyres — but quite possible.
- (8) YOU MUST STOP ON AN EXPRESSWAY**
Signal, slow down, pull off road. Leave front, rear, interior and emergency lights on in dusk, darkness or bad weather. If near traffic, get all persons out of car. Never block taillights. Raise bonnet, tie handkerchief to antenna.
- (9) YOUR CAR CATCHES ON FIRE**
Get jack handle from trunk and rip loose burning wires — don't touch! Smother wires with clothing. If fire is spreading, get away quick — petrol tank will explode.
- (10) YOU ARE ON A COLLISION COURSE**
Your blood chills — a head-on crash looms. This is the worst road disaster. Keep your wits. Brake hard. Honk. Head for the left shoulder — give up the entire road. Go off road completely — into a ditch if necessary — even a roll-over is better than the deadly head-on collision.

From the National Safety Council Pamphlet, Panic Preventers

"man" to drive? Are they there to make you late for Aunt Myrtle's family supper? Or, on the contrary, to prevent you from getting a fast ride in an ambulance — or a slow one in a hearse?

In New South Wales, the Commissioner of Motor Transport reports that in the year ending in mid 1970, 27.5% of the state's road deaths had been caused by "excessive speeds"!

Complacency and Inattention

The predominant cause of automobile carnage is complacency. People hear frequent news reports of highway butchery. They are bombarded with pleas to drive safely. Yet the toll soars. The problem is basic — familiarity breeds contempt.

Cars have been around a long time. There are multiple tens of thousands of

them gobbling up fresh air and belching out noxious fumes. And they kill people. Many people. Nice people.

Cars are as much a part of modern society as food, clothing and shelter. This familiarity has immunized us against treating the automobile as we would treat a deadly weapon. Cars should be handled like a loaded machine gun with a hair trigger.

Watch complacency at work in your own mind. You'd probably be careful before walking across railroad tracks. But you'd seldom think twice about walking across a thoroughfare. That's human nature. Three trains an hour may pass on the tracks. But 1,500 cars will whiz by an average suburban road in the same period of time — and many can be expected to weave, swerve, skid or veer at any moment. But we're "cool." We don't worry about cars. And they continue to kill people. Many people. Nice people.

Complacency spawns inattention. And inattention is the greatest single cause of collisions. People don't concentrate on their driving. It's too much like work. Their minds are somewhere else; their eyes wander to the roadside; their hands twist the radio dial. They become careless. Carelessness follows inattention as surely as inattention follows complacency. A mistake is made; it's not seen in time. If you don't know the results by now, we've all been wasting our time.

Driving time is too often considered "free time." You suppose you can subconsciously floor the accelerator and steer the wheel. So why "waste time" driving. Your mind can be set free. Free to unwind after work, free to hash over your latest marital spat and rehash your perennial in-law problem, free to meditate about your future, free to day-dream, free . . . free . . . free . . .

And that's the trouble. You are *not* free. *Driving is a FULL-TIME job.*

Are you pleasantly nodding your head in agreement — and are you just as pleasantly planning to drive exactly as you always have? If so — better buy a cemetery plot — family size.

Driving Mirrors Character

Driving is an extension of the self — a self that's usually not particularly con-

tent with life. Job tensions, financial worries, family feuds, personal anxieties, thwarted goals, sex frustrations — all work their way into the automobile and get their hands on the wheel and their feet on the accelerator.

What better outlet for behavioural disorders than zooming down the highway, a 2,000-pound monster instantly responding to your slightest command. And for 200,000 people each year — the estimated worldwide auto death toll — it is the ultimate escape.

Bad drivers conform to a surprisingly predictable antisocial pattern. They're prejudiced against taxi, bus, truck and especially women drivers. At the feeblest provocation, vicious manners erupt in a temper tantrum of violent invective, impatient horn-blowing and inter-car yelling contests. All too often actions replace words — road-hogging, speeding, cutting-off, and tailgating are common means of revenge. Don't allow your car to be an instrument for releasing your frustrations. If you "got it" from the boss or your wife (often the same person!), do you then "give it" to the accelerator? Control your emotions. Control yourself.

Traffic experts say that motorists who lack self-control and a sense of moral values are more likely to become involved in accidents. An American research team discovered that safe drivers are more religious than accident-prone drivers. A man who has certain religious morals and principles of character will reflect this way of life in his driving habits. But a person who is not interested in his fellow-man has the greatest difficulty in the realm of safety. A man who blows his horn and blows his "cool" because he doesn't want the other guy getting ahead or slowing him down is actually betraying his selfishness.

Driver education is important, but moral consideration is essential.

Hazards of Urban Driving

World-wide traffic accident death rates can be directly related in most cases to the amount of city driving in each country. In America, for instance, the many miles of city streets are offset by the thousands of miles of expressways that traverse vast desert and mountain areas.

Americans kill 5.6 people per 100 million miles driven. This figure is low in comparison to Japan's which is 21.7 deaths over the same distance.

But, then, in Japan most driving is done in urban areas. Despite very rigid traffic controls, the kill-rate on Japanese roads is excessively high. In downtown Tokyo figures of traffic accidents and deaths are posted regularly to remind the public of the dangerous driving conditions. But, human nature being what it is, drivers persist in playing traffic roulette, and a trip in a Tokyo taxi continues to be a hair-raising experience.

Well, where does Australia stand?

The answer is, "Just about in the middle." With a traffic death rate of 10.1 people per 100 million miles, Australians have a better record than closely urbanized Holland (at 16.1) and a far worse record than the U. K. (at 7.0).

What this means, then, is that as Australia becomes more and more a nation of cities and of urban living, its people *MUST* become much more conscious of the dangers of city and residential area driving. The kill-rate doesn't *have to* rise *AUTOMATICALLY* as urbanization increases just because of the prevailing trend. It is possible to reverse that trend as, in fact, a few countries have and to lower the toll even though close living and working conditions are becoming the "normal" pattern.

It all depends on the will of the people to control their driving and to stay alive.

Well, who does all this killing and crippling, and why? Let's look at the record of one state, New South Wales, and discover the source of its highway carnage.

The Right-of-way Problem

The major cause of road accidents in New South Wales is failure to yield the right of way at intersections.

Australians are all too familiar with the law that grants priority to any car coming onto any road from the right. This is the only country that has such an off-side right-of-way ruling; other nations have right-hand priority, but they drive on the right.

This means, then, that Australian

drivers have to operate as if they had eyes on all sides of their heads, that they have to cultivate a quick braking technique in case a mini-car should suddenly sneak out of an alley across the highway, that they have to be perpetually on the look-out, knowing that every time their view is obstructed by a curve in the road, a side-lane just around the bend could bring disaster to them and their families.

Over 25% of all road accidents in New South Wales result from the breaking of this law, and 23.9% of all the state's road deaths and injuries are caused by drivers' inattention to cars entering on the right — or their impatience with these repeated interruptions in the flow of traffic.

Just where this leaves the unwary visitor with an international license is an interesting question.

The solution, in the absence of any change in the law, of course, is simply to wait your turn and to be on the alert for those who don't. At high speeds both are difficult for the ego as well as the brakes, but the alternative can be pretty grim.

Tailgating Madness

The second most frequent cause of accidents is "tailgating." This is perhaps the violation most startlingly obvious to newcomers to Australia. Cars rushing along at high speeds with barely one car's length between themselves and the vehicle ahead cause 17.4% of the state's road disasters. Why? Well, for a start, 1,321 accidents occurred in N. S. W. last year because of defective brakes — and 442 people were killed or injured as a direct result. Another 1,157 people were killed or injured as cars swerved to avoid each other — many in this tailgating position.

But drivers don't reach their destinations any more quickly by boring along on the bumper of the car in front, unnerving learners and provisional drivers and endangering the occupants of sometimes several cars. There's no sense to it, but there we all are, locked in a high-speed chain, gambling our lives on our brakes and the driving skill of some little old lady four cars up ahead.

Ten Commandments of MOTORING

These Ten Commandments of Motoring are given in the booklet, "Road Craft" — The Police Driver's Manual, published in Britain.

- (1) Obey the traffic laws of the land. If you drive according to the rules of the road, you will drive safely and well.
- (2) Concentrate on your driving and drive defensively. Never take it for granted that the other driver will do the right thing — drive defensively.
- (3) Think before acting. Be alert — think about what you are doing while you are doing it.
- (4) Never tailgate. The cause of most accidents on highways and expressways is tailgating — following too closely.
- (5) Drive with deliberation and overtake as quickly as possible. When in doubt, never pass.
- (6) Use speed intelligently and drive fast only in the right places. Don't drive too fast or too slowly. A skilled driver never drives faster than the conditions of the road, traffic and weather permit.
- (7) Develop your car sense and reduce wear and tear to a minimum.
- (8) Use your horn thoughtfully; give proper signals; never turn off headlights at night.
- (9) Be sure your car is road-worthy and know its capabilities. Keep your car maintained in good mechanical condition.
- (10) Perfect your road craft and acknowledge courtesies extended to you by other road users. Courtesy is an important factor in road safety.

Fast driving is the major cause of road deaths in New South Wales: 260 people were killed and 3,595 were injured in 1970. Reread the account of that car-tree collision at the beginning of this article. You don't *have* to kill yourself that way — but you can.

And the drunks are out on the roads murdering and maiming about 2,000 people a year in N. S. W. alone. Even if you're standing on a kerb, you can't

defend yourself against *anyone* who's been mixing alcohol and petrol. When the "mixer" is behind the wheel, you'd better keep out of his way. Some people think they're the exceptions; they can see, so they reckon they can see to drive. A drink or two never kept a good man down — but it can slaughter a whole family.

One Australian authority points out that, "Alcoholic drivers may cover 10

MAD MOTORISTS

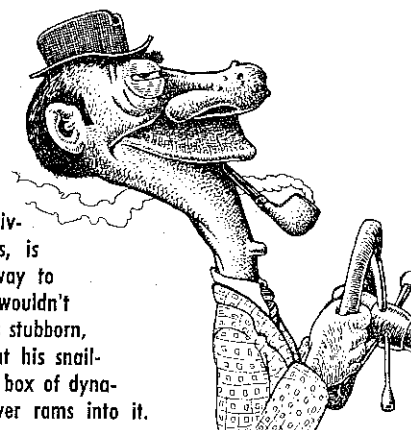
The old western six-gun often brought out the worst in people. So does a long game of Monopoly. Today's frantic car driving does the same. Some profoundly noxious and dandily deranged denizens have been spawned from behind steering wheels. Here are a few of the many tiresome but tireless types you'll recognize with the usual revulsion.

Here's hoping you don't find your picture here.

Basil Wolverton

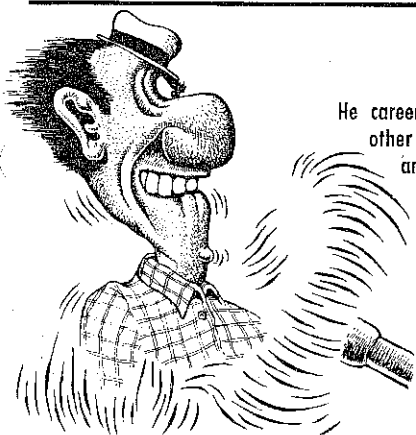
CRAWLER

Here is the motorist who believes that very slow driving, even on expressways, is the only safe and sane way to conduct a car. Perhaps he wouldn't harm a fly or perhaps he's stubborn, but he fails to realize that his snail-pace vehicle is a potential box of dynamite if some careless driver rams into it.



WEAVER

He careens from lane to lane, passing other cars right and left in a frantic and disdainful effort to get ahead of everybody. His grand moment is when he victoriously startles the stitches out of another driver. His lowest moment is when he tangles with another weaver who weaves him out of action.



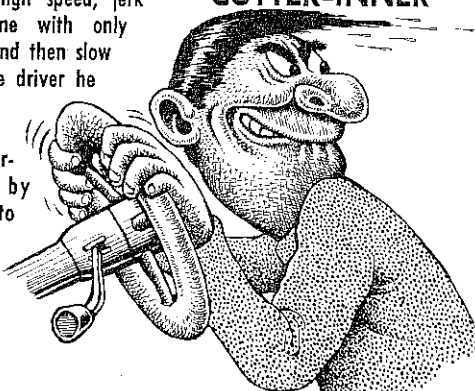
TAILGATER

Almost as dangerous as the speeder. By following very close to the car ahead, especially at high speeds, he tries to prove that anyone ahead of him is going too slow, and should give up and get off the road. He can generally be recognized by his angrily indignant expression after he has plowed into the rear of the car ahead.



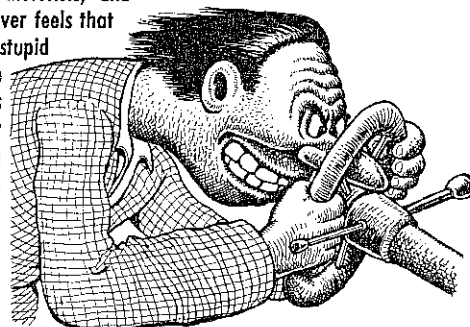
CUTTER-INNER

He likes to pass at high speed, jerk back to the left lane with only inches of clearance — and then slow down so much that the driver he has passed has to pass him. Not caring to be left behind, the cutter-inner then whizzes by again, jerks back into the left lane again — and so on and on until often somebody loses more than his temper in this highway game of lethal leapfrog.



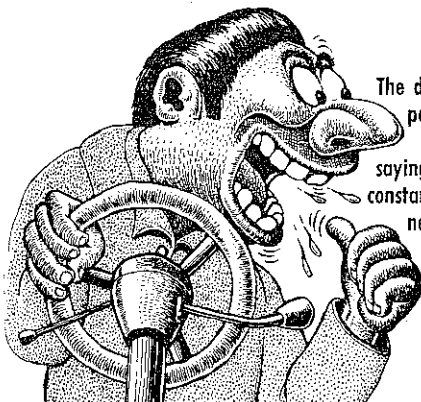
SPEEDER

Main maniac of the Mad Motorists, and the most dangerous, this driver feels that all other drivers are too stupid and/or too old to be driving and getting in his way. He has no regard for the safety of others. He gets his kicks out of showing off right down to the moment of fatal impact.



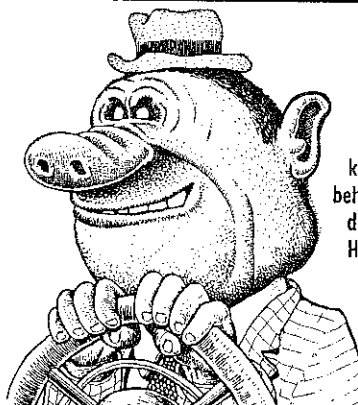
YAKKER

The driver who talks continuously to passengers. This is bad enough, but he feels that what he is saying is so important that he must constantly watch his victims to witness their reactions to his profound and witty utterances. If he and his passengers live to collect their pensions, it is only through merciful Providence.



ROAD HOGGER

He drives over the middle line to keep anyone from passing him from behind and to scare the scalps off drivers going in the opposite direction. He doesn't tire of his fun until he meets another of his kind on a sharp curve or on top of a hill.



per cent. of the total annual mileage driven over Australian roads. And such drivers may be involved in over half of the alcohol-related accidents which are so sickeningly familiar."

If you drink and then drive, even after reading these statistics and knowing full well the personal tragedy of highway mutilation, it's your funeral! Or perhaps you'll be "lucky" — and only have to live with the nightmare of having killed someone's wife and kids — or your own!

"They're Out to Get You"

Suicide by automobile is another chilling reality. Bits and pieces of evidence on this still shrouded subject have revealed that in America more than 10 per cent. of traffic fatalities are intentional — people wanting to kill themselves — while another 5 to 30 per cent. can be classified as subintentional (self-destructive tendencies which are not conscious, but nonetheless deadly).

The trademark of such suicide drivers is their use of the automobile as a psychological weapon in the arena of social competition. An American authority on suicide, Dr. Edwin L. Shneidmann, states: "It's the 'I'll get in line before you will, I'll take this space,' the whole business of playing chicken on the highway... I mean the way people drive. The elbowing and shouldering with the automobile is there for anyone to see.

"Some people drive as if they were afraid they would be late to their own accident. And put 'accident' in quotation marks."

These studies portend ominous consequences for every driver. Any car — that means any car — may be booby-trapped with a suicide driver gunning directly for you! Your car is merely a convenient object for his self-destruction. If your family gets mangled in the process, well, that's the way the car crumbles.

One can hardly disagree with the old truck driver's maxim: "Drive as if the other fellow hates you and is trying to kill you."

Mechanical Failure

Fill her up with petrol, turn on the ignition, hit that accelerator, grab the wheel, jam the brake. That's all the

IS THAT CAR RELIABLE?

MECCHANICAL reliability and safety should be considered before anyone buys a car. It will save much aggravation (and yes, money too) afterwards.

What kind of car should one buy? New or used? Obviously, there are enough brands around to satisfy anyone. But is it necessary to pay 300 to 1500 extra dollars for a flashy, sporty car with fake air scoops — when you really need a solid station wagon for your six children?

What about a new car? It sounds nice. But a car depreciates enormously the first year. Some cars can lose \$300 to \$400 as soon as you drive them out of the dealer's showroom! Why not a strong, one-year-old car, with low mileage, bought from a reputable dealer or a reliable private party?

An automobile is an investment — financially, of course, but much more in the well-being of your family. Check all factors before you buy. There are motorists' association magazines that publish automobile ratings (usually one model per issue). The articles include reports of road tests on performance (including brakes, clutch, steering, engine, locking devices, etc.) and good and bad features that are included or offered as extras. There are also commercial magazines which stress sales promotion, but do offer some valuable information.

Also, be sure to examine the frequency-of-repairs record of any car you might think of buying. And always consider the resale value. Similar cars can sometimes vary widely.

Do you really need all that gargantuan horsepower for your type of driving? Extra horses eat up a lot of petrol — and often do little else (except perhaps massage your ego).

If you're going to buy a used car, be extra careful. Ads are very high pressure. Salesmen are usually worse. An \$80 paint job will make even an old car look

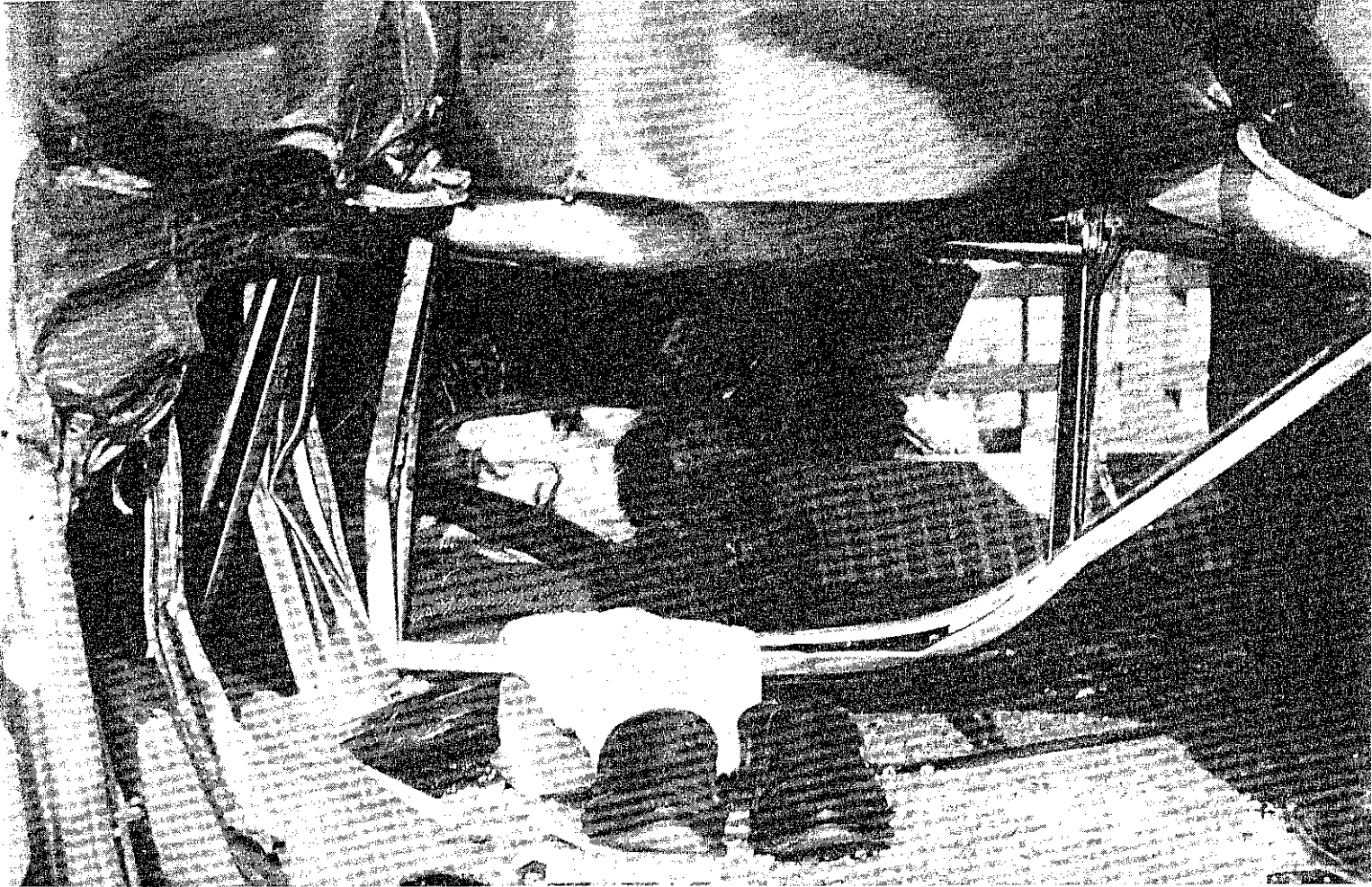
good — but in two weeks or two months you may have to replace the transmission — for more money than you paid for the car in the first place! There are reliable used-car dealers. Many are anything but! Check with friends. Where did they find satisfaction? What about the used car "guarantees"? Are they worth even the paper they're written on? Check. Some are, many aren't. It would be a good idea to spend a few dollars to have a used car tested by some reliable company before buying.

What about the cost? Have you set a strict budget for yourself? You should. And don't be fooled by advertised prices. Items which you take for granted — such as radio, white walls, seat belts — might be extra. So are dealers' preparation costs. Then there are registration and insurance fees. Additional insurance payments are required for bigger and sportier cars. And higher maintenance and operating costs will be coming along too. Figure all these factors into your budget. Be realistic; the price in the ad is not!

Finally, never neglect safety features. They're not glamorous, but they will save you and your family. Seat belts on all seats, headrests, collapsible steering columns, padded dashboards, etc., should be standard equipment on new cars. But what about used cars? Will the dealer add this equipment at a minimal cost?

There are other safety features even more basic. Some cars are heavier with bigger springs and more massive brakes. They would be safer in the event of an accident. Disc brakes, an important safety item, are optional in some cars and should be considered. Hardtops and convertibles which don't have the support around the doors or tops would be more dangerous in roll-overs or broadside collisions.

Naturally, your budget is limited. Will you sacrifice safety for style? That's your decision. When you make it — look your children in the eye!

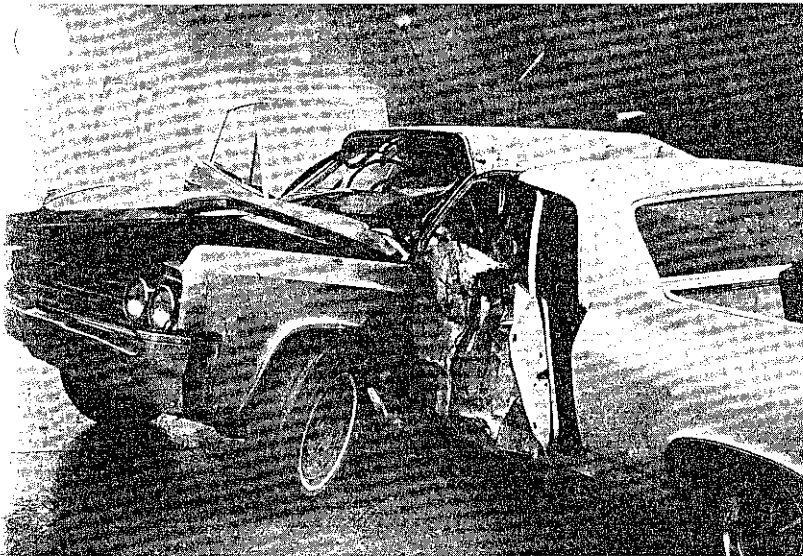
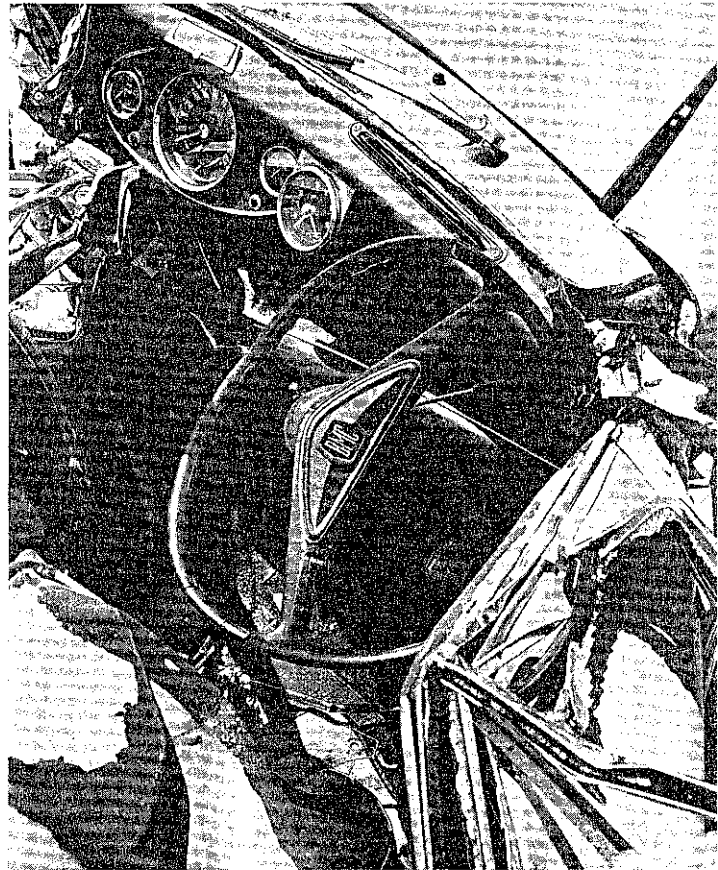


"...until each driver and pedestrian makes a daily personal decision NOT to be involved in an accident, road deaths and injuries will continue." (M. A. Morris, Minister for Transport, S. W.)

HOW MANY OF THESE DRIVERS MADE THAT DECISION BEFORE LEAVING THEIR HOMES ON THE DAY THESE ACCIDENTS HAPPENED?

Have YOU made that decision?

Top — Wide World Photo; Right — Ambassador College Photo;
Bottom — California Highway Patrol Photo



average driver knows about his car.

"It's symptomatic of this problem that you see so many highly polished, comparatively new cars sitting disabled beside the road," remarked an oil company official. "People have a childish faith that the car won't let them down. Our fathers, who had to contend with much less reliable vehicles and worse roads, took the trouble to learn what to do when things went wrong."

New cars today can barely chug off the assembly line without breaking down. Good parts are tacked together with such shoddy, threadbare techniques

that the average car, right out of the dealer's showroom, still has "bugs." Deadly mechanical faults often pop up — all too often at highway speeds!

If you're at all interested in putting your family in a reasonably safe vehicle, you must be able to recognize mechanical danger signals instantly. Correct them immediately.

You ARE Involved

Probably you're a good driver. And this article is written to correct bad drivers, right? Wrong.

Most drivers involved in fatal accidents are "good" drivers. Seven out of

ten had no serious prior violations. Eight out of ten had no record of previous accidents.

If you are at all associated with cars, statistically you *will* have a collision during your life. You and your family have a fair chance of being killed or injured.

If this concerns you, write — if you're in New South Wales — to the Department of Motor Transport for their free *Motor Traffic Handbook*. In other states, write to the appropriate government department and keep informed about their recommendations. Be up-to-date about safe driving.

How to DRIVE and STAY ALIVE!

- (1) **KNOWLEDGE**—know your traffic laws and obey them. Accidents are due to broken laws. Never repeat past mistakes.
- (2) **FORESIGHT** — keep your car in first-class mechanical condition always! Have it serviced by a reliable mechanic before long trips. Especially be sure your tyres are in good condition.
- (3) **SEAT BELTS** — wear them always when travelling in a car. Each passenger should have a seat belt and use it.
- (4) **PLAN AHEAD**—know your route, where you are going, where to turn.
- (5) **NIGHT DRIVING** — slow down when driving at night. Never overdrive your headlights.
- (6) **RAILROAD CROSSINGS**—never ignore signals. Never get blocked on a track by other traffic.
- (7) **OVERTAKING** — to overtake safely you need about one half mile of clearance in the oncoming lane of traffic. That's just about as far

as you can see an oncoming car with normal vision. Use turn right signals.

- (8) **INTERSECTIONS** — most crashes occur here. The key is — be prepared. As you approach, have your foot poised over the brake pedal. Look carefully both ways. Avoid sudden moves.
- (9) **TURN SIGNALS** — signal your intention at least 100 feet before you make your move. Use signals properly.
- (10) **TURNING IN FACE OF ONCOMING TRAFFIC** — one of the most dangerous maneuvers in driving. Never turn your front wheels hard when stopped, waiting to turn. If struck from behind, the impact would propel you into the oncoming lane of traffic.
- (11) **MIRROR** — keep aware of what's going on behind you by using your rear-view mirrors. A professional driver will glance at his mirror every 5-10 seconds. Adjust mirrors so the rear mudguard is visible, giving an indication of distance to nearby vehicles.

- (12) **REVERSING** — know what is immediately behind your vehicle. Look behind and under your car before you start — then reverse slowly. Use mirrors only as a guide — but turn your head and LOOK!

- (13) **ADVERSE WEATHER AND ROAD CONDITIONS** — don't drive if you can avoid it. If you must drive, beware of slick road surfaces and control your speed accordingly.

- (14) **EXPRESSWAY DRIVING**—enter at the same speed as expressway traffic. Make lane changes smoothly, in harmony with other traffic. Don't tailgate. Allow an absolute minimum of one car length for every 10 miles per hour speed, and preferably 150 feet at 50 mph.

- (15) **ATTITUDE**—the most important key of highway survival. Drive defensively. Respect the laws and forces involved in driving (including your 2,000-pound weapon). Be a friendly, considerate driver. Don't let your feelings explode on the highway. Don't drive competitively. Remember, driving is a full-time job. Never grow complacent.

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Ambassador College
Safety Department