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Evasive Driving

RWT Publications

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WHY WOULD ANYONE NEED THIS SORT OF INFORMATION?:

That is an excellent question, and one that is not easily answered. Most people who would be inclined to read a book like this are merely curious about the subject matter, and have little inclination to risk damaging their personal vehicle (or injuring themselves) by foolishly

engaging in unsupervised experimentation of the techniques enumerated herein. Of the few persons who *might* be inclined to practice reverse 180s in empty parking lots or speed down rural highways at 4 AM, almost none of them would ever consider engaging in any sort of lawbreaking (aside from speeding). The minute percentage who might have a tendency towards unlawful behavior (and the resultant police pursuits), and who are *already* inclined to flee from the police, just might be able to avoid colliding with innocent motorists simply by remembering a few pointers and safety tips.

With predatory criminals and psychotically aggressive drivers marauding along the public motorways, *anyone* is potentially at risk of being seen as a "target of opportunity." What if some reckless lunatic suddenly flies into a rage because your vehicle just happens to be in his way when he's in a hurry? What would you do if the SUV tailgating you suddenly began ramming your rear bumper? What if your vehicle happens to be the exact same make, model, and color as that of a demented motorist's most hated enemy? What if a car has been tailing you for miles, and you're far from help and without a cell phone? And what if you are required to transport a dying friend to the emergency room ASAP? By applying the knowledge contained herein, your chances of successfully reaching your intended destination will significantly improve. However, a mere text is *no substitute* for intensive practice with a qualified instructor. Never attempt to drive beyond your abilities!

INTRODUCTION:

Any monkey can step on a gas pedal. Any punk teenager can spin his tires or do donuts in the mall parking lot. And anyone. . . yes, *anyone*, can be killed, crippled, or maimed in a high speed motor vehicle accident. Performance driving requires skill, focus, and a properly maintained vehicle. A moment's distraction can cost you your life. Once you have lost control of your vehicle, you are in serious trouble. There is no room for error.

Whether intended as such or not, a motor vehicle is a lethal weapon. Far more people are killed in motor vehicle accidents each year than in all gun fatalities combined (suicide, accidental discharge, murder, criminally negligent homicide, justifiable homicide, criminals shot by policemen, and "miscellaneous") over any given decade. You can easily kill a pedestrian or bicyclist, as well as other motorists, your passengers, and yourself. If you are careless, reckless, or stupid, people may die as a result. . . consider this.

PREREQUISITES:

Your vehicle must be well maintained to ensure its reliability. Your suspension and brakes must function perfectly. Your tires should all be the same style, be inflated to the proper pressure, and be in nearly new condition. You should have recently had a front alignment as well as an oil change. All fluids should be topped off. Your windshield should be clean, inside and out. Your headlights must be kept clean. All lugnuts must be tight and free of crud and corrosion. Before starting out, your seat and mirrors must be adjusted for comfort and visibility. If there is snow or ice on your vehicle, it should be completely removed. Be sure to warm up the engine prior to leaving your parking space — never push a cold engine hard! You should always have a nearly full tank of gas, never allowing it to get below half a tank. Preventive maintenance and common sense are of the utmost importance.

Optimally, your vehicle should be a mid-sized to large sedan that is low to the ground.

Smaller cars may be quicker on the start and more maneuverable, but they tend not to be able to withstand accidents very well, and are easily bumped off the road due to their lack of mass. Vehicles with a high center of gravity tend to be unstable around sharp turns. It should be equipped with an "anti-roll bar" fixed between the front axles (stock equipment on many passenger cars), to reduce the stress of hard cornering. Your vehicle's engine should be powerful and well tuned. For evasive driving purposes, an automatic transmission is generally far superior to a stick shift. A manual transmission can be utilized by an expert when driving evasively, but for most people (lacking the reflexes and "muscle memory" of a master wheelman), it would prove to be a significant handicap (furthermore, clutch cables tend to snap at the most inopportune times, and unless your vehicle's transmission is equipped with a top quality synchromesh, you could be in a lot of trouble). Mercedes Benz, Audi, and BMW sedans seem best suited for evasive driving, along with American "muscle cars" built during the 60's and 70's (although nearly any stock passenger car in serviceable condition can be used — with varying degrees of success."

EQUIPMENT & MODIFICATIONS:

You must have a spare key upon your person at all times (not only will this eliminate the possibility of a lockout, but it will allow you instant access to your car key in the event of an emergency). You should have a locking gas cap to prevent unauthorized access to your petrol supply, which could easily be siphoned or contaminated. Your car must have a full-sized spare, quality jack, jumper cables, and a bundle of tools secured in the trunk. In addition to these mandatory items, you should also have an emergency replacement belt, a hose repair kit, several long burning flares, a small can of WD-40, a quart of oil, windshield wash fluid, a gallon of water, a blanket, and some emergency rations (energy bars and trail mix are preferable) neatly stored within the trunk (plastic storage boxes, or small gymbags, will help you to keep these items organized).

You should have a first-aid kit, flashlight (preferably heavy duty aluminum with krypton bulb), halon fire extinguisher (if you can find one), and magnum revolver in the passenger compartment. All equipment stowed within the passenger compartment must be properly secured (with tie-downs, snap clips, or mounted storage boxes). Items which are not properly secured can roll under one's brake pedal, become distracting during high-speed maneuvering, or be transformed into lethal projectiles in the event of a collision or rollover (Of course, the occasional bag of groceries that won't fit in the trunk may still be placed on the rear floorboards with a reasonable expectation of safety).

The magnum revolver is recommended for a variety of reasons:

1. **COMPACTNESS:** Unlike a carbine or pistol-grip shotgun, it is small enough to be stowed within the glovebox or an underseat lockbox.
2. **POWER:** Unlike other handguns, the magnums have enough power and penetration to pierce windshields and car doors. It is possible that a round from a magnum revolver may even be able to crack a vehicle's engine block.
3. **SELF-TERMINATION:** In a worst case scenario, if you have had a high speed motor vehicle accident in an untraveled area, and no medical assistance will be forthcoming, you may very well decide that you no longer wish to be pushing your intestines out of your face

as you dangle upside-down in your demolished vehicle. Be advised that if you take it upon yourself to dispatch a mortally wounded passenger, who is screaming for someone to please kill him, you *will* be convicted of homicide!

A "Life-Hammer" device (or one of the inferior copies) should be mounted within reach — if you cannot procure one of these excellent crash extrication devices, a serrated sheepsfoot blade (for detaching frozen safety belts) and a centerpunch (for shattering window glass) may be substituted; the "First Response Knife" from Taylor Cutlery (also sold under the Smith & Wesson brand name) combines both.

If you intend to use your vehicle for serious driving and want to invest in modifications, consider: heavy-duty radiator hoses, stainless steel brake lines, high-performance tires, top quality foglights, high-wattage backup lights, a high-decibel horn (or even an airhorn), and a "wig-wag" switch for your high beams (which makes them flash alternately, as on emergency vehicles). If you are so inclined, further modifications could include: a large fuel cell, a rollcage, racing harnesses, and a switch activated fire-extinguishing system. A crowbar and winch are both valuable accessories that can help to get you back on the road and mobile in the event of a wipeout. Various defensive options (Kevlar door panels, nightvision goggles, pony air tanks, pepperspray dispensers, gunports, and even smoke generators) are also available if you feel the need exists. Offensive options (such as oil slicks, paint sprays, remote fired guns, or calthrop/mine dispensers) are all highly illegal and should not even be considered.

THE BASICS:

You need to be comfortable driving your primary vehicle. . . it needs to become an extension of your body. You need to be intimately familiar with your vehicle's capabilities. All cars handle differently, especially around curves, so it is best to stick to one specific type of vehicle — though you should familiarize yourself with the idiosyncracies of as many vehicle types as possible.

You need to be able to feel the road through the steering wheel and pedals. You need to know how wide your vehicle is, where your passenger-side tires are contacting the road, and the size of the smallest gap your vehicle can fit through without clipping the side mirrors. You need to know how your vehicle handles, at various speeds, on: dry pavement, wet pavement, flooded pavement, grooved pavement, rough roads, gravel, packed dirt, light snow, deep slush, glare ice, wet grass, and mud. You need to know exactly how fast you can take a ninety degree corner on dry pavement without going up on two wheels or spinning out. You need to know how quickly you can come to a dead stop from eighty miles per hour, without losing control by locking up the wheels (attempt this at low speeds first, to see if your vehicle pulls to the side; if you lock your brakes at speed, a portion of each tire will be scuffed flat, which will make the car vibrate until new tires are mounted). You need to know how fast you can safely drive in reverse, and for how long. You need to know ways to stop your car in the event of brake failure.

You also need to know approximately how well your vehicle can withstand various accidents, collisions, and rolls. As a general rule of thumb: any impact with a fixed solid object at a speed exceeding 15 mph will sustain serious damage to your vehicle, and if your

speed at impact is exceeding 35 mph, you can reasonably expect your car to crumble like a wad of tinfoil, crushing any occupants within. . . you want to avoid driving into fixed solid objects. Once you have compiled an accurate assessment of the aforementioned data, you can progress.

THE CARDINAL RULES:

1. AWARENESS — you need to be cognizant of everything happening in your immediate vicinity as well as what is happening far ahead of you. You need to be aware of any vehicles in your "blind spots" as well as vehicles approaching from behind. You need to be prepared for evasive action so you can react instantly without fear of causing an avoidable accident.

2. SMOOTHNESS — all movements of your vehicle must be as smooth and precise as possible, this includes acceleration and braking as well as steering. Lack of smoothness and precision is equivalent to lack of control.

3. EXPERIENCE — it is necessary to have first practiced performance driving under somewhat controlled conditions before attempting to drive at double the speed limit while negotiating traffic. If you are uncomfortable driving at high speeds, you cannot reasonably expect to do so safely in the event of an actual crisis situation (such as evading a psychotically aggressive driver or medevacing someone to the ER). It is imperative that one have confidence in his abilities.

4. DISCRETION — simply stated, it is necessary to be able to differentiate between a *calculated* risk as opposed to a *foolhardy* risk. Certain evasive driving techniques — like passing on the wrong side of the road or squeezing between two cars at a high rate of speed — require lightning fast calculating in addition to quick reflexes. A master wheelman will not pass on a blind curve (or rise) with the sun in his eyes, nor will he attempt to squeeze through a gap narrower than the width of his vehicle (including side mirrors). Only drunks, lunatics, and teenaged car thieves drive in such a reckless manner.

COMPETENCE:

You need to be focused 100% on driving. . . there can be no distractions. Music is acceptable if it does not detract from your concentration. Music should never be so loud that you fail to hear sirens or the sound of someone's wheels locking up. You should focus your attention well ahead of your vehicle, paying close attention to activity alongside the road or at approaching intersections. Move only your eyes, as there is no need to turn your head, and never direct your gaze away from the road for more than a second at a time.

You need to be able to drive defensively, knowing that often other drivers will behave carelessly or recklessly, and never become complacent. Never assume that another driver will check his blind spot, look before pulling out into traffic, stop at a red light, or turn in the direction his blinker indicates. Motorists fall asleep at the wheel and slam on their brakes for squirrels, they also drive while applying makeup, consulting maps, arguing on their cellular phones, disciplining their children, or eating hamburgers. Motorists drive while fatigued, while enraged, while suicidal, while crying hysterically, while rushing to appointments, while taking prescription medications, while under the influence of illicit drugs, and while drunk.

The number one cause of motor vehicle accidents is the idiocy of other motorists, followed by distraction, excessive speed for conditions, and "driver error." A very small percentage of accidents are caused by "unavoidable" collisions (usually deer) or vehicular malfunction (usually brake failure or tire blowout). If you wreck your car, chances are it was because you fucked up, either through not paying attention or through driving beyond your vehicle's capabilities (the rules of physics apply no matter how loud your stereo is cranked). If you are properly focused, you will not fuck up. Needless to say, inebriation and uncontrolled emotions will impair your ability to focus.

COURTESY:

Generally speaking, you need to obey the rules of the road as well as be courteous to other drivers. This means no tailgating, no cutting people off, no flipping people the bird, no screamed profanities, and no bumping. Furthermore, you should refrain from speeding in residential areas, blowing through yield signs and yellow lights, zipping in and out of rush hour traffic at double the speed limit, recklessly swooping across several lanes at once in heavy traffic, or driving at highway speeds through shopping center parking lots. Many people consider the aforementioned activities to be rude, and may take personal offence, depending upon their degree of emotional stability. Offense may manifest itself through aggressive driving, better known as "road rage." Persons driving aggressively may slam on their brakes to deter tailgating, may attempt to run offending motorists off the road, may decide to follow an offensive motorist home, or may even fire a handgun at the object of their dismay. Passive-aggressive busybodies will simply call the highway patrol on their cell phone and tell them your plate number along with a detailed (and quite possibly exaggerated) description of your violations of the vehicle and traffic code.

Typically, the goal of the typical aggressive driver is to *"teach that asshole a lesson."* Enraged by another motorist's perceived incompetence, arrogance, or recklessness, the aggressive personality (imbued with a distorted sense of self-righteous indignation) considers the offensive behavior of other motorists to be unacceptable transgressions which must be immediately dealt with by *"putting that bastard in his place."* These sick people look upon simple lapses of courtesy as personal attacks necessitating retaliation. Common manifestations of retaliatory behavior include: tailgating, "shadowing" (deliberately driving in the blind spot), and overt pursuit. More severe aggressive activity may entail: bumping (from behind), "clipping" (passing close enough to scratch paint and break off the mirror), or cutting in front and suddenly slamming on the brakes. Astonishingly, these deadly menaces not only tend to be "respected members of the community" with clean criminal records, but also truly believe themselves to be justified in their actions! Scary, isn't it?

The moral of this section is that it isn't prudent to blatantly provoke strangers into committing acts of violence against you. The majority of the "victims of road rage" had done something, often deliberately, to antagonize the aggressor immediately preceding the incident. Victims who did not provoke their aggressor via unsafe maneuvers or derogatory gesticulations either were driving slower than the posted limit and were not allowing others to pass (usually by speeding up in the passing zones), or presented an offensive appearance in some way (either by emblazoning their vehicle with obnoxious stickers or by flaunting wealth in an impoverished area). A very small percentage were either random

targets or victims of mistaken identity. Do not allow bad behavior or stupidity to make you a target.

While most aggressive drivers are mentally ill psychopaths, consider that nearly anyone can be temporarily deprived of their faculties when subjected to extreme stress, such as the loss of a job or the dissolution of a relationship. Stressful situations can make even the most meek and inoffensive people lose their shit. A weak individual is suddenly transformed into a force to be reckoned with upon sliding behind the wheel, and may choose to abuse his newfound power. Never assume that an aggressive driver can be made to "back down," as this often escalates the situation to an entirely new level.

Not only must one be aware of the fact that one shares the road with potentially aggressive drivers every day, but one must take care to avoid becoming one as well. By viewing one's vehicle as an extension of oneself, it is easy to suddenly become enraged over idiotic behavior which causes one to instantly react in order to narrowly avoid an accident. It is also common to lose one's temper when rushing to an important appointment and finding oneself stuck behind a slowpoke who not only refuses to pull, but speeds up on the straightaways. In such situations, it is important to remain calm and consider why the offending motorist is driving in such a manner. A reckless driver may be: rushing someone to the hospital, fleeing police pursuit, dangerously impaired, or simply a wild teenager who hasn't even considered the possibility of causing an accident. A slow or erratic driver may be: inexperienced, ill, elderly, drunk, or experiencing car trouble. Remain focused and don't irrationally take their actions as a personal insult to be answered in kind. If you've left for your destination early, and have been checking your mirrors frequently, this is much easier to accomplish.

You need to be aware of your surroundings, be wary of unsafe conditions, and use a modicum of common sense. As a rule of thumb, you should always leave for your destination at least five minutes earlier than necessary to allow for traffic and so you do not feel compelled to rush. If someone is impatient to pass you, allow them to do so, even if it means pulling over to the shoulder for a moment. . . never speed up if someone obviously is attempting to pass you, but apply your brakes instead. If you are passing someone, you should be doing at least 10 mph faster than they are (I see idiots trying to pass at exactly the speed limit, often resulting in two idiots driving alongside of each other for several minutes). Once you have passed someone, wait until you are at least 2 car lengths ahead of them before re-entering their lane, and do not immediately decelerate after having done so. If someone is merging into traffic, do not block their progress. If someone appears frustrated that there isn't an opening in traffic for him to pull out into, provide that opening. If someone looks like they're about to cut you off, apply your brakes. If someone is driving like a psycho, stay away from them, even if it means taking the time to pull into a parking lot or circle the block. If someone is tailing you and won't be deterred, drive to the police station instead of leading them to your home. Simple solutions to common scenarios, but you would be astounded at the vast number of people unable to draw similar conclusions. If you see an unsafe situation approaching, place yourself out of the way.

Not all unsafe situations involve fellow motorists. If you see bicyclists, joggers, horses, or pedestrians near the shoulder of the road, the courteous thing to do is to provide them with plenty of space. You should reduce speed and, if feasible, edge over the centerline. If you see bicyclists or pedestrians behaving carelessly or foolishly, you should further reduce speed, provide even more room for them, and sound your horn once to let them know you're there. If children are playing dangerously close to the road, you should take even further precautions, and be prepared to suddenly stop, if necessary. Failure to extend these simple courtesies to non-motorists angers some people — a few of which may have long memories and harbor a grudge. Persons who harbor a grudge versus the driver of a particular vehicle may vandalize it upon finding it unattended in a parking lot, or may begin driving aggressively if they again encounter the vehicle while behind the wheel themselves.

You should not make a practice of driving like an asshole. Revving your engine and squealing around corners serves no purpose but to alert the general public (as well as the police) that a street racer is approaching. Such antics tend to draw adverse attention to yourself and upset the taxpayers. If, through no fault of your own, you have an accident while driving like this on public roads, everyone will assume that you are to blame. You must strive to be a careful, competent, and courteous driver. If you make a practice of leaving early, driving at a reasonable speed, and being polite, it is unlikely that you will incur the ire of your fellow motorists.

FOCUS:

A driver should be concentrating only on the act of driving. Distractions, such as loud music, unnecessary conversation, or even one's own thoughts should be avoided. If the vehicle's interior is uncomfortably warm or cold, that too would qualify as a distraction, and should be remedied (if possible). A moment's distraction, especially when negotiating sharp curves or heavy traffic at speed, can easily result in a potentially fatal wipeout.

After familiarity with a vehicle has been gained, it is possible to notice minor changes (such as vibrations, rattles, odors, or miscellaneous noises) which could give warning of an impending breakdown that can be avoided through preventive maintenance. After intimate familiarity has been achieved, one can have the sensation of "melding" with the vehicle; in this altered state of consciousness, not only is it possible to feel minor imperfections in the road surface through the steering wheel and pedals, but your sense of awareness is drastically heightened, you make adjustments to the wheel to compensate for curves automatically, and you are able to react to the unexpected instantaneously.

At speeds exceeding 120 mph, it is easy to enter what has been described as a "zen trance." Not only do you feel as one with the vehicle, but you have a feeling of total calmness, everything seems to slow down, and you may experience some minor distortion of time and space (like reaching one's destination earlier than possible, or taking a sharp curve in defiance of the laws of physics). This is a true altered state of consciousness in which you feel separate from your everyday persona. Many would be inclined to dismiss

what has been stated here as so much pseudo-mystical balderdash, but those of you who have been there will know of what I speak. Some things cannot be adequately explained in words, and thus must be directly experienced in order to be understood.

When the experienced driver is driving his vehicle at speed, whether he be competing in a race, eluding pursuit, engaged in combat, participating in an emergency medevac, or simply driving fast for his own enjoyment, he will be completely calm. Calm does not necessarily mean "relaxed," however, as a keen sense of alertness will be apparent, as will a degree of muscular tension, but all detrimental emotions (such as anxiety, fear, panic, anger, or rage) will be completely eliminated as if a switch had been thrown, disconnecting one's emotions altogether. . . indeed, the strongest emotions a driver in this state might experience are mild annoyance at a given situation or satisfaction that a difficult technique had been performed flawlessly. Such a driver will not lose control of his emotions regardless of the circumstances.

The totally focused driver will be concentrating solely upon the actions required to keep his vehicle on the road. If an accident is unavoidable, he will use his remaining fractions of a second prior to impact maneuvering his vehicle in such a way as to absorb the energy with as little harm to himself (or other occupants) as possible. If he goes flying over an embankment or into a wooded area, he will keep his eyes open and his hands on the wheel in an effort to guide the vehicle to safety. Even if the vehicle is airborne or in an uncontrolled spin, the calmness attained through total focus will effectively prevent panic and reduce the amount of adrenaline released into the bloodstream. Focus is good.

HAZARD LIGHTS:

Your hazard lights (also known as: warning lights or 4-way flashers) are a valuable asset. They enable you to forewarn other motorists that your vehicle might pose a possible danger to them, which (hopefully) will sharpen their focus, thus enabling them to avoid a possible accident.

Common applications of the hazard lights include:

- 1.) Indicating that your vehicle has come to a halt (either in traffic or on the shoulder). This often occurs when you're faced with either a line of vehicles stopped due to an accident ahead, or debris that is blocking the road. Your vehicle also may have come to a halt due to a breakdown or a flat tire. Your hazard lights will warn approaching motorists of the danger.
- 2.) Indicating that your vehicle is traveling at a speed significantly under the speed limit (i.e.: 45 mph in a 65 mph zone). This can prevent a preoccupied driver from inadvertently plowing into your rear bumper.
- 3.) Indicating that you have cargo (properly flagged) extending beyond the confines of your vehicle.
- 4.) Indicating that your vehicle is disabled (misfiring, overheating, power steering failure, brake failure, loose exhaust system, etc.).
- 5.) Indicating that your vehicle is being towed.

Less common applications of one's hazard lights include:

- 1.) Indicating that your vehicle has come to a halt in the motorway because:
 - a.) You've been flagged down or signaled to stop.
 - b.) You are picking up, or unloading, passengers.
 - c.) You have observed a dangerous (or suspicious) situation ahead.
- 2.) Indicating that your vehicle is reversing into, or against (on a one-way street, or on the shoulder of a highway), oncoming traffic.
- 3.) Indicating that your vehicle is performing a hazardous maneuver (such as a 3-point turn in rush hour traffic).
- 3.) Indicating that you have an emergency, and intend to disregard traffic lights and other traffic safety devices (be sure to lean on your horn as well).
- 4.) Indicating that your vehicle is traveling at a speed significantly higher than the speed limit, and may be weaving through traffic.
- 5.) Indicating that your illegally parked vehicle will be returned to momentarily.

Proper use of one's hazard lights (which can be augmented with either "wig-wags" or strobe headlights, if not an actual detachable emergency light and siren) can alert other motorists, not only to the unavoidable dangers of everyday driving, but to dangerous actions deliberately undertaken — and hopefully, such forewarning will enable one to perform hazardous maneuvers with a slightly greater expectation of safety.

DANGER!:

Certain situations should set off "alarm bells" in your head — particularly if you appear to be a lucrative target (particularly for a carjacking or robbery) or have dangerous enemies. Be aware that even an older car of little apparent value to a thief may be targeted for a carjacking if the criminal needs a stolen car for a getaway or to be used in the commission of future crimes (such as armed robberies or driveby shootings).

In the event that you are accosted by an individual with a gun, and for whatever reason cannot return fire or escape, you should willingly give up your vehicle and belongings, but **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD YOU ALLOW AN ASSAILANT TO DRIVE AWAY WITH YOU!** If an armed assailant demands that you accompany him, you can be assured that he intends to do serious harm to your person. If an armed assailant simply manages to pull open your door and attempts to shove you over into the passenger seat, you should open the passenger door and continue out of the vehicle. If you are ordered to "drive," at first opportunity you could slam on the brakes, go into a spin, or have a minor collision before taking your keys and fleeing the vehicle. If you allow yourself to be driven away from safety by a menacing goblin, you can reasonably expect to be slowly tortured to death at its leisure.

If someone intends to rob, injure, or kill you, there will usually be some indication that something "isn't right". . . if this feeling is quite intense, it is a reliable indicator that you may be in immediate physical danger. If you believe yourself to be endangered, you should take immediate precautions, such as hyper-vigilance and distancing yourself from the potential threat. Most spontaneous threatening situations (such as those resulting from an enraged person out of control due to intoxication or mental illness) are immediately apparent to nearly anyone, but a premeditated attack by an experienced predator is more difficult to discern.

Typically, any individual other than a uniformed police officer or road construction flagman who approaches your vehicle in traffic should immediately command your immediate attention; and if they appear the slightest bit threatening or suspicious, you should immediately depress the accelerator and flee the area (while scanning the road ahead for any dangerous situation, such as a motor vehicle accident or a downed powerline, that the individual might've been attempting to warn you of). If the individual(s) in question is brandishing a weapon or deliberately blocking your only escape route, you should feel no compunction whatsoever about accelerating directly into his body. A few common indicators of a potentially dangerous situation follow:

1.) BEING SIGNALLED TO STOP: You may be flagged down by an individual feigning distress (often a female is used as the decoy, while an armed companion(s) lies in wait). It may indeed be a legitimate emergency, or it may be a devious lure to get you to stop (and possibly unlock or exit) your vehicle. If you feel it may be an actual emergency, and you feel morally obligated to stop, it is advised that you take the following steps:

a.) Ascertain that you have a weapon within reach.

b.) Make sure all doors are locked and windows are up.

c.) Carefully scan the immediate area, taking in the situation and looking for signs of a potential ambush (such as the three guys running towards you from behind). If it is dark and you have a spotlight within or mounted upon your vehicle, now is the time to use it (while still at a distance from the scene).

d.) Stop the vehicle by applying the brake. Keep your vehicle in gear with a foot poised over the accelerator pedal. Switch on your hazard lights.

e.) Ready your cellular phone or CB radio for immediate use.

f.) Roll down your window a crack — no more than 2" — to speak to the individual. Make sure you can see their hands! Offer to call a tow truck/ambulance/policeman/other. Maintain constant awareness of your surroundings, particularly your blind spots.

g.) Do not exit your vehicle under any circumstances! Do not allow anyone to enter your vehicle! If you feel endangered, do not attempt to communicate with anyone and leave the area immediately!

Those are "the rules" for dealing with situations where you are being flagged down by a stranger under questionable circumstances. . . of course, there is an exception to every rule, and one is expected to use discretion. People are also commonly flagged down by

hitchhikers. Everyone says "never pick up a hitchhiker," which generally is very good advice, but again there is the occasional exception to the rules. If you are considering picking up a hitchhiker, follow these guidelines:

a.) NEVER, under any circumstances, pick up a hitchhiker if you have anyone (or anything) in the vehicle whose safety you are responsible for, such as your wife or children. The potential risk is unacceptable.

b.) Ascertain that you have a weapon within reach.

c.) Observe the individual. Does he (or she) appear ill, dirty, drunk, or deranged? If so, keep driving.

d.) Are there any other individuals? Do they have parcels? Do they have a pet? Is there anything unusual or suspicious about them? You need to take all of these factors under consideration.

e.) Find out what their destination is (If they say "just get me over the state line" that would be a bad sign) and look for any possible weapons before unlocking the doors and allowing them into your vehicle. If they immediately start tugging on the door handle, just drive off.

Remember, you are encased in over a ton of steel capable of generating great power, and *they* consist of a bag of liquids draped over a thin mobile framework. If a threatening individual chooses to boldly block your path or leap onto your vehicle, he is, in effect, daring you to kill him. A driver of a motor vehicle has this capability over all pedestrians, and only the law and one's personal sense of ethics protects surly jaywalkers and drunken idiots. A deranged individual attacking one's vehicle has waived said protection through his own free will.

2.) STAGED ACCIDENTS: Many robberies and kidnappings are preceded by minor fenderbenders. Such incidents usually amount to little more than a hard bump from behind, resulting in minimal damage. The instigator is hoping that you will then exit your vehicle in order to assess the damage and exchange insurance information — that is his signal that it is now safe to perpetrate a crime against you. Be aware that this tactic is very common. If you have any reason to be suspicious, lock your doors and *do not exit your vehicle* — especially if the other motorist was at fault. Keep your vehicle in gear with your foot on the brake as you converse with the individual through a cracked window. If you have a cellular phone or CB radio, use it to summon the police. If the other motorist asks for assistance with an injured passenger, or demands that you "accompany him to the police station," do not be tempted to do so — it is most likely a trick. If you are a VIP targeted by assassins or kidnappers, be aware that terrorists often use a "crash car" to disable a target vehicle, relying upon a support vehicle for their escape.

3.) OBSTACLES: A common ruse is to roll an object into a vehicle's path (such as an old tire or baby carriage), with the expectation that the driver will slam on their brakes. . . once the moving vehicle has come to a complete stop and the occupants are momentarily stunned, they can be mobbed by attackers and pulled from the vehicle through an unlocked door or broken window (you do NOT want to be pulled through a broken window. . .wearing seatbelts will make it far more difficult for occupants to be pulled free). A similar ruse

involves a youngster on a bicycle or skateboard deliberately plowing into the side of a moving vehicle and pretending to be knocked unconscious in hope that the driver will not only stop, but actually exit the vehicle. Once you have exited your vehicle, you are at the mercy of a predatory gang unless you happen to have a cellular phone in one hand and a high-powered automatic pistol in the other.

4.) BARRICADES: Barricades are improvised roadblocks meant to stop or divert traffic. Barricades are often encountered during urban riots, but can also occasionally be found in gang controlled neighborhoods as well as impoverished rural areas far from "civilization." Barricades are commonly used by bandits in many underdeveloped countries. Barricades can take the form of: sawhorses, garbage cans, worn out furniture, old bathroom fixtures, rubble, pallets, crates, 50 gallon drums, felled trees (or utility poles), dumpsters, beat-up cars, or any other readily available item large enough to impede traffic. Sometimes, barricades may be doused with fuel and set alight to make them appear more intimidating.

Barricades are often manned by armed miscreants and should not be approached. . . the "J-turn" is the textbook procedure for dealing with roadblocks. Fragile roadblocks, such as one composed of several flaming garbage cans set atop an old sofa, can usually be blown through by simply shifting into low gear and accelerating, although this is not recommended due to the potential risk of damage to windshield, radiator, and tires. Be wary of broken glass, roofing nails, or spiked boards which may be strewn in front of the barricade, as well as the possibility of substantial reinforcement (I-beams, cinderblocks, concrete, steel cable, 50-gallon drums filled with water, or holes (including open manholes). If you attempt to ram through a barricade, you can reasonably expect to be fired upon.

5.) PROPS: A common ploy is for a predator to impersonate a police detective. In order to pull this off, the only props needed are a cheap suit and a realistic-looking fake badge; but in many documented cases police impersonators have gone so far as to obtain the same style of vehicle as those used for unmarked police cars and equip it with a flashing light and multiple antennae.

Due to the fact that "badge-freaks" have been implicated in numerous abductions and rapes, many states have prohibited unmarked police cars and plainclothed officers from making routine traffic stops. If an unmarked car signals for you to pull over by flashing its light at you (dash-mounted and magnetic emergency lights can be obtained via mail order with no documentation required), or if a suspect individual pulls up alongside you and displays a badge, you are advised to immediately contact the police on your cellular phone or CB radio for instructions; failing that, you can immediately activate your hazard lights and proceed, at the legal speed limit, to either the nearest police station or a densely populated area with plenty of witnesses. If you have any suspicion whatsoever that the individual attempting to stop your vehicle is not a police officer, you are not obligated to pull over. . . especially if you are a female driving through a secluded area.

A ploy which has been used by terrorist groups in the past is to either impersonate construction workers doing emergency roadwork, or ambulance attendants at a crash scene; with the intent of slowing or redirecting traffic until contact is made with the target vehicle. Unless you are a political or corporate VIP, however, such a scenario would not be applicable.

6.) EVIDENCE OF TAMPERING: If your window is broken or a door is ajar, you should approach your vehicle with caution (if at all), due to the possibility that the miscreant could be inside (or in the immediate vicinity). If your tires appear to have been deliberately deflated, the possibility exists that you might have been set up for an ambush. If you see a red or green puddle seeping from your vehicle, it is possible that your brake lines or coolant hoses might have been slashed, which also could be a setup. If you see a cut belt lying under your vehicle, if your headlights have been broken out after dark, or if the door lock has been deliberately jammed up (with super glue or toothpicks), there could be someone waiting in the shadows for you.

If you see wires leading away from your vehicle; or if you see fresh debris underneath it (specifically snippings of insulated wire, alligator clips, cable ties, wads of duct tape, or a loose alkaline battery); or any protruding wires (especially near the wheelwell or driver's side door); or suspicious parcels beneath, atop, or inside your vehicle; you can reasonably assume that your vehicle has been boobytrapped with explosives and should immediately vacate the area and alert the police bomb squad. At one time, only persons with serious political or criminal connections needed to worry about the possibility of having their car bombed, but nowadays, with the proliferation of readily available bombmaking instructions (from several sources, including the Internet), disgruntled employees, spurned suitors, and various hate-filled zealots all can potentially construct an explosive device (with the possibility of actually doing so successfully).

7.) SNIPERS & SHIT DROPPERS: It is a sad fact of life that some demented freaks feel compelled to engage in acts of random violence. This often takes the form of either shooting at passing cars or dropping heavy objects upon them from an overpass or pedestrian walkway. Due to their extreme anti-social proclivities, freaks of this nature tend to be teenaged, as they are almost invariably discovered and incarcerated before their twentieth birthday.

Snipers tend to favor the .22 bolt-action rifle, as it is easily accessible and able to be discarded, if necessary. If the sniper is able to obtain a .22 autoloading rifle (which freaks like to "militarize" with folding stock, muzzle brake, and multiple high-capacity magazines), he will be far more dangerous due to the capability to deliver numerous rapid-fire bursts at his target. The .22 projectile usually will not penetrate an automobile's windshield, but it can easily shatter side windows, and possibly even penetrate unreinforced portions of the chassis (like the roof). If the deviant either lacks a firearm, or is unwilling to commit himself to using one, a high-powered pellet gun may be used instead, with similar results.

If your windshield is ever suddenly starred — and no vehicles are ahead of you to kick up gravel — you can reasonably assume that you are being fired upon and immediately take evasive action (zig-zagging and accelerating in the event of an attack from the side or rear, and the immediate execution of a "J-Turn" if you are being fired upon from ahead — if you are on a highway, you can drive the wrong way by flipping on your hazard lights and staying on the shoulder). There is generally no forewarning of a sniper attack unless you are fortunate enough to see either the reflection of his scope or the dot from a laser designator. Be aware that a serious sniper will use something like an autoloading .308, which can easily punch through windshields as well as car bodies, but such an individual is unlikely to pick his targets at random.

Persons who drop things from overpasses and walkways can usually be spotted behaving in a suspicious manner immediately prior to the act. Always be cautious of persons milling about aimlessly over a highway, especially if no protective chainlink fencing (sometimes referred to as an "anti-drop barrier") is evident. These persons tend to favor large rocks and cinderblocks, which can easily crash completely through either the windshield or roof, resulting in serious injury or death.

THWARTING A TAIL:

Persons being stalked may often find themselves tailed, as may celebrities, politicians, and other prominent members of the community. Occasionally, average individuals with no known enemies suddenly find themselves being tailed by persons unknown, often after inadvertently cutting off the vehicle in question, but sometimes for no apparent reason (it could be a case of mistaken identity, or perhaps they found one of your bumperstickers to be offensive).

Usually, a tail proves harmless. It could be a simple case of immature harassment, a legitimate investigator (law enforcement, insurance, journalism, or licensed private) may lawfully be monitoring your activities, an acquaintance may need to contact you (and happened to spot you while in an unfamiliar vehicle), or it could be someone with no interest in you whatsoever who just happens to be taking a similar route to their destination. Sometimes, however, a person may be tailing you with intent to cause you serious bodily harm, either at the first possible opportunity or at some time in the near future. If you believe you are being tailed, it is recommended that you take the following steps:

- 1.) Ascertain that all doors are locked and all windows are up. Double-check your petrol level — are you in danger of running out of gas?
- 2.) **DO NOT DRIVE HOME!!!** Once a miscreant has your home address, he may elect to zoom off and possibly come visit you at a later date. . . or he may instead decide to block you in and perform an act of violence upon you in your own driveway!
- 3.) Take note of the make, model, and color of the pursuing vehicle, paying special attention to any distinguishing features (rust, dents, custom paint, modifications, etc.). If possible, memorize the tag number.
- 4.) If you are uncertain as to if you are actually being tailed, you can perform one (or more) of the following maneuvers:
 - a.) Suddenly take a sidestreet without signaling.
 - b.) Circle the block.
 - c.) Pull into a parking lot, then immediately exit in the opposite direction.
 - d.) Perform a "U-turn" in a safe spot.
 - e.) Pull over to the curb (or shoulder) and wait for a reaction.

If you are indeed being tailed, your pursuer will have to either abort or continue. If he chooses to continue, you can reasonably assume that he is committed to performing an act of violence upon your person (assault, robbery, rape, etc.). It is unlikely that anyone but a true psychotic (less than 1% of the population, but by no means a rarity) would wish to perpetrate a crime of violence in the presence of witnesses, because then he would have a high risk of becoming incarcerated. You are thus advised to proceed immediately to the nearest police station (or police car, if you happen to chance upon one) or, failing that, a well-lit and highly-populated area. If you have a cellular phone or CB radio, call for assistance. When you reach a safe destination, stay in your vehicle and lean on the horn to alert others.

EVASION:

If you are being pursued, and for some reason cannot get to a police station or well populated area where witnesses and assistance can be had, you may elect to evade pursuit. If you have a magnum revolver within easy reach, as well as a cellular phone or CB radio, you are almost as safe as if you were in your own livingroom. If you have neither protection nor communications, evasion is no longer an option but a necessity.

A common misconception is that evasion requires driving at unsafe speeds and ignoring red lights and "one-way" signs. . . nothing could be further from the truth. Whether on city streets or back roads, you seldom want to exceed 60 mph. If you go too fast, you cannot negotiate sharp turns, nor can you compensate for unexpected obstacles or the stupidity of other drivers. If your vehicle is low to the ground and you are being pursued by a vehicle with a high center of gravity (such as a "sport utility vehicle"), you can put more distance between your vehicles by accelerating through sharp curves and taking unexpected turns which a more top-heavy vehicle would need to slow down for to avoid tipping. The only time speeds in excess of 100 mph are permissible is when you are being pursued on a well-maintained, multi-lane highway and feel you have a good chance of safely outdistancing your tail (for example, you are driving a new sports car and they are in a rusted out pickup truck with bald tires). You do not want to drive beyond your abilities or your car's capabilities. Once you wreck, the chase has most likely come to an end.

Tires are speed rated. Most passenger cars have tires that the manufacturer says can safely withstand a sustained speed of 85 mph. Once you exceed 110 mph, your tires begin to heat up and deform, becoming more oblong than round. If your tires are worn, damaged, or subjected to the stress of sudden lane changes, they can easily burst, resulting in a blowout. If you have a massive blowout (as opposed to a gradual deflation) at over 100 mph, you may go into a spin or a roll. . . at such high speeds, and without a roll cage, most cars will break apart, smearing their occupants along the asphalt like strawberry preserves. Buy the best tires you can afford, and be aware of the stress of high speed maneuvering.

Tires may rupture upon high speed contact with a pothole, curb, railroad track, or debris. They also may rupture if they contact the wheelwell due to leaving the ground or hitting dips and inclines. They can rupture due to the heat and friction of repeated skidding, such as from controlled skids, 4-wheel drifts, J-turns, and bootlegger turns. If your fender is crumpled due to contact with either an obstacle or the pursuing vehicle, metal may dig into your tire and rupture it. As anyone who has watched televised police chases knows, it is

possible to drive for miles on a flat tire or bare rim, though speed and control will be significantly impaired. As long as you remain in motion, you are in little danger from your pursuer. As soon as you stop, crash, or are otherwise rendered immobile, your car will become more of a trap than a refuge, and you will need to either evade on foot or stay and fight. If you are unarmed and facing overwhelming odds, fighting may not be the best option.

Aside from outrunning pursuers, which often is much more dangerous than simply allowing the pursuit to continue at a reasonable speed, you have the options of:

- 1.) Shaking a pursuer via sudden unexpected turns;
- 2.) Ditching a pursuer by making the prospect of further pursuit difficult; or
- 3.) Hiding.

A simple example of shaking pursuit would be to suddenly take a sidestreet in a controlled skid, without giving your tail a chance to react (I don't think I need to tell you not to use your turn signal), then roaring off and making a series of turns that would make finding you nearly impossible. If you are driving along a straightaway at speed and your pursuer is starting to overtake you in the passing lane, you can execute a "panic stop" (slamming on the brakes without losing control of the vehicle), which will make him overshoot your position and give you opportunity to reverse your direction (best done by means of the "J-turn"). If you feel you must drive the wrong way on the highway or a one-way street to evade pursuit, stay on the hard shoulder with your high beams and hazard lights on. Ditching a pursuer can be done by driving through terrain unsuitable for a passenger car. You can drive across the median strip, down an embankment, or through a lawn. You can drive along a sidewalk, through a park, or into a shopping plaza. You can also drive through hedges and small fences. It is even possible to jump ditches and drive off road for an extended duration. Few marauding motorists would be bold enough to follow you, even if you are moving relatively slow.

Hiding is only an option if you are able to outdistance your tail long enough to get out of his line of sight. Driving behind a house, down an alleyway, or into a huge parking lot — then parking out of sight and waiting, is a good trick. Be aware that if you drive across damp sod you will leave visible tracks, and if you drive across dry dirt you will leave a dust cloud — either of which can reveal your position. After a few minutes of frantic rushing around and backtracking, most pursuers would give up . . . and those that don't can be ambushed.

If you must hop a curb, it should be done at a 45 degree angle and at less than 45 mph. The lower your speed, the lower your chances will be of blowing a tire, breaking a wheel, or damaging your front-end. If possible, it would be best to do this at under 15 mph. . . any

faster, and you will be taking a substantial risk of disabling your vehicle.

ESCAPE:

This section has deliberately been minimized. In order to learn escape techniques, first you must retain a qualified instructor (or at the very least, obtain a video or well illustrated book created by a qualified instructor). Next, you must spend hours practicing the techniques in a safe area. If you lack either guidance or experience, you have no business whatsoever attempting these maneuvers. . . it is far too easy to roll over or slide into a ditch. I refuse to take responsibility for the consequences of your actions.

The first escape technique to learn is what police know as the "J-turn." It has also been called a reverse 180 or a moonshiner's turn. To perform this procedure, come to a complete stop, then shift into reverse and accelerate to approximately 30 mph (any faster is unnecessary as well as dangerous). When this speed is reached (you'll need to estimate, as your speedometer will not work), crank the wheel sharply to the left, then apply the brakes, slam it into gear, straighten the wheel, and punch the accelerator. . . it will take practice to get it right. If the maneuver is performed correctly, you will do a perfect reverse 180, finding yourself facing the opposite direction in the proper lane and speeding off, giving you a considerable head start. This maneuver is hard on the transmission, but I haven't stripped one yet. You will need to practice in an empty parking lot with orange cones before attempting this on a road with ditches and guardrails. Be forewarned: hubcaps will go flying, and after a half dozen practice turns, your front alignment will be thrown way off and your front tires will be worn down to the steel belts. . . remove all hubcaps and have a pair of full-sized spares ready.

The second technique is known as a "bootlegger's turn," or simply as the "180." It is three times as difficult as the J-turn, and takes that much longer to master. A skilled driver, with competent instruction, can master the J-turn after his second attempt. . . it will take at least a half-dozen attempts for most drivers to feel comfortable doing the bootlegger's turn. To do it, the driver slows to about 30 mph, then cranks the wheel to the left and yanks on the emergency brake lever, keeping the button depressed. Almost immediately, he releases the emergency brake while straightening the wheel and flooring the gas pedal. Performed correctly, the car will instantly spin around facing the opposite direction and take off at a high rate of speed. To perform this maneuver with a foot pedal emergency brake, minor modifications must be made (these vary, but disabling the brake release with vise grips — or a piece of wood carved to fit — and stretching elastic from the pedal to the dash will work and is easily reversible). Practicing this will also screw up your front alignment and destroy your tires, as well as possibly ripping out your emergency brake. It is strongly advised that you practice these techniques in a rental car of the same type as your primary vehicle. Practicing on gravel, snow, or other low friction surface will greatly reduce wear and tear on your vehicle, but proficiency on asphalt must be attained before attempting to perform this maneuver for real.

The G-forces created by both the forward and reverse 180 turns are such that if you are so stupid as not to be wearing your safety belt, you may very well find yourself laying across the passenger seat. Never attempt either of these turns — or any high speed cornering —

in a sport utility vehicle, Jeep-type vehicle, mini-van, jacked-up truck, or any vehicle with a high wheelbase or center of gravity, as such vehicles can easily be rolled. Some automobiles will stall upon performing a 180.

Other techniques involve ramming, jamming, and smashing. These are usually practiced in a field or abandoned parking lot with \$100 beaters equipped with modified seatbelts (like the "H-harness" used in race cars). These maneuvers are extremely dangerous, involving either sending another vehicle spinning off the road or busting through improvised roadblocks. I will not reveal how these moves are performed. What I *will* do however, is tell you three important things:

1.) Sideswiping your opponent's vehicle — shown to be an effective technique on countless action-packed television shows — *will not work!* Slamming into your opponent's left front quarterpanel as you cut him off may work in theory, but in practice you have a fifty percent chance of actually sending *your* vehicle spinning out of control.

2.) If you are being rammed from behind at an odd angle by a large vehicle moving 15 — 20 mph faster than you, your vehicle can easily be sent into a spin. If you are being bumped or rammed, and it appears unlikely that you'll be able to outrun your pursuers, SLOW DOWN. If you are only doing 30 mph, you cannot easily be sent into a spin. Or, you can come to a complete stop, slam it into reverse, and it's demolition derby time! Slam one of the rear corners of your car through the radiator or driver's door to put a quick end to his foolishness.

3.) If someone is trying to run you off the road, especially if you believe them to be in possession of a firearm, DO NOT allow them to pass you or even get alongside you. This means that you will need to keep a close eye on him in your rear view mirror, cutting him off whenever he attempts to pass. If they succeed in drawing alongside you, they can fire into your vehicle. If they succeed in passing you, they can pull broadside across the road, forming an impromptu roadblock. If you have a passenger, he should get in the back seat and roll both windows down, the better to fire a weapon or throw things at your pursuer's windshield (for example: newspapers, laundry, glass bottles, canned and jarred grocery items, or any heavy item that could conceivably break a windshield). If, despite all this, he still manages to pass you, you can execute a moonshiner's turn to escape. If going back the way you came is not an option, (and you cannot go around the roadblock by hopping a curb or plowing through underbrush) you can come to a complete stop, slam it into first gear, tell everyone to keep their heads down, and ram the trunk area behind the wheelwell to knock his vehicle aside. Ramming is only to be done when you are in imminent danger of being killed and there is no other option. Unless your vehicle has heavily reinforced push bumpers, it will probably become disabled. If your vehicle becomes disabled, but is still mobile, keep going until it will go no further. You'd be surprised how far some "undrivable" cars are capable of going.

If you intend to practice ramming techniques — or if you want to be able to continue driving after engaging in an impromptu demolition derby with an irate motorist — you need to be driving a vehicle that is sturdy and dependable. Individual opinions vary greatly in this regard. Many people favor "sport-utility vehicles" (SUVs) for their high damage to survivability ratio. Drivers in demolition derbies, however, tend to favor the big V-8 sedans

from the 60's and 70's, which had solid frames and lacked wussified "crumple zones." The Plymouth Furies and Chevy Impalas are favorites in the derbies. The '74 and '76 Impalas were especially favored, due to the amount of empty space between the radiator and engine block (which lessens the probability of a rupture upon impact). Stationwagons have always fared particularly well, with special mention being made to the '53 Chevy and the '62 Ford. Retired police cars, like the Plymouth Grand Furies and Dodge Diplomats, also tend to do well. If you intend that your vehicle can safely withstand the impact from ramming other vehicles, as well as being rammed or run off the road yourself, it is imperative that you install the necessary safety equipment (rollcage, racing harness, fire extinguishing system, fuel cell, etc.), and you might want to consider offensive modifications as well (reinforced pushbumpers, fender rams, or concealed tire cutters and radiator piercers — all welded securely to the frame).

Again, I reiterate: doing 180s requires both professional instruction as well as hours of practice in a safe area, and ramming another motorist can cause you to wreck or otherwise disable your vehicle. Both maneuvers are unlawful to implement. Do not mess around with these techniques if you don't know what you're doing!

IMPORTANT TIPS:

1.) Always have a spare key upon your person (not only will this prevent lockouts, but in an emergency you will be able to instantly access your car key without having to fumble through your keyring). Your key should be in your hand as you approach your vehicle. *Do not* rely upon a "Hide-a-Key" magnetic keyholder! Every car thief knows about them, and they sometimes become detached.

2.) As you approach your vehicle, be aware of your surroundings and examine the area near your vehicle for suspicious activity (such as persons loitering or a parked vehicle with the engine running) before approaching it. Be aware of places where an attacker could be hiding unseen (such as under or behind a vehicle) and take care not to be surprised. Note anything unusual about your vehicle (puddles, soft tires, parts hanging from beneath) that might indicate damage.

3.) Before entering your vehicle, check the backseat for unwelcome passengers. If your vehicle's interior light does not immediately turn on upon grasping the door handle, you may wish to illuminate the interior with a penlight.

4.) Immediately after entering your vehicle, lock all doors.

5.) Ascertain that the seat, mirrors, and steering wheel are all adjusted the way you like them. Keep your arms slightly bent (adjust your seat, if necessary).

6.) After starting your car, listen carefully for any noises that might forewarn you of possible engine problems (rattling, squealing, etc.). Be sure to let your vehicle warm up before taking off (at least five minutes on cold days — until the needle on the temperature gauge moves from "cold" to "normal"). After taking off, be aware of any noises, vibrations, or odors which might indicate that something is amiss. If you believe there might be a problem, have your vehicle checked by a qualified mechanic.

7.) If there is snow on your vehicle, take the time to brush it off while your vehicle is warming up — don't rely upon the wind to clear snow from your rear and side windows. Be sure to clear all snow and scrape all ice, including on the side mirrors — Any obstruction of vision is dangerous. Snow on the hood, roof, and front bumper often ends up on the windshield, so it must be removed. Be sure that both locks are free of ice and road salt, using de-icer or WD-40 if applicable. Ascertain that your windshield wash fluid reservoir is filled to capacity.

8.) Check your petrol level. You should top off your tank frequently and never have less than half a tank. If your tank is nearly half empty you should plan to refill it as soon as possible. Once your tank is only an eighth full, condensation and particulate matter can be drawn into the fuel line, causing a variety of ill effects. Fuel additives (dry gas, octane booster, and cleansers) should be used when applicable.

9.) Lean back in your seat with your seat belt tight. If you need to lean forward, for whatever reason (fiddling with the radio or retrieving an item from the glovebox are two of the most common reasons), immediately retighten your seatbelt. Your seatbelt should never become loose, nor should its use ever be neglected. . . not only is it proven to significantly reduce risk of serious injury in the event of many types of accident, but it also keeps you in your seat when subjected to the high g-forces generated during evasive driving techniques (if you were to attempt a "bootlegger's turn" sans seatbelt, you could easily find yourself flung into the passenger seat, from which controlling the vehicle would be difficult). Your seatbelt should never become twisted, nor should it rest over something uncomfortable (and possibly able to crack bone or puncture the flesh in the event of an accident), like a pen. Pads can be attached to seatbelts to make them more comfortable, or high-performance racing harnesses can be installed for more security (although "H" and "Y" harnesses are unlawful to instal in street cars in many jurisdictions).

10.) Let your head rock freely. You should be relaxed rather than tense, even under stressful circumstances.

11.) Acceleration and deceleration should be a gradual progression. To do otherwise will reduce traction and control. If you feel your tires spinning, let off on the gas; if you feel your wheels locking up, let off on the brake. . . otherwise, you might find yourself going sideways. In the event of slick road surfaces, the slippage factor is multiplied and you will need to compensate accordingly.

12.) Try to keep a "buffer zone" between yourself and other motorists, both to give you room to maneuver and time to brake. This means that there should always be at least three car lengths between you and the vehicles ahead of and behind you — keep this in mind when passing. Even when stopping at an intersection, be sure to "leave yourself an out." This means that you shouldn't ride up to someone's back bumper or otherwise allow yourself to be blocked in if traffic ahead suddenly came to a halt. If need be, you should be physically able to hop a curb and drive across the sidewalk to avoid a jam or escape an armed miscreant.

13.) You need to remain calm and somewhat detached. . . this is no time for anger, fear, or other obfuscating emotions which can cloud judgement or cause hesitation. In times of extreme stress, or at speeds exceeding 120 mph, most warriors seem to enter a "zen trance," focused on nothing but the present moment, doing the required movements instantly without prior thought. An added benefit to this state of mind is that everything seems to slow down, making high-speed maneuvering much easier.

14.) Remember that you can lose traction in a single puddle, patch of packed snow, or thin layer of gravel — especially at speed around curves. Be especially wary of the long shallow puddles that form along the shoulder. . . you can hydroplane at any speed above 45 mph. Dried dirt clods, wet mud, loose hay, or garbage spread across a road can also reduce traction.

15.) Large puddles are especially dangerous, due to the fact that all four tires can momentarily lose contact with the asphalt, resulting in loss of control over the vehicle. If you cannot reduce speed prior to driving across a large puddle, immediately take your foot off the accelerator and keep the steering wheel perfectly straight, so that you skim straight across without spinning your wheels. Be aware that by driving through an unusually deep puddle (6"+), enough water may splash up into the engine compartment to actually short out various components of the electrical system, possibly resulting in loss of mobility.

16.) When necessary, brace yourself against G-forces by pressing your elbow against the right side of your seat for sharp right turns and grabbing the roof through your window for sharp left turns. You may want to use your knees for support as well.

17.) While maneuvering through extremely sharp right turns, like hairpin curves, it is often necessary to view the road momentarily through the driver's side window rather than the windshield.

18.) Never deliberately kick out the rear-end when negotiating sharp hairpins. . . it is too easy to inadvertently spin out.

19.) When decelerating, going down steep inclines, or maneuvering through a series of sharp curves, it is often helpful to downshift your automatic transmission. If you are driving evasively downtown, along a treacherous stretch of road, or through a field of damp sod, you can extract better performance from your vehicle by keeping it in 2nd gear at speeds under 60 mph. By keeping your vehicle in 2nd gear, you increase your vehicle's potential for fast acceleration and gain more control when cornering, but the engine will begin to strain at speeds above 45 mph and may overheat. Never slam your transmission into 2nd gear at highway speeds!

20.) Sometimes just tapping or "feathering" the brakes is all you need to compensate for sharp curves. Try to apply the brakes before actually negotiating the curve.

21.) After heavy use, as in practicing escape & evasion maneuvers or high speed driving on back roads, brake failure sometimes occurs. If your brakes fail, try pumping them to build up pressure. If the pedal sinks to the floor, you may need to lift it back into position with your toes. If your brakes do not come back, and you feel you're in danger of crashing, immediately take your foot off the gas. After decelerating as slow as you can, downshift to

second gear. When you get below 15 mph, downshift to first. After slowing to a crawl, apply your emergency brake. You can slowly engage the emergency brake at speeds under 50 mph in a true emergency, but you run the risk of either ripping out the emergency brake or spinning out of control. In a true emergency, you can decelerate by: driving up an incline (on road or off), driving through hedges or overgrowth, driving into a weak fence, driving over saplings, brushing against parked cars, driving into a field or empty parking lot and circling it, or — under the most dire of circumstances — rear-ending another motorist, spinning out, or driving into a pond or lake. Never let things like bottles or cans lay on your floorboards. . . many accidents have been caused by an empty bottle rolling under the brake pedal.

22.) If you drive into a body of water, you will probably float for a while before the vehicle finally sinks, engine first. The doors won't open, but you can roll down a window before the electrics short out. If the vehicle is submerged enough, water will rush in, so be prepared for it. In a worst case scenario, you may not be able to exit the vehicle before letting it fill with water. If necessary, you can let water in through the vents. After the pressure equalizes, you should be able to open a door. Difficult as it may seem, you must remain calm. . . in a situation like this, panic can easily kill you and your passengers. If you regularly travel along the coastline, through wetlands, through flooded areas, onto docks, or over poorly maintained bridges, you should consider securing a "pony" air tank for emergency use.

23.) If the accelerator sticks, first try lifting the pedal with your toes as you apply the brakes. If your engine is racing your brakes will barely work, so you may need to slam it into neutral. In a worst case scenario, you will need to turn off the ignition — but be aware that this will impair the function of power brakes and power steering, and may even cause your steering wheel to lock. A stuck accelerator can be worse than no brakes. Seconds count, and panic will kill you.

24.) Whenever feasible, drive in as straight a line as possible to reduce G-forces, increasing both speed and control. By crossing over the centerline, it is possible to drive through a shallow S-curve as if it were a straightaway. Edging over the centerline can increase one's speed and stability around sharp left curves. Edging onto the shoulder can increase one's speed and stability around sharp right curves. Never "cut corners" and cross the centerline around blind curves (or over blind rises) before sundown. . . even if you are able to avoid a head-on collision, you can still kill an innocent family by inadvertently running them off the road.

25.) Move the steering wheel as little as possible. If you begin compensating for a curve before you reach it, it is seldom necessary to move the wheel more than an inch in either direction.

26.) Various types of curve are handled differently, depending upon the angle, grade, surface, and peculiarities of the vehicle in question. While it is generally advisable to cut as close to the inside corner as possible, the apex of your turn will vary. The subject of apexes is impossible to convey properly without extensive diagrams. In order to learn more about judging the proper apex for a given curve, it is advisable that you review several books on

performance driving as well as review a lot of racetrack footage. Taking curves at high speed is something that one requires competent instruction in as well as hours of practice to perform safely.

27.) You will be able to feel the bite of the tires through the amount of strength it takes to turn or hold the wheel.

28.) Try not to oversteer or understeer when negotiating curves at speed. Different vehicles take the same curves much differently.

29.) If your hands sweat, wear gloves. If you wear gloves, they should be fingerless and backless.

30.) It is often helpful to wear moccasins or loafers for increased sensitivity.

31.) Gripping the wheel at the 9 and 3 o'clock positions (or just above them) gives excellent control. Avoid crossing your arms or palming the wheel when turning. . . if it becomes necessary to crank the wheel sharply (as when taking a U-turn), one should instead allow the wheel to be "passed" from hand to hand. One should always keep both hands on the wheel (with very few exceptions). Never permit the wheel to slip from your grasp.

32.) Avoid looking directly at oncoming headlights. If necessary, temporarily focus on the line painted along the shoulder.

33.) If visibility is limited due to rain, fog, snow, or direct sunlight, slow down to whatever speed you feel comfortable at. Amber fog lights are helpful in thick fog and blizzard conditions, as is rapidly alternating between your high and low beams as necessary. If you need to drive at least 10 mph below the posted limit, you should activate your hazard lights. If you have less than 30 feet of visibility, it is often helpful to focus on the centerline to avoid losing your bearings. If you have less than 5 feet of visibility, it will probably be necessary to have a passenger walking in front of your vehicle with a flashlight to prevent you from going off the road. Whenever driving well below the speed limit (especially in the event of poor visibility), it is *imperative* that one switch on the vehicle's hazard lights in order to forewarn oblivious motorists.

34.) Ascertain that all equipment and parcels within the passenger compartment are secured so as not to become projectiles if subject to high G-forces or sudden deceleration.

35.) Check your rear-view mirror frequently, especially when other vehicles are behind you.

36.) Look over your shoulder to check your blind spot before switching lanes or merging into traffic.

37.) When driving in heavy traffic or driving at speed on backroads, keep your left foot poised over, but not touching, the brake pedal. This will require development of the ankle muscle, but will greatly increase your reaction time. Never "ride the brake," as this causes them to overheat and rapidly wear out. When your left foot is not poised over the brake, it should be resting on the "dead pedal" (the bump in the floor conveniently next to the brake) instead of the floorboards.

38.) A quality sound system will increase horsepower by 20%. I once kept a tape in my car

that was painted red and labeled "FOR EMERGENCY USE ONLY" that was inserted in the stereo once evasive action was deemed necessary. . . on one side the "Peter Gunn Theme" (from the "Spyhunter" arcade game) was mixed so it played repeatedly, and on the other side was Wagner's "Ride of the Valkeries" (from the film Apocalypse Now). If you choose to make similar arrangements, I recommend visceral tunes without lyrics.

39.) When driving at high speeds in a metropolitan area or in heavy traffic, turn your high beams on during daylight hours to increase your visibility to other drivers. Hazard lights, wig-wag headlights, and car alarms will further augment your visibility. Sound your horn if you intend to wrongfully claim the right of way. Flashing one's headlights often is more effective than sounding one's horn (many cars allow one to do this by simply pulling the spring-loaded directional lever back with one's fingertips — even when the headlights have been switched off).

40.) When driving at speed, there will be a certain amount of slippage and loss of traction. This is multiplied when the wheel is jerked sharply. Quick maneuvering at high speeds reduces adhesion between the tires and road, and can easily result in loss of control. Maneuvers should be smooth and efficient.

41.) Never assume that idiot motorists will give you the right of way or turn in the direction their blinker indicates. *Expect* that idiot to pull out of his driveway ahead of you as you barrel towards him at seventy miles per hour. Many drivers seem to have only limited contact with reality, so expect them to occasionally perpetrate acts of incredible stupidity.

42.) Be especially wary if the road surface is slick due to heavy rainfall or winter precipitation — stupid people assume that they can still rush to their appointments, then fail to negotiate a curve and come spinning into your lane. Give people lots of room to make their mistakes, and always be prepared to stomp on your brakes or take evasive action.

43.) In a combat situation, playing Car Wars like Mad Max, you just can't think about things like scratching your paint. Watch lots of demolition derby footage and old car chase movies to better learn how your vehicle can be used as a weapon. Newer car chase movies, being unrealistic, often tend to rely heavily on special effects and computer generated graphics in lieu of actual stunt drivers.

44.) Be sure to study as many televised police chase videos as possible; although most of the perpetrators are either drunk or inept, a small minority of these videos show evasive driving at its most intense — they also show what happens when you fuck up. Police videos will also show you how far a "disabled" vehicle can be driven before becoming truly immobile.

45.) Cars can be passed on the hard (paved) shoulder, but never on a soft shoulder (sod, dirt, or gravel). Be advised that the shoulder of the average highway is often littered with discarded wheels, detached mufflers, deer carcasses, and broken glass, so be prepared to take evasive action if faced with hazardous debris. Some combination exit/on ramps can also be used to pass slow moving vehicles, as can large parking lots. The median (or

"turning") lane can also be used to pass, although this is extremely dangerous as it could result in a head-on collision with an uninvolved motorist.

46.) The double-yellow line is not sacrosanct, but it is a good suggestion to avoid crossing over it unnecessarily. You can drive a straight line through S-curves or deter pursuers from passing you by cutting corners, but it is impolite to make oncoming motorists soil their britches. By edging over the centerline, it is possible to substantially increase speed and control while negotiating curves. When driving upon an icy surface, it is recommended that one actually center one's vehicle upon the centerline (in the absence of traffic) in order to reduce the likelihood of leaving the road. Use extreme caution whenever driving in the oncoming lane. Use of high beams or wig-wags is recommended.

47.) In an emergency, you can sometimes drive between two cars on the painted line dividing the lanes (although this is highly dangerous). The double-yellow line can also be driven upon, but extreme care must be taken to avoid the possibility of clipping other motorists or having a head-on collision. Such maneuvers should only be attempted by an expert driver evading pursuit by armed criminals who have either fired into your vehicle or attempted to run it off the road. These maneuvers would easily constitute reckless endangerment, and should never be used unless no other option exists. If you need to drive like this, you must activate your "wig-wag" headlights (if applicable), or, at the very least, your high-beams and hazard lights. Although it is possible for a reckless driver to drive the wrong way on an uncrowded road, or fly through sections of road under construction, such foolhardy behavior can never be justified — no matter what the circumstances.

48.) At night, the glow of the headlights of oncoming cars is visible around curves, allowing you to more effectively cut corners around blind curves for increased speed and control.

49.) When passing other vehicles in the oncoming lane, you need to be able to differentiate between a calculated risk and a foolhardy risk — especially when passing several vehicles at once or when road conditions provide only limited visibility. You should never be in the oncoming lane around blind curves (or over blind rises) before sundown.

50.) To bypass heavy traffic stopped at an intersection, the shoulder or sidewalk can be driven upon, and parking lots can be cut through.

51.) Stop lights and signs are a good suggestion. . . be sure to slow down and check both ways before blowing through them.

52.) When evading pursuit in urban (or suburban) areas where the streets are laid out in a "grid" pattern (provided one has first attained a significant "lead"), one can often ditch pursuers by rapidly taking a series of "right, left, right, left, right, left" turns. Most pursuers would see you take the first right turn and expect you to accelerate down the straightaway, then possibly take a side street after a few blocks to accelerate down yet another straightaway. Hence, their pursuit would take a linear pattern, as the gridlike streets were designed to be driven upon. . . no-one would expect you to be driving diagonally!

53.) When driving evasively, extreme care must be taken to avoid inadvertently clipping or sideswiping uninvolved vehicles. The average motorist pays little attention to what's going on around him, and might cut in front of you or otherwise jeopardize himself through his obliviousness. Furthermore, if you are taking evasive action (either to avoid a dunce or simply to escape down a sidestreet), it is easy to suffer a temporary loss of traction, resulting in a sideways slide referred to as a "controlled skid" or "4 wheel drift." If you skid into another vehicle, not only do you risk a blowout or ruptured radiator, but you could very well pick up an additional pursuer! If, instead, you were to skid into a ditch, guardrail, or utility pole, your vehicle might be rendered immobile.

54.) If you (or a passenger) are actually considering *shooting* at a threatening vehicle in order to terminate a pursuit, I would advise you to aim for the radiator. The radiator is a particularly vulnerable target due to its location and lack of shielding. Once the radiator has been penetrated (even by a lowly .22), steam will begin to billow out, impairing vision and rapidly causing the vehicle to overheat. If pursuit is not immediately terminated, the engine will eventually seize up, possibly resulting in an accident. At nighttime, the radiator is easily targeted simply by firing between the headlights. I favor the radiator for a target not only because it is easy to hit and stops the vehicle, but because the solid engine block lies immediately behind it, effectively protecting the vehicle's occupants from unnecessary perforation. Tires are difficult targets to hit, and often fail to immediately deflate. If lethal force is being considered, please note that windshields often deflect bullets due to a variety of factors (angle, curvature, lamination, etc.).

55.) If a passenger needs to fire a weapon from your moving vehicle, he should be in the backseat to obtain the optimum firing position. All windows should be lowered in order to avoid unnecessary breakage (as well as deafness from the concussion of gunfire within a confined area). If your vehicle is equipped with a sunroof, hatchback (with remote release), or opening rear window, that would make things much easier. If necessary, the rear window can actually be *fired through* (be sure that the side windows have been rolled down, and the shooter is equipped with protective goggles), but it will soon become opaque and need to be smashed out. If the firearm is an autoloader, be aware that hot brass casings will soon be bouncing around inside the passenger compartment, leaving burns wherever they contact exposed skin. If a hot brass casing strikes someone in the eye, the possibility exists that permanent blindness could result. Rigid brass catchers will prevent this, but can interfere with reloading and cause jams.

56.) If you ever find yourself airborne (as when leaping the crest of a hill), take care not to depress either the brake or the gas whilst in flight. If you hit the ground with locked or spinning wheels, it can throw you out of control. Hopefully, you will fly straight for only a short distance. Landings are brutal on suspension and tires. If you find yourself in a situation where you are likely to be impacting with great force (as when suddenly careening over an embankment at speed), it is imperative that you: exhale rather than inhale, do not tense up your muscles, and clamp your jaw closed to avoid biting off your tongue. If your vehicle flies a great distance, you may impact nose first, forcing the engine block through the dashboard (and possibly the driver), or you may land with enough force to crush vertebrae. At the very least, you will have several blowouts and completely destroy your suspension, effectively rendering your vehicle immobile. Stunt drivers who jump cars for

television shows require vehicles with full rollcages and specially designed suspensions (in addition to numerous safety modifications), and then the vehicle is generally salvaged for parts after the stunt — shows like "The Dukes of Hazzard" have no basis in reality.

57.) Mind your instruments, paying particular attention to your temperature gauge. If your vehicle is equipped with "warning lights," it is highly recommended that you install temperature, oil pressure, and amperage gauges. Gauges often can warn you of an impending problem before it becomes serious, whereas "idiot lights" seldom come on until the problem has become so acute that the vehicle is undrivable. While gauges can assist one in accurately diagnosing a problem, lights tell you only that a non-specific "problem" has been detected, and often malfunction (either by lighting without legitimate cause or failing to light when a problem exists).

58.) If you see an accident or debris in the road ahead, steer around it — do not lock up your brakes. Locking up one's brakes often results in a collision at only slightly reduced speed.

59.) If you are driving at speed and an animal suddenly darts out in front of you, do not be tempted to slam on your brakes or swerve. You will probably do far less damage to your vehicle by impacting it directly rather than spinning out of control in an effort to avoid hurting the animal. Your personal safety, and that of your passengers, has top priority. If, however, a *child* were to dart in front of you, you should make every effort to avoid impact, even if it means driving off the road and destroying your vehicle. Unless you have passengers in the car and going off the road would mean certain death, running over a child is not something you'd want to deal with for the rest of your life.

60.) It is often helpful to brace one's elbows upon the armrests when driving at high speeds. When driving at speeds exceeding 100 mph, it is neither necessary nor recommended that one move the steering wheel much more than an inch in either direction, and bracing one's elbows both assures stability and enables one to better relax.

61.) Be wary of vehicles towing trailers, as trailers can cross over the centerline or become detached — be especially cautious of disabled vehicles being towed by non-professionals by means of a chain or rope. Furthermore, look out for vehicles with items lashed to the roof, as well as pickups and flatbeds with unsecured loads. Be aware of vehicles with dragging mufflers, which can suddenly break away and bounce.

62.) When driving through the city, be sure to keep one of your windows cracked for better awareness of the street sounds (sirens, arguing pedestrians, squealing tires, ect.). Your stereo should be kept at a low volume (if utilized).

63.) When driving in snow or mud, it is usually helpful to shift your automatic transmission into 2nd gear (or the equivalent) for better control of the vehicle. After decelerating to between 45 and 50 mph, shifting into 2nd gear will also help to slow your vehicle down when coasting down steep inclines.

64.) In the wintertime, it is highly recommended that one have a survival kit secured within the passenger compartment in the event that one's vehicle slides off the road (or otherwise becomes disabled) in an isolated area. Said kit should include: a metallic survival blanket, a

package of chemical body/handwarmer packets, electric socks, arctic facemask, and emergency rations (energy bars and a miniature bottle of brandy are both resistant to freezing). Long-burning flares and a large container of cinders for traction are both essential, and a crowbar and hand-winch are both invaluable in the event that you slide off the road. Your vehicle should be equipped with the best quality studded snow tires you can afford (with chains in the trunk) and have a fresh heavy-duty battery installed. Whenever driving through isolated areas in inclement weather, it is important to have either a cellular phone or CB radio in case of emergency — at the very least, responsible family members, friends, or co-workers should have a copy of your planned route and itinerary for the day so searchers would have a better idea where to begin. It would also be a good idea to have snowshoes, arctic clothing, an entrenching tool, and a firestarting kit in your trunk in the event you become stranded with little possibility of rescue. If the heater in your vehicle no longer works, a snow cave would prove far warmer than your car. Be familiar with a variety of techniques (rocking, turning, applying traction, levering, pulling, winching, etc.) for freeing a vehicle stuck in deep snow (or mud).

65.) When you park your vehicle, do so with the nose facing out. This will enable you to instantly vacate the area, if circumstances require it, without the added difficulty of backing out and turning around. . . and never leave your vehicle unattended with the door unlocked or the motor running!

66.) If you must park on an incline, set the parking (emergency) brake and turn the wheels towards the curb — or something else that can prevent your vehicle from rolling too far in the event of mechanical failure.

67.) When you park your vehicle, double-check that the lights are switched off, all windows are up, all doors are locked, the vehicle is in "park," and your keys have not been left in the ignition. . . it is easy to make a stupid mistake if one is harried or distracted.

68.) Be sure to lock any valuables out of sight in the trunk, glovebox, or a lockbox mounted under your seat. A purse on the floor, set of keys in the ignition, firearm in the gunrack, 12-pack of beer amongst the groceries, or even a handful of spare change that is visible from outside the vehicle can result in a broken window. . . do not delude yourself into thinking that a desperate, unstable, or immature criminal would be deterred by a thin layer of safety glass.

69.) If your vehicle is equipped with a retractable radio antennae, be sure to lower it before exiting your vehicle. Dirtbags can use your antennae as a crack pipe, zipgun barrel, improvised weapon, or simply as a means to vent their frustration at the world around them.

70.) If you frequently speed, or otherwise violate the traffic codes, it is recommended that one's vehicle be as anonymous and unremarkable as possible. If you have an exotic vehicle or an unusual shade of paint, your car can be easily remembered as well as identified. One should also avoid bumperstickers and personalized licence plates.

71.) Never drive a vehicle if your abilities are even mildly impaired due to the ingestion of alcohol, prescription medication, cold/allergy medication, or illicit substances. If you feel the need to drive a vehicle regardless of the fact that your abilities may be significantly impaired, it is imperative that you take care to obey all traffic laws and use extreme caution.

If your abilities are impaired in any way — even if due simply to fatigue or illness — never exceed a prudent speed for the conditions and *especially* never attempt any form of evasive driving — even techniques you've performed flawlessly in the past; if you take foolish risks while impaired, you have an extremely high risk of failure due to accident.

72.) *Do not attempt to elude or flee from the police!* You cannot outrun a radio or a helicopter, you are at high risk of accident, you can be run off the road, you will accumulate multiple traffic violations as well as criminal charges, and you will be portrayed as a "menace to society" in court as well as the media. If you pull over and are polite and respectful towards the officer, often one will receive a reduced violation or only a warning. Do not act stupid simply to avoid a traffic ticket. If, for whatever reason, you feel that receiving a traffic ticket is *unacceptable* and intend to elude the police anyway, I will share one important tip: "*Never attempt to elude police pursuit unless you already have a significant head start!*" If the policeman must first pull out of a parking space or perform a 3-point turn prior to pursuing you, that may give you enough time to accelerate far enough ahead to get out of his line of sight long enough to take a sidestreet without being seen. After accelerating down the sidestreet, immediately take another turn, after which you could elect to either resume normal driving speed (as it is likely that the pursuit will be aborted once he has lost your trail, although he may be pissed enough to call for assistance), or to hide (by pulling behind a building or blending into a crowded parking lot). *NEVER* attempt to flee from the police if they are in close pursuit! Not only do you risk: skidding off the road, causing a serious accident, being spun out by a "PIT Maneuver," or even having a tire blasted out with a shotgun (not to mention racking up numerous felony charges in the process); but they've undoubtedly called in your plate number already, so there's no chance you're getting away clean. Only serious criminals who truly don't give a fuck whether they live or die act in such a reckless manner, and if you attempt to outrun the highway patrol, you are guaranteed to be treated as such upon apprehension.

73.) *NEVER* attempt to "assist" police with a high speed pursuit! If you are observed driving at "reckless" speeds, blowing through stop signs, or attempting to "block" or "bump" a suspect's vehicle, your efforts will neither be applauded nor appreciated; instead, you will be charged with multiple crimes (probably including felonies), lose your driver's license (probably for several years, if not permanently), treated like a psychotic dirtbag, and possibly even get a well-deserved ass-whuppin. Police tend to despise those who seek to emulate them, especially when they put the safety of the public at risk. . . don't be an idiot.

74.) Do not have any contraband on your person or in the vehicle. Ascertain that any "questionable" items (like firearms, baseball bats, or bludgeonlike tools) are secured out of sight. Empty beer cans should not be visible within the passenger compartment, nor should empty sandwich bags, ammunition, or anything that might indicate unlawful activity (particularly drug use or gang affiliation) to a suspicious policeman. Be aware that if a gymbag, backpack, suitcase, or paper bag is visible to a policeman, he will probably ask you what it contains (and may even expect you to show him). If you are transporting anything questionable, be extra careful to obey all traffic laws and do not draw attention to yourself.

75.) Use your brain. Open your eyes. Don't be an asshole.

IMPROVISED WEAPONS COMMONLY FOUND WITHIN A VEHICLE:

If it appears that you are going to become involved in a physical altercation and your vehicle is, for whatever reason (disabled, out of petrol, stuck in traffic, blocked in, stuck in a ditch, wrecked, ect.), immobile, it is advisable that you arm yourself rather than fight barehanded. After all, your assailant probably has a hidden weapon, backup, or some other physical advantage if he feels bold enough to start shit. If your vehicle is mobile, you can run down a belligerent pedestrian or escape, but if you have no choice but to stand and fight, and it appears that you are weaponless, consider the defensive possibilities of the following items:

Aluminum flashlight, fire extinguisher, lug wrench (standard or X-style), jack handle, bumper jack, highway flare, ballpeen hammer, magnetic retriever, screwdriver, crescent wrench, socket wrench, crowbar, tow chain, WD-40, radio antenna, broken belt (fan or serpentine), jumper cables, bungee cords, hubcaps, glass soda bottle, tire pressure gauge, keys, snow brush, ice scraper, "pop-up" cigarette lighter, contents of ashtray, spare change, grocery items (cans, jars, and bottles), and the car door itself.

Any of the aforementioned items would, to varying degrees, give you an added advantage. Many people are aware of their potential, and may keep such an item within easy reach. It is advised that you not keep your weapon of choice under your seat, as it could easily slide under the pedals or back out of reach. . . it could also get stuck. Furthermore, be aware that if a policeman searches your vehicle and finds a dangerous tool inside the passenger compartment, in some jurisdictions you can be charged with a misdemeanor weapon possession charge.

Many people toss an aluminum baseball bat, axe handle, golf club, or machete in the trunks of their car "just in case." Far better would be an old dinged-up shotgun or rifle with a box of shells. Whatever your choice of weaponry, it should be inspected and cleaned on a regular basis. Most trunks are not properly sealed, and metal items stored within have a tendency to corrode. Even if you can unlatch your trunk from within the vehicle, there is no guarantee you'll have opportunity to access your weapon quickly. If you are suddenly mobbed, you may be prevented from reaching your weapon at all, and may even end up arming your assailants! Do not attempt to retrieve a weapon from your trunk unless you have ample opportunity to do so.

ENDNOTE:

Driving is one of the most dangerous things you can do. There are so many ways an automobile accident can occur, even if you are cautious, and the resulting injuries are often horrendous. Furthermore, many people are assaulted in, or near, their vehicles. People are frequently beaten up in parking lots and ambushed in their own driveways. Criminals and psychotics regularly victimize people stopped in traffic. People are followed, bumped, or shot at for seemingly minor breaches of etiquette. You can be targeted for reasons as trivial as having a bumpersticker that some mentally unstable person finds offensive. There is no need to let these facts make you fearful or paranoid, but it is stupid to be oblivious of what's going on in the world around you.

Driving is also one of the most enjoyable things you can do. It is pleasant to go for a

relaxing drive in the country, and it is exhilarating to push a high-performance car to its limits. As long as certain basic precautions are taken, driving can be relatively safe. Make sure that your car is regularly maintained and that you always have at least half a tank of petrol. Be aware of what's going on around you. Be cautious when driving after dark or in inclement weather. Keep your doors locked and windows up (or cracked) when driving through the city. Don't antagonize other motorists. Don't take foolish risks. Don't allow yourself to become distracted. Take precautions against eventualities. Be prepared. Be careful. Be safe.

For more information, I highly recommend the books *Drive to Survive* by Curt Rich and *Getaway* by Ronald George Eriksen.

About the Author

T. J. Steele is a founding member of RWT, holding the rank of Master Scribe.

He is a reformed street racer who has successfully evaded high speed pursuit on numerous occasions, and who at one time was considered by many to be one of the top wheelmen in New York State.

He believes that — like marksmanship, hand to hand combat, and first aid — evasive driving is a skill essential to the modern day warrior, and he has compiled this information in hopes of conveying to interested parties exactly what the typical passenger car is, and is not, capable of. Please remember that reading a text is *no substitute* for attending a performance driving course. Anyone attempting to perform evasive maneuvers without the guidance of a professional instructor risks serious injury as well as vehicular damage.

Much of this information has been gleaned from the words of race car drivers and bodyguard/chauffeurs, as well as seedier (but no less skilled) individuals, such as: criminal wheelmen, street racers, cabbies, demented hillbillies, and pizza delivery drivers.

This material has been published in hopes of making driving enthusiasts more focused, competent, and courteous; as well as providing for entertaining reading. *Please drive safely!*