

# Ranting Ever On: Bad Drivers

I am an angry driver most of the time. It is something I have to work on constantly. I wouldn't even consider myself an angry person most of the time – though I do have a very angry resting face. (That's an article for another time!) I am not even an impatient person in my day-to-day life. But on the road behind the wheel, I am all those things. Plainly put, most people have no business driving a vehicle. They have no idea how to control their own vehicle, let alone be aware that there are other vehicles on the road around them. This is all very annoying. It is also dangerous. I could live with the annoying part, but when you factor in the dangerous aspect of bad driving, that sets me off. I never took Driver's Education in school. My small school didn't offer it. (To give you some idea how small my school was, I was in a graduating class of one.) My parents taught me when I was 17 years old and it made a world of difference. They taught me to pay just as much attention to those around me as to my own driving. They taught me to follow the laws of the road – novel idea it seems. They taught me to be a “defensive” driver. I have done my best to take their lessons to heart. I don't speed. I use my signal lights. I do all the little things we are supposed to do when we are drive our vehicles. And it bothers me that from all appearances, most other drivers do not do these things.

Complaining about bad driving is too general to make a good rant. If I want this rant to stick, it needs to be more focused. With that in mind, let's look at the art of driving conscientiously. Little things like letting cars merge, not following too closely, slowing down and moving over a lane when there is a stalled car on the side of the road, acknowledging when another driver lets you merge. These are the little things that make driving better and safer for everyone on the road. Too often though, these are the first things that are thrown out of the window by most drivers.

Comedian Brian Regan has a really good bit about acknowledging other drivers that is not only funny, but also makes many valid points. You can watch that clip [here](#) if you so desire. Warning: Some might find the advertisement before the clip offensive.

I have had many similar experiences. One in particular stands out. On my way to work, I was in the right turn lane and I could tell that the car to the left of me was going to need to get over. They did not have their signal light on, but I could tell. How? It's just one of those things you learn to recognize when you pay attention when you are driving. Naturally, I slowed down and gave the driver a chance to switch lanes. They didn't. I thought for a brief moment that perhaps I was mistaken that this driver needed to change lanes. My faith wavered. I doubted my skills. Not for long though, because finally, at the last possible moment, the driver flashed their turn signal once and then quickly swerved in front of me. That last-second signal light was both infuriating and laughable. It was pointless but I'm sure it made the driver feel like they had done everything correctly.

So, I had allowed the driver to merge – and believe me, it was not easy. The very pleasant and patient person behind me was not less than thrilled that I slowed down. They showed their displeasure by honking at me and then giving me a friendly hand gesture. (Maybe they weren't angry and were trying to tell me that I was Number One?) Even after all of this, I had a faint hope that the driver I had allowed to merge would acknowledge my help and perhaps wave to show their appreciation. Nope. They did not wave. They didn't even look in the rearview mirror to see the kind man who had made their turn possible. They continued to do the thing that had put them in the precarious position from the very beginning: They talked on their phone. How did I respond to this ugly and distasteful display of incivility? I waved at them like an idiot and continued to wave (with a giant, completely over-

the-top grin on my face) for the next three or four minutes. I have no idea if they saw me. I don't really care. Actually, I do care. My secret hope is that they saw me and realized what they had done and when they got to work, felt so bad about how they treated another human being that they curled up in the corner of their cubicle and cried themselves to sleep. No big deal – just total and abject shame and guilt.

Moral of this story: Be nice to other people when you are on the road. Or, in the words of the famous fictional rock band, Wyld Stallyns, "Be excellent to each other." Bill and Ted believed it. Jesus did too. Driving would be less stressful and the roads would be safer if we just listened to Bill, Ted, and Jesus.

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## **Ranting Ever On: The Five Edition**

There are days when you just need to rant and rave about stuff. Moments when you need to get it off your chest. You know the drill. If there is something that is bothering you or getting under your skin, this is a safe space to vent. But keep a few things in mind. First, do your best to keep the object of your rant as illogical and pointless as possible. Nobody has time for a rant about something serious and important. Second, try to keep it short and sweet. Long rants wear out their welcome very quickly. Finally, be honest and transparent. Nothing is worse than a ranter ranting about something that doesn't really bother them that much. It's plain to everyone around that it is an empty rant, devoid of purpose and passion. Mean it or keep it to yourself.

In our ongoing effort to be helpful and generous, we here at REO have decided to give you, dear reader, a short collection of rants to help guide you in your future ranting. A primer, if you will. Here are five mini-rants about five different things that are deserving of the best we have to offer. We hope you will enjoy this Ranting Ever On, Friday Five style. And please, feel free to add your own rant in the comment section below.

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### **How Pluto has been Dismissed As Not an Actual Planet**

Back in grade school, we learned the acronym My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas to remember the planets. The truly awesome thing about this acronym is that we were getting nine pizzas. Nine! But now...now our innocence is lost. No more carefree hours of staring at that pizza planet in the sky (I don't think we can actually see it, but we can imagine its there). Now It's just My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine... And that's it. Nope, nothing, nada. But there is hope. In recent years there has been a movement afoot to include all of the dwarf planets with the regular planets. If this dream transpires it will be Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Cerus, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, Haumea, Makemake, and Eris. I have seen a number of suggested acronyms if this does, in fact, become reality. Unfortunately, none of the suggestions I read have included pizza, which makes me think many people are missing the important point here. Let me suggest My Very Educated Mother Christine Just Served Us Nine Pizzas Having Mucho Everything. So I say its high time we take back our childhood. Let's take matters into our hands and put that pizza back in the acronym as it so justly deserves. (Ben Plunkett)

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## Wendy's "Fresh-Never-Frozen Beef"

Why does Wendy's now advertise that their beef is fresh and NEVER FROZEN? It is in every commercial they do now. Freezing beef is now up there with being a Nazi as one of the worst sins you can commit in 21st century America. People freeze meat all the time. They buy giant deep freezers just so they can buy a lot of meat and freeze it.

Now Wendy's has decided that it is horrible to freeze beef. WHAT IS NEXT, WHERE WILL THIS END!?!?!?! (Mike Lytle)

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## Why Does Carey Elwes Have to Be So Much Cooler Than Me?

Yeah, Carey, I get it. You got to be Westley in *The Princess Bride*, getting to kiss Robin Wright, hang out with Andre the Giant, have the greatest sword fight of modern times and make women all over the world fawn. And you got a turn as the Dread Pirate Roberts, as if being a pirate isn't a lifelong fantasy of mine. Yeah, you got to actually be on the set with, run lines with, and act in the same scenes with George Costanza and other characters from *Seinfeld* once. No big deal. Not like I wouldn't light myself on fire to have had that opportunity. You got to match wits with Shawn and Gus as the mesmerizing, out-of-the-park home run recurring villain Despereaux in *Psych*. You even got to prove that when your role is a lame character, like Jerry on *Liar, Liar*, that you still make it totally unforgettable and quotable! You have the perfect looks, the sublime accent and the filmography I would die for.

And yet all of that apparently isn't enough, as you have now signed on for Season 3 of *Stranger Things*. Why do you do this to me, Carey Elwes? Why do you take my perfectly content life and make me yearn for more? (Gowdy Cannon)

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## Clipping My Fingernails

I hate clipping my nails. It's boring. it's tedious, and it seems like I am having to do it more often these days. My nails just won't stop growing! Why do they have to grow so fast? I'll admit, I would hate NOT having nails because then my fingers would look like little fleshy protrusions growing out of my hands, but all this nail clipping is just a complete headache. Sadly, there is no good answer here. No nails and I'm a mutant. Long nails and I'm a creep. So I have to clip them. Fine nails! I'll clip you on a regular basis but don't expect me to be happy about it! (Phill Lytle)

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## Internet Lists

Do you know what we need a lot fewer of on the internet? Lists. Some lists are cool, such as this fine websites weekly list of musings from various contributors. I have benefited greatly from sitting down in the morning and creating a daily to-do list But I think the internet has really gotten out of hand and we need to stop. Every time I turn around someone is publishing some inane list of something and they are usually way more than just a few items. "Twenty-five reasons why the number two is cooler than the number eight" or "99 reasons that 1999 was the best year ever!" or "22 reasons that Barb from *Stranger Things* is the greatest character in the history of fiction". I haven't always felt this way. I remember when they celebrated 100 years of film with the top 100 movies of all time. I enjoyed watching that because it was compiled from years of cinema and it made me want to watch some movies that I had never before thought of watching. Now, however, we are just using lists willy-nilly as if they are some magic device that makes our opinion more valid. Why do we like making lists and looking at the lists of others? Is it because we like ranking stuff and seeing if others agree with us even if the things we are ranking aren't that important and/or really

don't require any sort of ranking? Are we not content to have a group of stuff that we like that isn't broken down somehow? Do we have to catalog every single aspect of our life and share it with other people and then find ourselves arguing over the ways their list is different than ours? Maybe it annoys me so much because I've caught myself ten points deep into a 35 point list that I saw on the internet and realized that my life will not be improved by knowing all of the times that Hurley from *Lost* proved himself to be the smartest person on the island. Lists are not bad. Lists are fine if used in moderation. But can we please show a little restraint on our usage of lists.

I hope you will revisit the site next week when I publish my list of 19 reasons why I believe that *The Walking Dead* is all happening inside Jack from *Lost's* head. (Jonathan Postlewaite)

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## **Ranting Ever On: Mondays**

Let's take a brief look at six days of the week: There's Tuesday, not a bad sort, really, but rather non-descript; Wednesday, better than Tuesday because it marks the halfway point of the week, and there is Awana to look forward to; Thursday, which is a bit more interesting and funny than Tuesday especially if there's a good comedy on that evening (an event which is increasingly rare); Friday, the coolest, most awesome of all the weekdays and mark of the march into the lazy, hazy weekend (theoretically); Saturday, probably the most enjoyable day of the entire week of all civilized society; Sunday, the glorious day of fellowship with God and His disciples here on earth. Your opinion of these will change from person to person based on your lifestyle and habits, but most will be united on the subject of my loathing, the

epicenter of my rant: Mondays.

I doubt that very many people out there are thinking, "My goodness, he hates Mondays? How very unusual" or "I can't believe he would stoop to such a low view of such a kindly, fun-loving day." No, I doubt that. We all know that Monday is horrible (for most of us). It's famous for that status. Even Garfield the iconic cat hates Mondays. Garfield who just sleeps, eats, and watches TV all day every day. It's the February of the week that we experience at least four times a month, sometimes more.

Monday is so horrible because...well, it just is. I don't know why, exactly. Just a freak of nature, I guess. That and you're just coming off the sugar rush level highs of the weekend. Also, you're beginning the mundaneness and drudgery of the work week all over again. So I guess those are two pretty good reasons. I guess. All I know for sure is that it is the day of the devil. Let us unite in an international movement to ban all Mondays. We'll have the famous Mamas & Papas song, "Monday, Monday" as our theme song. The song actually starts out rather pro-Mondays ("Monday, Monday, so good to me; Monday morning, it was all I hoped it would be") so one might jump to the conclusion that it is full of lies and that the truth is not in. But then it launches into great truths like how we can't trust Monday and that it just turns out that way, that every other day is fine and dandy except for Monday's which are always tear-inducing. Let us stand together and rage against the day, my brethren, let us sing our songs of revolution. Yet, sadly, my friends, I greatly fear that Monday, Monday, is here to stay. Oh Monday, Monday, how we despiseth thee. OH MONDAY, MONDAY!!!

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# The REO Rant: Interstate 440 in Nashville

I am not the first person to write about this. I won't be the last. **Stated plainly: Interstate 440 in Nashville is an embarrassment.** It is an embarrassment to the great city of Nashville. It is an embarrassment to the wonderful state of Tennessee. It is unsightly, unseemly, and unsafe.

There are sections of I440 that are nearly un-drivable unless you actually are trying to cause damage to your vehicle. There are so many potholes that you cannot avoid them. Some of those potholes are so large they have their own ecosystem. I narrowly avoided one the other day that was so big, I'm pretty sure there was a family living in it. (Tiny houses are all the rage these days.)

A handful of years back, I440 was a decent drive. It was never the most pristine or the most luxurious of interstates, but it was well-maintained and did its job. Shockingly[1. This is sarcasm. Nothing about government incompetence shocks me anymore.], some genius decided to do some form of milling[2. Pavement milling (cold planing, asphalt milling, or profiling) is the process of removing at least part of the surface of a paved area such as a road, bridge, or parking lot. Milling removes anywhere from just enough thickness to level and smooth the surface to a full depth removal.] to the road. Now, I realize the interstate was not milled in the complete sense of the word. But something very much like milling was done. The road suddenly had deep lines that ran the entire length. At the time, it seemed as if this was the first step in resurfacing the interstate. How naïve and stupid of me to think something logical like that! Years and years later, no resurfacing has been done. The lines/grooves stayed and the road slowly began to crumble. I mean that literally. The road is crumbling. Falling apart. Eroding. You can see huge chunks

of interstate splayed all over the shoulders of the road every time you are blessed enough to drive it. To make matters worse, when bad weather hits, potholes form. Instead of a few sprinkled here and there like any other interstate in the nation, I440 is simply riddled with them. I don't like hyperbole but in this case, I believe it is warranted. There are more potholes per square foot of I440 than on any road I have ever driven or seen. (And I grew up in Central America.)

I'm not sure who to blame. Tennessee Department of Transportation surely deserves a good portion of the blame. I think the Governor and the Mayor of Nashville deserve some blame as well. Evidently, those in positions of power never have to drive I440 because if they did, it would have been fixed by now. If leaving this interstate to literally fall apart before our eyes is some sort of ploy to make the people of Nashville desperate for some big fix to our traffic problems, then that is sickening and evil. The decision-makers that have allowed this problem to get this bad need to be held accountable, fired, or forced to drive on I440 in a continuous loop from now until the end of time. Or until their vehicle breaks in half. Whichever comes first.

How many more tires have to blow before something is done? How many gallons of coffee must be spilled each time a pothole is hit? How many hubcaps need to be forcibly removed from their wheel only to go spinning down the road alone and afraid? How many children must ask, through tear-stained eyes, "Dear father, why does I440 look like a third world road instead of a beautiful, smooth, and safe interstate in the heart of one of America's 'It' cities?"

Enough is enough.

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# The REO Rant: February

## February: A Swirling Maelstrom of Despair

I usually consider January the worst month in history, but it is close. It's neck and neck with February. Plus, January is over, so I blew that one. No matter. February is probably just as horrible. It's wet, cold, and completely bland. And January and February love making dark alliances to foster sickness – the everlasting crud. It drains the head, mind, and brain.

Some might say that there is Valentine's Day, that beacon of heart-shaped joy, that holiday of eternal looove. Joy–hah! Love–my foot! Maybe love and joy if you're a seller of flowers or chocolates or pink cards. Because that's all V Day is really, just a big old marketing gimmick. (Okay, fine, I'm good with the chocolate since it heals the soul and keeps Dementors at bay.)

In truth, February is so pathetic and losery a month that it couldn't even work up to as many days as its 11 brothers and sisters. And the number it does have always jumps back and forth from 29 to 28. So not only is it pathetic and losery, it's also incredibly fickle.

Truth be told, pretty sure January has an edge in the race since I am practically drowned in its particular brand of the swirling maelstrom of despair every year. With February, the dark, dirty waters of another maelstrom are all too near, but I usually manage to elude them. Usually. Sometimes, though, I do almost drown in it like the best of 'em. So let's just go ahead and say that both are equally malevolent and dark and pretty much the worst thing ever. I say we abolish them both from the calendar completely. Let us never speak of them

again. May it be as if they had never been born. Strike their names from our records. So let it be written. So let it be done.