

Career Traffic Cop Tells The Truth

hill could really help. The Budweiser Rocket Car could not run in the wind anyway and also took four hours to refuel.

ROB WATANABE
Canyon Country, California

SPEED KILLS?

I agree 100 percent with Pat Bedard: Speed does not kill! ("They Say Speed Kills," September 1996) The "sudden impact" of hitting a fixed object does, just ask any cop.

OFFICER BOB SPEED
Towson, Maryland

Thanks for the swell insight, Bob! (We think ol' Bob drove that motorcycle without a helmet for too many years.) We thought maybe you'd appreciate the following letter from a fellow officer—Ed.

You are to be commended for "They Say Speed Kills" [September 1966]. Having spent over 20 years (the '50s, '60s, and '70s) as a state trooper in one of the nation's largest state-police agencies, I can personally vouch for the absolute accuracy of most of the article's content.

The pervasiveness of the distortion and outright fabrication of traffic-accident statistics by police and so-called traffic-safety agencies in those years was quite significant. The managed deception of the public in such proportions could only have been accomplished through the collaborative efforts of government and law-enforcement officials—and their shills in the mass media. Speed enforcement became the very raison d'être for most of the law-enforcement community during those years. **And still is in many places.**

It is important to understand the origins of this tidal wave of speeding enforcement, which began in the late '50s. This enforcement and the spurious statistics it generated were rooted in the incredible and insatiable greed of police executives across the U.S. as they prostituted themselves, their agencies, and in turn their rank-and-file personnel, for the federal tax dollars being doled out under that law-enforcement welfare monstrosity, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA).

To understand the extent of the massive deception of the American public perpetrated by police executives and mid-level-management traffic-enforcement personnel, it needs to be pointed out that ultimately all levels of law enforcement, down to the lowly patrol trooper, were eventually corrupted and participated in touting the "party line" on speed, i.e., that speed was almost the exclusive and maybe sole cause of accidents, injury, and death on our nation's highways.

Traffic accident reports, in which the factual cause of the accident was cited by the investigating trooper, were routinely altered, literally forged, by mid-level supervisors, either by means of the simple expedient of adding an "X" in the report's

blank speed box, or by creating accident statistics predicated on the bizarre notion that any accident that occurred on a curve or near an intersection or in inclement weather must have been caused by speed, i.e., speed too fast for conditions!

I can vividly recall being verbally chastised and instructed to reconsider my cause-of-accident determination by supervisors—even when the investigation clearly confirmed a cause other than speed. And if an errant trooper balked at being converted to the new party line, the supervisor simply resorted to checking that all-important speed box.

READER SIGHTINGS



Photographed in Alabama by David B. Lightsey. If you think real hard, we bet you can figure out the name of the town with the missing letters.

3 Million \$ Grant, FL 1996

The real inducement to law enforcement to buy into the "speed kills" canard has always been and still is greed for all those radar and VASCAR units, those additional cars and additional personnel who could be hired courtesy of federal tax dollars.

Seeing what a stunning success the speed scam was, the law-enforcement manipulators of statistics, the traffic-safety gurus, and their ever helpful propagandists in the media have now devised a new one for the '90s: driving under the influence (DUI). Again, the basic party line is that DUI is now the single greatest if not the sole cause of accidents, injury, and death on our nation's highways. The DUI cabal is, however, aided by a peripheral but nonetheless potent group: Mothers Against Drunk Driving, MADD and the law-enforcement community (and to some extent, the insurance industry) are now completely "in bed with each other" in a massive and very successful effort to convince the public and our legislators that if

DUI can only be eradicated, our highways will truly become as safe as KinderCare playgrounds. MADD's fanatical DUI witch hunt, its legislative agenda, and the draconian restrictions and penalties proposed in that agenda are causing many legislators and courts to see the need to rein in the MADD extremists.

Once again within law enforcement, the very same supervisory "arm twisting" and manipulation of accident-cause statistics are in place and functioning smoothly. Again, the inducements to law enforcement to join in are all those expensive high-performance cars (5.0 Mustangs, Camaros), mobile DUI labs, Breathalyzer machines, dash-mounted video cameras, and the additional personnel hired to staff the DUI wolfpacks, all of which are doled out from federal tax revenues to those departments willing to aid and abet the DUI enforcement canard.

P.J. CORR
Seminole, Florida

Wish we could get this ["They Say Speed Kills" article] printed in every Sunday newspaper in the country. As an insurance agent and car enthusiast, I'm especially involved with "speeding" wackos and the abuse the insurance industry piles on normal drivers when they get "speeding" tickets.

WILLIAM SCHLAUDECKER
Cleveland, Ohio

Dr. Martinez states: "People tend to follow laws if they have a chance of being caught." If that's true, why did we stop Prohibition? By now, alcohol consumption would be zero, and Dr. Martinez's emergency room would be closed! Am I on the right train?

D.M. KELLY
Plano, Texas

Bravo for your pieces on NHTSA's "speed management" scheme, and its efforts to "educate the courts" to equate speeders with drunk drivers, arsonists, and bomb throwers. A few Americans still hold the quaint notion that the executive and judicial branches of the government should be separate. The U.S. DOT should be told to stop prejudicing the courts against any group of citizens. If the government can tell the courts that certain kinds of persons need to be jailed, the Constitution is in more danger than anyone on the highway.

Wouldn't it be nice if, somewhere, an inventive lawyer got a motorist's speeding conviction thrown out on the grounds that the judge had been prejudiced by exposure to Dr. Martinez's propaganda campaign?

AARNE FROBOM
Lansing, Michigan

Your assessment of Dr. Martinez and his cohorts as mendacious twits is completely accurate. I cannot agree that a vote for Dole/Kemp would significantly blunt

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Ins.
funded
"Safety
Groups

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¹⁸ FL 1993 + 1994 only 2% of All Accidents caused by speeding (D.H.S. + M.V.)
Less than 50 Speeding Accidents Annually on I-95 (1300+ total, P.B.C.) yet over 11,000 Sp.Tickets (96)