

Road Rage

by

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Road Rage

DESCRIPTION

The automobile has done much to change American society, including turning most mild-mannered people into vehicular Terminators. Winston D'Cline, who should literally know better (since he is a driving instructor), pops out of gear when cut off by another car, and poor Darlene Benz, who is taking a lesson at the moment, is enlisted by D'Cline to right the alleged slight.

CHARACTERS

- WINSTON D'CLINE, driving instructor
- DARLENE BENZ, student, between 16 and 17 years of age

SETTING

- Inside and near a car

TIME

- Present

MISCELLANEOUS

- Two chairs indicating the car

NOTE: Mild North Carolina accents can be used.

Road Rage

A driving lesson. D'CLINE in the passenger seat, reading a newspaper. BENZ comes up to the car, opens the door, and get in.

D'CLINE
Right on time for your lesson.

BENZ
I really want to get my license.

D'CLINE
Good. All right. Now before we hit the road, what do we do?

BENZ
(mimes the actions)
Put on the seat belt. Make sure my mirrors are set. Take off the parking brake. Start the car. Check in the rear view mirror to make sure no one is behind me. Put it into "Drive." Check the rear- and side-view mirrors for oncoming traffic, pedestrians, or cyclists. Physically look over my left shoulder to double-check. Then pull smoothly into traffic.

D'CLINE
And here we go.

They are in traffic.

D'CLINE
Good work. Now, remember, do everything calmly -
- careful of that person getting out of the car -
- calmly. There's no need to hurry anything.

BENZ
I know. When people get in cars, they seem to, like, change.

D'CLINE
The devil bites them in the behind. Okay, up here, I want you to turn left, so you'll have to shift over a lane. Directional, right. Check the mirror. Smooth turn of the wheel. And you're there. Good. Remember, you have the green arrow here. How are things going, Darlene?

BENZ
Oh, fine, Mr. D'Cline. Really looking forward to getting my license. My mom is, like, totally over having to play Mister Taxi. I'm saving money to buy a car.

D'CLINE

Okay, start taking your turn on the green light.
That's good. Wait! Watch out!

(BENZ jams on the brake)

Did you see that idiot run the red light? Idiot!
That really -- That really p -- ticks me off
when they do that! You okay?

BENZ

Yeah, fine.

D'CLINE

Idiot!

BENZ

It's okay, Mr. D'Cline. The guy was just a jerk.

D'CLINE

But it happens more often than it used to --
total disregard, total discourtesy. They should
have to pay a price.

BENZ

They can get a ticket.

D'CLINE

And where was he going that he had to shave 30
seconds off his time?

BENZ

Mr. D'Cline?

D'CLINE

Yes.

BENZ

What do you want me to do now?

D'CLINE

Right, right. Just go straight, then up Beacon
Hill Road. I want you to do a three-point turn
on the hill.

BENZ

There's jerks everywhere.

D'CLINE

Not all of them have two tons of metal at the end
of their foot. You're right about how cars
change some people. As if a jerk switch gets
turned on.

BENZ

A jerk switch!

D'CLINE

As if yellow meant "Pedal to the metal" and red meant "Doesn't apply to me."

BENZ

You're really righteous about this, Mr. D'Cline.

D'CLINE

It's all part of a bigger piece about how the world is going to hell in a handbasket, Darlene. Little common courtesy things start going, and before long traffic signals are just pretty lights. Stay in your lane.

BENZ

Right.

D'CLINE

Teaching drivers ed shows you everything -- it's like a little window. Through the lights, then a right onto Beacon. It gives you a look at how things are all running to smash. I could chart the decline of Western civilization through speeding tickets. Road rage -- it's all the rage, now. After the lights, you're going to want to shift over right.

BENZ

How long you been with the school?

D'CLINE

Started there as a phys ed teacher ten years ago. Took up drivers ed to make a little extra money. Okay, ease through the intersection.

Instead, BENZ jams on the brakes, and they both pitch forward violently.

BENZ

Honest, Mr. D'Cline, he came out of nowhere!

D'CLINE

That goddamn -- Damn -- Darn -- idiot! Okay, it's clear. Take a left and follow him.

BENZ

Follow him? I was supposed to take a right.

D'CLINE

Follow him! I'm not going to take it anymore! Go, go!

BENZ takes a left turn.

D'CLINE

There he is, up ahead.

BENZ
(obviously frightened)
Is this in the manual? Is this on the test?

D'CLINE
He's over in the right lane. Move over. Don't forget to signal! Good, good. Now, come up behind him and start honking the horn. Go ahead.

BENZ
Mr. D'Cline, I don't like this.

D'CLINE
You're doing fine, a regular Mario Andretti. Maria Andretti. Okay, honk. More!

BENZ
He's not doing anything.

D'CLINE
Flash your high beams at him.

BENZ
What?

D'CLINE reaches over and flashes the lights. BENZ looks even more frightened.

D'CLINE
C'mon, you bastard. Honk the horn some more.

She's honking, he's reaching across her flashing the lights.

BENZ
He's stopping.

D'CLINE
Good. Put your hazard lights on.

BENZ
C'mon, Mr. D'Cline, let's just finish the lesson. I've got fourth period algebra to get to.

D'CLINE
Stay here.

D'CLINE gets out of the car and exits.

BENZ
Come back, Mr. D'Cline. This is so stupid. Stupid! Damn, look at him -- arguing with that guy. I'm gonna get reamed if I don't get back! No, no, don't hit him. Don't -- Oooh, that must have hurt, bad! Another one -- ooh, shit!

D'CLINE gets back into the car, rubbing his fist.

D'CLINE

Now there's a driving lesson for the day. Okay.
Three-point turn, wasn't it?

D'CLINE stares out the windshield.

D'CLINE

Look at that -- giving us the finger as he pulls
away. Obviously, he didn't learn very much, did
he? Follow him.

BENZ

Three-point turn.

D'CLINE

Go, go! He needs a booster. Faster! Keep up
with him. Move!

BENZ

Fourth period algebra.

D'CLINE

The line has to be drawn somewhere. Up there,
he's taking a right. Signal, signal! Good,
you're almost there. Watch out for the geezer in
the crosswalk! She should be more careful! Now,
into the rotary -- hands at 10 and 2 o'clock!

BENZ looks into the rear view mirror.

BENZ

Mr. D'Cline.

D'CLINE

Eyes on the road.

BENZ

Mr. D'Cline, we have a policeman behind us.
Flashing his lights. And look, there's one up
ahead, too. They're pulling him over.

D'CLINE

We're so close!

BENZ

I have to pull over.

D'CLINE

No -- Yes -- All right! All right!

BENZ pulls over, and for a moment there is silence. BENZ rolls down
the window.

BENZ

Hello, officer. No, you need to talk to him.
He's my driving instructor.

D'CLINE rolls down his window.

D'CLINE

Hello, officer. Right, right, here they are.
Yes, I'm a driving instructor. You're right,
this isn't in the manual.

Reaches into the glove compartment for documents, hands them over.
The two of them sit there for a moment. D'CLINE rubs his fist.

BENZ

Jerk switch.

D'CLINE

(not to anyone in particular)
It's going to be a long day. Sorry about fourth
period algebra.

BENZ

That's all right -- I can never figure out the
equations anyway.

D'CLINE

(not to anyone in particular)
Jerk switch. It's going to be a long day.

BLACKOUT