

## **I'M GOING TO BECOME A CRIMINAL!**

No - I'm not about to try and steal the Crown Jewels, or rob the Bank of England - but I could soon have a criminal record - as could each one of us! The scary fact is that as the police target motorists more and more, and with lower speed limits everywhere and more (hidden) speed cameras, in a few years time the only people without a criminal record will be non car drivers and the Doris Datsun drivers (you know - the ones who are more likely to be stopped for causing an obstruction due to the **lack** of speed!)

I haven't be "nicked" for speeding yet - but it can only be a matter of time - even the best drivers will occasionally exceed the speed limit without realising it (I admit nothing in print!). Of course, setting a speed limit does not make a road safe - it's only the drivers on that road that can make it safe. But setting a speed limit does give the chance for everyone to become part of the criminal fraternity! So, apart from driving everywhere at 30, how can you avoid the inevitable? Well, the first plan is to have your perfect excuse ready.

A very pregnant woman, about to produce, in the passenger seat is by far the best excuse, but having to carry pregnant passengers all the time is a bit of a pain - even more so because the faster you go the more likely they are to produce. And you don't want that all over your leather upholstery, do you?!

Another good one is to race the cop car to the nearest toilet, then, after a quick sprint into the cubicle, a profuse apology and blame something you ate. It works better if the cops are of the opposite sex, because they are less likely to join you in the loo! It's a bit of an old one now, but might just work.

But if you can't think of a good excuse, the next plan is to take evasive action. One idea is to always carry a few large dogs in the car. I got stopped a few years ago, driving a Cortina 2000E estate with 4 large English Setters behind the rear dog guard. It was late at night, and I was following two of the aforementioned Doris Datsuns at 29.5 mph as I approached a (very short) length of dual carriageway (and by very short, I mean about 5 cars length!)

Well, fed up with the funereal speed, I dropped it down a cog and sped past the 2 dawdlers, only to realise that there was a third car in front. Instant decision - slow down or go for it - I went for it. As I sped past this one I glanced across, and my smile turned to an expression not unlike "Oh! S\*\*t! Cops!" (In fact those were the exact words!)

Of course Mr. Plod pulled past and signalled for me to stop. Beloved, who was in the passenger seat, was killing herself laughing - charming! Then this 12 year old (well that's all he looked) seven foot six giant with size 18 boots strolled over with an air of "You're for it chum!"

I wound the window down to hear him saying, "Bit of a dangerous manoeuvre that, wasn't it sir?" My immediate thought was, "No, it was damn fine driving!" but fortunately, my lips said, "Yes, sorry officer!"

Now at this point, two things happened. The nine foot three copper stuck his head in the car to sniff my breath, and at the same time, the four Setters woke up, to see this strange head in the car.

Obviously wanting to greet this stranger, they all hit the dog guard at the same time, which promptly fell over. Plod got just a glimpse of four very large, hairy and slobbering dogs lunging over the back seat towards him, and hurriedly withdrew his head. He was last seen jogging back to the cop car, shouting over his shoulder, "Well, mind how you go sir!"

The next idea is to discredit the cops. Filled with danger, this can be a real winner. Of course, in this country, it tends to be a simple request to see the calibration certificate for their equipment. But one guy in the States tried something really cute! The conversation went something like this:

Officer: May I see your driver's license?

Driver: I don't have one.

Officer: May I see the log book for this vehicle?

Driver: It's not my car. I stole it.

Officer: The car is stolen?

Driver: That's right. But come to think of it, I think I saw the log book in the glove box when I was putting my gun in there.

Officer: There's a gun in the glove box?

Driver: Yes sir. That's where I put it after I shot and killed the woman who owns this car and stuffed her in the boot!

Officer: There's a BODY in the BOOT?!

Driver: Yes, sir.

Hearing this, the officer immediately called his Captain, who approached the driver.

Captain: Sir, can I see your license?

Driver: Sure. Here it is. It is valid.

Captain: Who's car is this?

Driver: It's mine, officer. Here's the log book

Captain: Could you slowly open your glove box so I can see if there's a gun in it?

Driver: Yes, sir, but there's no gun in it.

Sure enough, there was nothing in the glove box.

Captain: Would you mind opening your boot? I was told there's a body in it.

Driver: No problem.

Boot is opened; no body.

Captain: I don't understand it. The officer who stopped you said you told him you didn't have a license, stole the car, had a gun in the glove box, and that there was a dead body in the boot.

Driver: Yeah, I'll bet the lying toe-rag told you I was speeding, too.

Risky - definitely. I believe the guy who tried it is due out soon!

Another tactic is police confusion. Find 10 other drivers of cars like yours, and do a deal with them (they'll enjoy it - honest!). Get everyone to fix a copy of your number plates onto their car, and all break as many camera covered limits as possible all over the country. How can the same car be in the same place at the same time? Trouble is this will only ever work once!

Dutch drivers are taking things even further. There is now a web site dedicated to the removal of Gatso cameras around Holland - ([www.tuftufclub.com](http://www.tuftufclub.com)) - although it's only in Dutch - but I gather that their tactics include spraying the camera window with paint, filling the boxes with expanding foam, and putting a tyre full of petrol round the box and lighting it - it's supposed to cook the camera quite nicely! Not that I can condone such anti social and reckless behaviour, of course.

However, such is the glut of speeding tickets being handed out that there is now a suggestion that the boys in blue will soon be travelling door to door selling discounted points and fines - "well, you've got a car, therefore you must speed, buy some now at this discounted rate, and save time and money later!"

I can even see the new Government initiative - "Speed Kills - so get your licence endorsed NOW - and help save the environment - you know it makes sense!"

Heaven preserve us but that will probably lead to a black market in endorsements! You'll be standing at the bar, enjoying your Guinness (sorry - orange juice, you're driving - I'll have the Guinness - shame to waste it!) - and this slimy looking chap will sneak up to you and give you a quick flash of a summons with the court decision already recorded - and "all for £25 - will cost you £60 from the fuzzi, Guv!"

Where will it end? Riots by angry motorists? Speed bumps on the M25? A man walking in front of the car with a red flag? TVR prices plummeting - now there's an idea - maybe then I could afford a Tuscan...well there has to be a way, eventually!

Finally, and in all seriousness, drive swiftly but drive safely, and remember - chocolate eaten at speed will always end up squashed between your left buttock and the car seat!

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