

[REDACTED]  
Glen Rock, NJ 07452

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"I Watch C-SPAN Because. . ."

. . . a New Jersey motor vehicle permit is a license to be rude. Whereas genteel motorists on the banks of the Potomac conduct a picture perfect alternate merges twice daily at several spots along the Geo Wash Mem Pkwy, a smart Jersey driver always looks out for an alternative to merging.

I live within five miles of my workplace and readily believe statistics that most car accidents occur within five miles of home. (Most driving is within five miles of home, of course, but it's nonetheless true that Jersey pulls the curve down to short distances.) I commute to work, a four minute drive. In the morning I wait until I get to work before I drink my java; driving under Jersey conditions is best done while in a mental fog. But the evening commute is painful. By then I'm awake, and can see what's going on down the road. For years I commuted in D.C. traffic, sometimes 45 minutes bumper-to-bumper each way, with no air conditioning in drenching humidity. But there at least I could trust that only teenagers and Metrobus operators had licenses to be rude. Here they all do, and I get home mad.

Sometimes when I get home I see this weirdness called "one-minute speeches." There, the biggest loudmouths in Congress reduce Periclean oration to its least common denominator, fustbudgeting. These guys are usually freshman ideologues chicken to speak up while their seniors are around to hear. But it's verbosity city when they're given a chance to expose their misunderstandings and pet peeves to the video camera and its extension, that sliver of its reach which includes their constituency.

The chronic one-minuters, you know who they are, make my day. I relate to them.

Coming home from work, here's a guy passing me on the right, then budging me to the left, finally taking my spot on the road. He's driving a jacked-up 4WD Dodge Ram Charger. Let's call him Jack Kemp. I'm driving a Pinto; call me Bob Six-pack-of-Lite. Jack, I mutter, you tick me off. But I've noticed Jack's bronzed 20-inch-round forearm leaning out the window, so I wait until he's a spot on the horizon (about three seconds at his rate) before flipping him a Rockefeller.

The classic move of the one-minuter. All talk, no action. Later, in front of the tube, I courageously think of what I should have done, and mentally revise and extend my driving.

I also dig your newspaper visits. When're you going to do a Murdock paper? Also, my dad came on at 3 a.m., testifying before a subcommittee, and I missed it. Next time you tape my dad, please air it right after Dan Rather. Thanks.