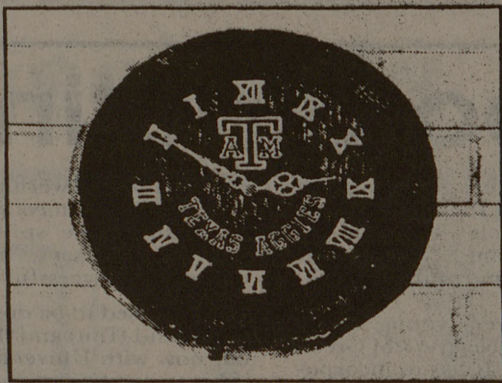


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(Quartz)
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Highway violence turns driving into fatal game

Associated Press
DALLAS — Fits of violence are turning Texas highways into modern versions of "High Noon" where dueling for a left-hand lane can involve deadlier weapons than just glares and obscenities, police say.

Three people have been shot in the Dallas-Fort Worth area in the last year, the most recently on Monday when a young mother was shot and killed after another motorist tried to force her husband's car off Interstate 35W in Fort Worth.

Last summer, a construction worker who was directing traffic around a barrier sign was injured when shot by a motorist fed up with delays. And last February, a car's passenger died after a fracas on Dallas' congested Central Expressway.

Psychology experts say the incidents point up a growing problem of freeway violence in a world of mounting stress, and they warn that it's getting to be far safer to flee than fight.

"It's getting much worse," Dallas police psychologist Dr. S.A. Somodevilla said. "It's like they're saying, 'You've affronted me personally' if you have cut into their lane or not let them onto the highway."

"It's getting to be like a duel or the movie 'High Noon,'" he added. "But whether you're right or wrong is irrelevant. Forget being macho because this could be your life that you're talking about."

Somodevilla, like psychology professor Dr. William Tedford at Southern Methodist University, advises "getting the heck away from a bad situation."

"Part of the problem is adrenaline," Tedford explains. "When you're confronted with a tense situation on a highway, the adrenaline starts pumping and it triggers the natural reaction of flight or fight."

Flight isn't easy to choose, either, he said: freeways are one of the most restrictive environments for handling stress.

"You can't walk around the car, hit a pillow, douse yourself with water or even count to 10 since you must continue keeping alternate lanes," he said.

Somodevilla and Tedford say they're not sure why more people are resorting to violence now.

"We've always had Central Expressways," Somodevilla said. "Traffic is worse now, but that's not the problem. There's an erosion for authority, lack of control and respect for other guy."

The experts recommend fighting the urge to fight. Leave early to give yourself extra time so you don't get compelled to rush, and don't antagonize the other driver or give him a reason to pull out a gun, they say.

Tedford, for instance, suggests having a good radio or a CB radio. "I don't talk a whole lot, but I listen to truckers as a diversion. I don't feel like I'm wasting time."

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Dallas woman finds fulfillment caring for abandoned child

Associated Press
DALLAS — Sally McKenzie never expected the heartache and the happiness, the trials and the triumphs.

At first, it was just a routine baby-sitting job.

Three years ago, a young woman came to McKenzie with a newborn in her arms. The woman said the baby's name was Joey.

"She asked me to watch him while she worked for a grooming salon," McKenzie says.

What was supposed to be a part-time job turned into a lifetime of devotion when Joey's mother abandoned him with McKenzie.

"When she brought him to me, he had an empty bottle, one diaper and no shirt," McKenzie says. "She was paying me good, though. Never skipped out on a payment until she left for good."

McKenzie says she is glad Joey's mother left him with her.

"At that time, I really needed him, like he needed me," she says. McKenzie, 37, says she was just getting

through a rough divorce from her third husband.

She says she eventually would have adopted Joey, but one thing gave the legal proceeding a special urgency. Joey had a heart defect that required an immediate operation . . . generally, something only a legal guardian could approve.

A hole in the heart's wall and a blocked ventricle made Joey's chances of survival slim, doctors at Children's Medical Center in Dallas told McKenzie.

One day, "I'm going to tell him, 'Your momma may have left you, but here's a hundred and more people that did love and care for you,'" — Sally McKenzie.

After she adopted Joey, she helped pay for his operation.

Despite the unusual circumstances of his adoption, and the heart condition that will follow him the rest of his life, McKenzie is determined to give Joey a normal life.

McKenzie, single with three children of her own and not a dime in the bank, started a campaign to adopt Joey.

"I couldn't afford to hire an attorney to help me get the adoption printed up some fliers and get people to raise money for the operation and surgery," she says.

With the help of friend Kenner, she went to bars and clubs to pick up a jar to collect money, she was able to raise \$900 — enough to pay the legal fees to adopt the five-week-old boy.

"I'm going to tell him, 'Your momma may have left you, but here's a hundred and more people that did love and care for you,'" McKenzie says. "Maybe he'll appreciate life a little more."

After she adopted Joey, she helped pay for his operation.

Despite the unusual circumstances of his adoption, and the heart condition that will follow him the rest of his life, McKenzie is determined to give Joey a normal life.

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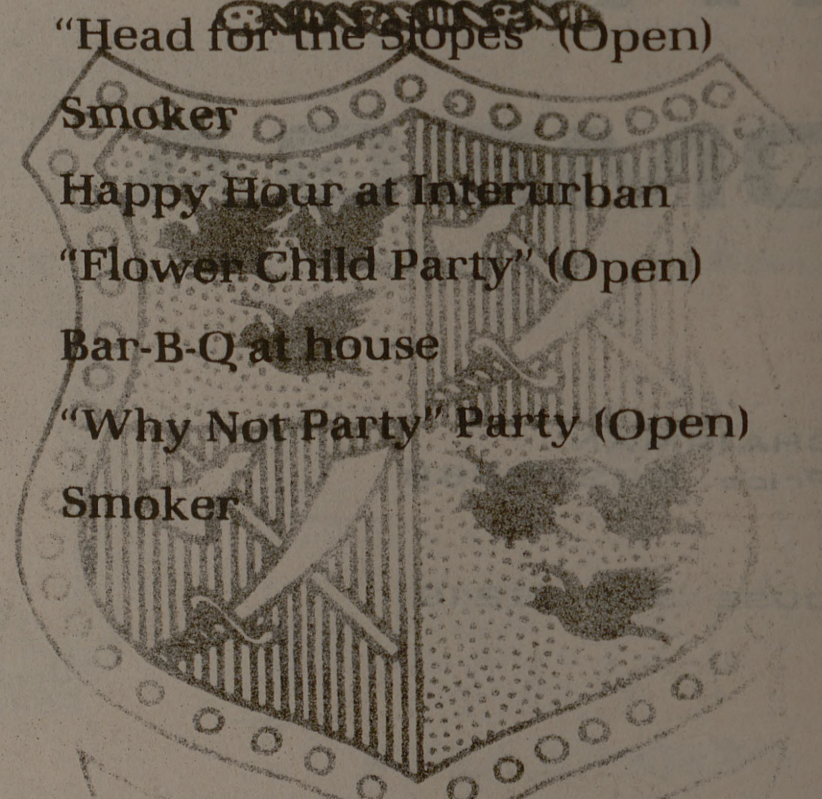
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