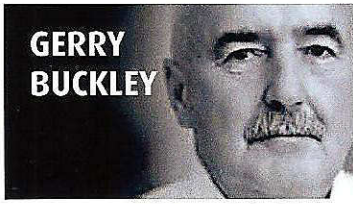


**GERRY
BUCKLEY**



A 23 year old college student in the United States hacked a college worker to death with a hatchet after the two argued about the student's car being parked in a service area. Other cases in the US stem from equally trivial causes, such as the case where a driver was shot and killed "because he was driving too slowly". In another incident, a driver rear ended a vehicle and for his mistake he was shot.

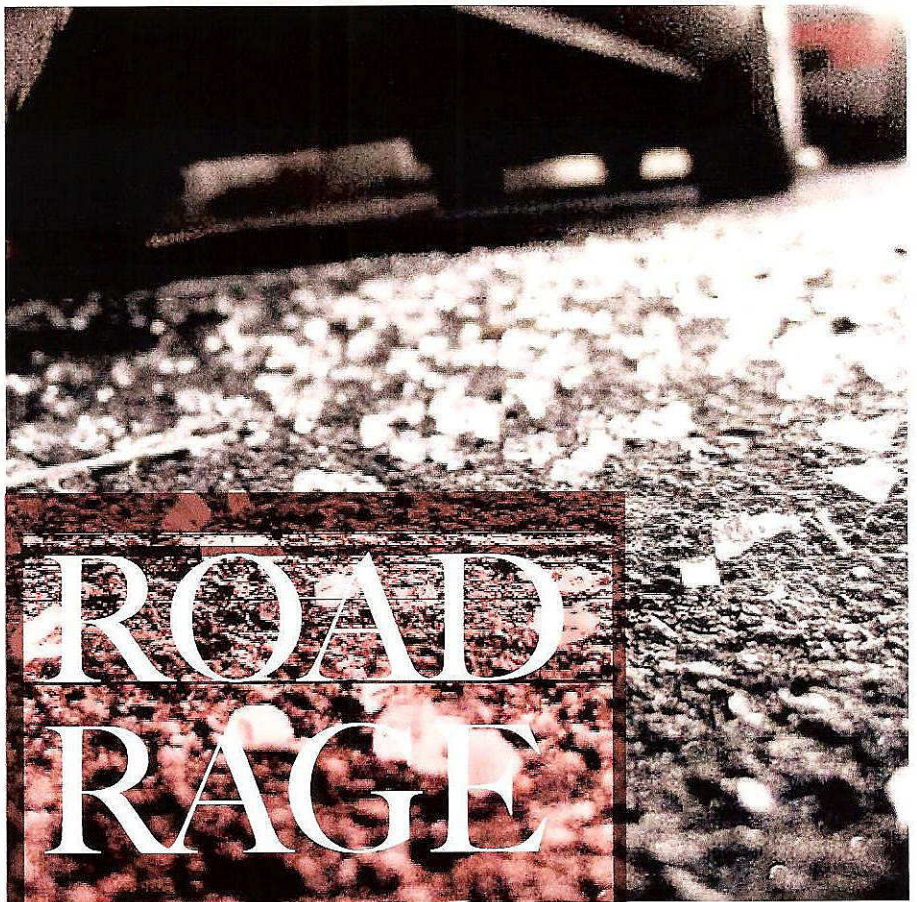
An average of 1,500 people are injured or killed in the United States each year as a result of Road Rage. In California, Oscar winning actor Jack Nicholson believed that the driver of a Mercedes cut him off in traffic. The actor grabbed a golf club, stepped out of his car at traffic lights and repeatedly struck the roof, smashed the windscreen and windows of the other motorist's car, all the time shouting "you cut me off".

Road Rage, sounds like it's taken from a futuristic film or science fiction. Sadly it's not. Road rage is aggressive or angry behaviour by a driver of a car or other motor vehicle; uncontrolled anger that results in violence or threatened violence on the road. It is criminal behaviour. Road rage incidents can be distinguished from other traffic incidents by their wilful criminal nature.

With the advancement in our society in varied aspects such as technology and education, the human mind has not yet learned to curb mindless aggressions. We have state of the art cars complete with vast improvements with a result we have bred a new type of driver better known as the aggressor or the bully, whose act of aggression better known by its somewhat eloquent name of road rage.

Road rage has impacted on each of our lives at some stage – no matter how small the occurrence may be, such as someone deliberately increasing speed as you go to overtake, tailgating you, sudden braking, to mention just a few.

Road rage can take on many different facets of driving behaviour, ranging from verbal or gesticulated abuse to downright dangerous driving – forcing another vehicle off the road. In extreme cases physical violence is used. In other countries knives and even firearms have been used with serious and sometimes fatal consequences. The reasons for these traffic



If driving weren't dangerous enough, simple mistakes or lack of courtesy can cause even the mild mannered to turn into aggressive bullies. Is it worth it, asks Gerry Buckley



6 tips on how to avoid road rage incidents...

- 1 Avoid eye contact with aggressive drivers.
- 2 Do not react to provocation.
- 3 Allow ample time to complete a journey.
- 4 Be polite and courteous when others are not.
- 5 Don't tailgate.
- 6 Don't take traffic problems personally.

disputes are – 'Get Mad, Get Even' – at all costs. Some of the reasons for road rage include, in no particular order: driving too slowly, 'you cut me off', 'gave me the V sign or fist', kept beeping his horn at me', 'would not pull off the overtaking lane', 'approached me with his headlamps on' or common arguments over a parking space.

Regardless of the consequences, the philosophy of 'get mad, get even' is being adopted by many behind the wheel.

Where does this aggression come from? Some experts insist that our biological roots – in relation to our personality – are to blame. It does not relate to gender, as both men and women, young and old engage in aggressive driving. For example, you see that aggressive driver coming up behind you, edging for that safety gap you have left between you and the vehicle in front. As far as they are concerned it is a free space ahead of you and they want it at any price. ■

Gerry Buckley is a retired Garda Driving Instructor from the Garda College, Templemore and qualified as a Class 1 Police Driving Instructor at the Scottish Police College.