

## Is Your Driver A Monster In Disguise?

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*Can I Give You A Lift?*

If we can remember one important lesson from the tragic traffic death of Princess Diana it is that knowing your driver is important for your safety and survival.

In August of 1997 Princess Diana got into the back seat of a Mercedes along with her friend Dodi Al Fayed and her body guard Trevor Reese Jones. The vehicle driver was Henri Paul, an employee of the Ritz Hotel in Paris who was given the task of whisking the group away from a group of photographers.

Mr. Paul passed through the Place De La Concorde and then onto an expressway where he suddenly accelerated. In those few seconds there would have been no

opportunity for Princess Diana to do anything about the driver's actions as she was on the far side of the vehicle and at the mercy of the driver's actions. As they approached the Alma tunnel a slower moving Fiat Uno entered the roadway and a glancing impact occurred to the right front of the Mercedes, sending it into a head-on collision with an unprotected pillar of the Alma tunnel. It was concluded that the Mercedes was travelling over 60 mph (about 100 km/h) when the impact occurred. While there were other circumstances that contributed to Princess Diana's death, a major factor was the alcohol consumption of Mr. Paul and his sudden decision to accelerate the vehicle to an exceptional speed given the locale.

Many additional deaths occur on our roadways because we do not evaluate the character of the driver when we chose to accept a ride with them. Is the driver you ride with dependable enough to make proper decisions and not take unnecessary risks?



The risks your driver takes could be the last for all involved.

Young drivers are often accompanied by friends as they socialize, particularly on holidays or weekends. An unplanned route can be a dangerous precursor to spontaneous decisions. Accompanied by a desire to "show off" to friends these factors can be deadly. Parents should make it an important activity to know their children's friends and to evaluate the character of the driver who will transport them.

If the monster cannot be stopped then at least we can assure that, following a crash, it is the only body lying on the roadside.



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