

# WHEN YOU PUT YOUR FOOT DOWN

TEXT & IMAGES: NICHOLAS CARROLL

*I've looked left, right and left again, and commenced my crossing of Centenary Boulevard by foot. All clear. The road is quiet, the wind rustling a few leaves overhead.*

A split second later, I am assaulted by the whine of an engine and subsequently obliterated as your speeding vehicle flicks me off my feet. Accustomed to an area speed limit of 50km/h, I never saw you coming.

At the inquest, you suggest that I simply 'stepped into the road without looking'. The coroner is not fooled of course, as the crime scene photos show my body in several pieces, synonymous with being struck by a freight train.

When you put your foot down - I risk cutting you off when I change lanes, as you speed by at twice the legal

limit. I executed my manoeuvre correctly, not expecting your excessive speed and acceleration. At the inquest, you suggest that I was probably 'distracted' that day. The coroner is not fooled as he concludes that the damage to both our vehicles looks as if it was caused by a guided missile from an enemy attack.

When you put your foot down - you paralyze my decision-making ability. But the coroner always knows when you have put your foot down.

***Just stick within the limit - 50 is way cooler than 100.***





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Early motor cars were not allowed on the road unless escorted by a man walking ahead with a red flag.

Pedestrians are considered to be the hardest group of people to control and enforce laws upon. In Australia or Singapore where “Jaywalking” is a full blown criminal offence, you will be heavily fined.

If you’ve never driven a car, your perception of speed and depth is severely restricted. So, it is incumbent upon the driver (like it or not) to look out for people crossing the road at undesignated spots.

Numerous global surveys show that the average pedestrian can reasonably judge the safest moment to cross the road when cars are traveling at under 45 KM per hour - on a clear day. In rainy conditions, reasonable judgement of safe crossing is reduced to under 35KM per hour.



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FACT

There are over 10 000 road accident deaths recorded in SA every year. 45% are pedestrians.

Road signs, rules and guidelines were designed to prevent all out carnage on roads at the turn of the century. Before that, no one knew what side of the road to drive and intersections were not considered stop or yield points. Thousands died.