

It can make for anxious moments on the road.

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Highlight: You're driving next to a big rig holding tightly on the wheel and feeling way too close for comfort. Well, soon that tractor-trailer may actually be driving itself--a kind of cruise control on steroids, if you will.

Body

LESTER HOLT: It can make for anxious moments on the road. You're driving next to a big rig holding tightly on the wheel and feeling way too close for comfort. Well, soon that tractor-trailer may actually be driving itself--a kind of cruise control on steroids, if you will. We get the story tonight from NBC's Joe Fryer.

(Begin VT)

MAN: I'm going to go ahead and push the button and turn it on.

JOE FRYER: The self-driving car movement is truly growing. Daimler has unveiled the Freightliner Inspiration, an eighteen-wheeler that can drive itself.

MAN: I'm completely hands-free.

JOE FRYER: The semi-truck still needs a driver who steers it to the highway. From there, cameras and sensors help keep the big rig in a single lane, a safe distance from other cars. But if there's an emergency, the driver takes over.

MARY AUFDEMBERG (Freightliner Trucks Director of Product Marketing): At this point for us, we feel it's really important to continue to have drivers in the vehicle. We absolutely want a driver to be able to take control at any time.

JOE FRYER: In 2013, crashes involving large trucks killed nearly four thousand people and injured ninety-five thousand others.

PHIL LEBEAU (CNBC Airline and Auto Industry Reporter): Self-driving trucks are important because it could alleviate one of the huge problems in this industry, and that's driver fatigue.

JOE FRYER: The world's top automakers are developing in testing autonomous technology for personal vehicles. Google's even working on a car with no steering wheel. And earlier this year--

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I'm in the passenger seat. And you can see no one is in the driver's seat.

--BMW showed us a car that can valet park itself. But right now, automakers can only tests self-driving cars in four states: California, Nevada, Michigan and Florida, plus the District of Columbia.

PHIL LEBEAU: This is a case where the technology is moving faster than the lawmakers.

JOE FRYER: While Daimler's semi is now licensed to drive on public roads in Nevada, the company wants to conduct more tests and ignite a conversation about driverless driving.

Joe Fryer, NBC News, Los Angeles.

(End VT)

LESTER HOLT: We're back in a moment with the reason why Pope Francis might want to start working on his jump shot.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

LESTER HOLT: Former Speaker of the House Jim Wright has died. He had a career in politics spanning decades. But the Texas Democrat will go down in history as the first speaker to resign amid scandal. Wright stepped down in 1989, while facing a House ethics investigation over his financial affairs- -a battle that some say marked the beginning of today's hyper-partisan climate. Speaker Wright was ninety-two years old.

Employees at a Florida Pizza Hut noticed something strange on an online order, a cry for help. Police say a woman persuaded her boyfriend who was holding her and her children hostage to let her order pizza. She did so through a smartphone app. And in the comments section she wrote, "Please, help. Get 911 to me." That's exactly what they did, resolving the situation without anyone getting hurt.

He has traveled the globe, and now Pope Francis is a Globetrotter. The Harlem Globetrotters paid a visit to the Vatican during their tour through Italy. The iconic basketball tricksters made the pope an honorary member of the team. They gave him his own jersey and helped him spin a ball, though he might want to work in that for a bit.

When we come back, the royal baby and why at least one young man might not be as thrilled as the rest of us.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

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