# [***John Grogan / Boob eyes tube while driving***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:47KN-2080-01JV-C0R7-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

It's 5:20 p.m. on a workday and I am merging onto the Vine Street Expressway into a wall of traffic. In front of me, a Ford Escort that looks like an escapee from the salvage yard weaves like a bee.

A weaving car in Philly rush hour? Stop the presses! But this car catches my eye. The passenger compartment emanates an odd blue-gray glow, the kind of otherworldly radiance you might see coming from a spaceship just before aliens emerge and ask to see your leader. (What? You mean, you've never seen this?)

The glow gets the best of my curiosity. I slip between two tractor-trailer rigs and pull alongside. This is what I see: A man watching television.

Not a passenger watching TV. The driver watching TV. As he merges into traffic. At the height of rush hour.

Earth to aliens: Beam him up, please.

The TV is not some miniature travel model. It's the real deal, the kind you might have on your kitchen counter. And it's somehow wedged on the dashboard above the center console where it blocks the better part of the windshield.

In my commuting adventures, I have seen a lot: drivers shaving, applying makeup, tying ties, reading novels, jotting notes and, of course, gabbing endlessly on ***cell phones***. I've even seen motorists executing several of these multitasking feats of skill simultaneously.

But never before have I seen someone turn a car into a mobile multiplex. What? No Raisinets?

I'm dying to find out what could be such must-see TV that this upstanding member of the commuting public would risk his life and everyone else's around him to watch.

Couldn't he wait till he was in safer surroundings - say, while dismantling explosives back in his garage - to tune in? I pull beside him again and can almost see what's on the screen when - WHOA! Here he comes!

I hit the brakes. The truck behind me hits the brakes. The 13,000 commuters behind the truck hit their brakes. And over drifts Mr. Teletubby. No blinker. No warning. No clue.

I back off and follow at a safe distance, watching the glowing Escort wind and weave up the Schuylkill and onto the Blue Route. I finally lose him at Plymouth Meeting when he peels off on 276 East toward New Jersey.

Where is Tony Soprano when we need him?

I never did find out what my pal was watching. But I'm pretty sure he had his own private Ralph and Norton Show unfolding right there in the driver's seat.

If he keeps this up, he's sure to get his very own show: Do You Want to Be a Highway Smear?

Later, I talk to State Police Trooper Chris Paris at the Belmont Barracks. This can't be legal, can it?

Trooper Paris assures me that driving under the influence of reruns is definitely not legal. Specifically, Title 75, Section 4527 of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code prohibits any motor vehicle from having a television mounted "forward of the back of the driver's seat or otherwise visible to the driver."

"If I saw that on the road, I'd pull him over and write him a ticket," Paris said. Yes!

And the fine? A whopping $25 ($100 with costs).

Well, it's the thought that counts.

Trooper Paris wants to stress that looking away for even a moment - let alone for a half-hour sitcom - can be deadly. And more of us, he says, are looking away - to dial ***cell phones***, to eat Big Macs, and, in my case, to try to figure out what the guy in next car is watching.

"At 55 m.p.h you're traveling 80 feet per second. That's the physics of it. And who drives 55 out there?"

No one I know. Anything else?

"Any task that takes away from the driving is a potentially dangerous one."

OK, trooper, are you about done?

"You are your neighbor's keeper. By driving carelessly, not only do you hazard yourself, but you put everyone else at risk."

So is this guy a complete moron?

"I would say unwise."

Trooper, you're kinder than I am.

OK, Mr. Unwise, here's a tip: Next time you hear the boob tube's siren call, do us all a favor. Pull over.

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