

Humboldt Road Rage du Fromage

Story told by Steve Welling

First, I must impress upon you that the following events are absolutely true. They occurred in the summer of 2021, while my family and I were visiting Eureka. The kids had been binge-watching Net Flick's "Murder Mountain". I was trying to show them a more objective picture of the place I grew up in. We were headed to the beach.

It was under these conditions that my family was driving east on 5th street. My wife, Kimberly was behind the wheel and I was riding shotgun (though not in the literal, "Murder Mountain" sense of things).

Kim attempted a left-to-right lane change, unaware of a pickup truck in her blind spot. The driver honked his horn. Kim returned to her original lane while braking hard. We found ourselves a couple of car lengths behind the offended truck.

On cue, the traffic light up ahead of both of us turned red. As we were closing the distance between us and the truck, the truck driver began to roll down his window.

"Good time to make a left turn", observed my son Easton from the back seat, showing wisdom beyond his 18 years. However, much to the dismay of all other passengers, Kim vectored the car to pull up right next to the truck. And me without my shotgun.

Without willing it to do so, I saw that my window had also been rolled down. I heard, coming from the back seat, a chorus of "Sorry 'bout that!". "My bad!" , "really sorry!" the sum of which sounded like my fellow passengers were begging for their lives.

The stage was now set for the man in the truck, whom I can now describe as a thirty-something bearded guy dressed in blue-collar work clothes. Would he be angry? Would he make certain animated gestures? Would he use a gun to

reduce our windshield to safety glass confetti? Or might he instead offer us a fine selection of cheeses? Yes, It appeared that the correct answer was my last guess. Anyone's last guess. He reached out his window without hesitation, extending a couple of small bricks to us ,”would you like some goat cheese?”

The chorus of pleadings fell silent. Every occupant in our car, jaws dropped, stared at the man for several awkward seconds. I admit frankly that I had not prepared for an exchange of cheeses in traffic that day, and was relieved when the light finally turned green. His truck went forward. As the truck driver closed his window, so too was closed a certain window of opportunity. I would describe the expression on his face as one of rejection.

I am no master of traffic law. I know even less about traffic etiquette, but Goat Cheese Man, I like your style. Thanks for drawing our attention to a dangerous mistake we were making then offering us encouragement and confidence for the road ahead.