



## JEAN SHEPHERD

**NO STOPS EXCEPT FOR EMERGENCY**  
Philadelphia (UPI)—Residents of a Philadelphia suburb complained yesterday of an incident involving a helicopter. Witnesses charged that suddenly a helicopter landed without authorization in the back yard of a Main Line estate. The pilot leaped from the craft and dashed into a clump of nearby bushes. Several moments later he reappeared, took off rapidly and disappeared in a Southwesterly direction. Local police expressed complete mystification.

Well, the police may be mystified, but I'm not. As I read this little poignant newsnote buried, as most significant items usually are, deep amid Magic Truss ads and Public Notices proclaiming the lack of responsibility for debts incurred, my overheated mind instantly conjured up the desperate scene as the helicopter pilot, in the clutch of overpowering forces, knew what he had to do. And did it. In a costly private hedge.

The power of suggestion is great. On the way back from the men's room I continued to mull over this human drama. I got to thinking about what happened in the hedges and how modern life has made this situation a more-than-passing pressing problem, if you'll excuse the allusion. Later, when I saw my friend Ockie inhaling an orange drink over the counter at Nedick's, I asked him how he handled it.

"Funny you should ask, buddy." He clanked his glass down on the counter and nodded for a refill. "Y' got no idea what kind of trouble y' can get into when yer pushin' a hack for ten hours straight and y' been drinkin' beer the night before. Lemme tell you, I used to know some real nervous times."

"What do you mean, *used to*?" I asked.

"Well, buddy," he shot back, his voice ten decibels higher so that the surrounding audience would be sure to hear, if not appreciate, his wisdom. "There has never been a greater invention than the fruit jar. Carry mine under the seat, and let me tell you, it has made life a hell of a lot easier."

"Yeah, I can see that."

"To be truthful, I don't actually use a fruit jar. I got one a them Heinz kosher pickle jars, the one-quart size."

The shorter of two account executives standing beside us paid his bill hurriedly and dashed out onto Seventh Avenue with a frantic look on his face. Nedick's does not have public facilities and, as I've said, the power of suggestion is strong.

Between Ockie and the bush pilot I got to thinking. I now hereby pen an open letter to the clear-eyed, visionary men responsible for the design of today's automobile:

"Dear Car Designer:

I don't want you to think that I am trying to tell you how to run your business, but it seems to me that you have overlooked something. I realize that selling cars can be quite a problem since it isn't easy to get most guys to shake loose four or five thousand clams without gilding the lily, so to speak. I understand that most buyers get more worked up over a fancy stereo or racing stripes or a decal that says "Boss" than they ever do over such things as decent brakes. I understand this and sympathize with your problem. Also, in these A.N. days (After Nader) things have even gotten tougher, what with one crowd hollering about such things as braking velocity and noxious gas emissions and the other crowd wanting more decals and bigger sound sys-

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In the new Whoopeemobile,  
color-coordinated  
Comfort Facilities  
designed by Peter Max  
will add a new  
dimension to your  
driving luxury

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tems and fatter 4-barrel carbs. It can't be easy. But the reason I'm writing is because of a new difficulty for drivers which has come into being because of the increase in Turnpike driving.

"I don't know how to put this into words without offending, but I hope you can understand that I am not trying to be facetious, nor am I cracking bad jokes, etcetera. While driving on the Massachusetts Turnpike recently I had a rather unpleasant occurrence. It was late at night and we had been driving for some time. The stereo was working fine, as was everything else, when we passed a sign that read 'Food, Lodging, Telephone, Rest Rooms—38 Miles.' It was green and white and was, I thought, a rather pleasant, well-designed sign. Well sir, no sooner had we passed this sign when someone announced that she was glad we were approaching a "rest stop" and would I please accelerate so that we would get there sooner. I did, and shortly thereafter I pointed out

the advantages of the modern car to my passengers, since we could easily exceed 100 miles per hour in emergencies, which this had become.

"The 38 miles fairly flew by as my stricken passenger became more anxious moment by moment. She was joined by another passenger who had also discovered that Nature does not wait.

"Well, you can imagine our consternation when the Howard Johnson's finally appeared . . . and was dark. It had been closed for repairs and, I can tell you, there was some excitement in the back seat when we discovered the extent of the dilemma. Another sign in the same tasteful green and white announced 'Next Fuel and Rest Stop—58 Miles.' Well, sir, you can imagine the commotion that took place!

"I, as the driver, attempted to soothe the victims (who had been now joined by a third) by telling them stories and playing games such as 'Animal-Vegetable-Mineral' in order to keep their minds off their problem. I have found that this sometimes helps.

"A sign which read "No Stops Except for Emergency" finally did it. At their hysterical urging I pulled into this Emergency Stop, barely in the nick of time. Two of them made it down the embankment into the bushes, but the third, in the excitement, didn't quite make it and it was embarrassing for all.

"Well, we were no sooner stopped when a police car with a revolving blue light pulled in behind us and the trooper refused to believe my explanations and wrote out a ticket for committing a 'public nuisance.'

"So, my suggestion to you is that there has been added to the modern automobile an almost infinite number of accessories, so-called, but the designers have failed to keep up with what has become, in modern driving, a true necessity. Hence, I suggest for the cheaper model of automobile a simple relief tube such as has been available in aircraft for many years. In the luxury vehicles a well-appointed, tastefully-decorated Rest Room could be easily incorporated in lieu of the vast areas of hood space which have become largely superfluous. It would make a very attractive selling point as well. The advertisements are easily visualized:

*At last! Complete living comfort for long-distance driving in the new luxury Whoopeemobile! Color-coordinated and designed by Peter Max, the Comfort Facilities add a new dimension to your driving luxury. A breakthrough in functional design!*

"You can see the possibilities here and I do not wish to belabor the point. I am also willing to give you this idea free of charge, with no strings attached, so you can feel free to use it. I am confident that the public, which has been aware of this problem for some time, will be enthusiastic."

I read my letter over twice and felt that I had covered the ground adequately. So for all of us who have felt that moment of terror in the dark, I signed it, sealed it and mailed it off. Now let's wait and see what happens. •