

Both hands on the wheel

A short book about using your phone while driving and
trusting that you're the exception

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First edition

Written by AI with human guidance. It can
contain mistakes, which later editions correct.

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Before you start

This is a short book and you can read it in two or three sittings. It's about one habit, which is looking at your phone while you're driving. Not the person who props it on the passenger seat and types a paragraph at sixty. The ordinary version. The look at the red light. The message read on your knee at thirty because it buzzed and you wanted to know. The call taken on speaker with the phone in your hand because the cradle's in the other car. The tap on the map because it's taken you the wrong way.

You know it's dangerous. Everyone does. You've seen the adverts, and you may have a rule about it that you keep most of the time. This book isn't going to tell you what you already know, and it isn't going to describe a crash to you. It's going to do something else, which is look at the beliefs that let a person who knows it's dangerous do it anyway. That it's only a glance. That you only do it when it's safe. That you're a good driver. That you've done it a thousand times and nothing's happened. That hands-free is fine. That the message might matter. Each of those has something true in it, and each one, I'll argue, is doing a job for the habit rather than for you.

The law is stated once here and once in chapter 15, and that's all. In Great Britain it's illegal to hold and use a phone or any similar device while driving, including at traffic lights and in queues, and the GOV.UK page on the subject is the source for anything I say about it. Hands-free use is allowed. Chapter 7 is about why that's a fact about the law and not about your attention.

If you drive for a living, chapter 22 is written with you in mind, and nothing in the method needs you to be unreachable for a whole shift. If you're the parent of someone who passed their test in the last two years, chapter 15 has one fact you'll want them to know, and chapter 22 has the thing that works better than telling them.

And if the phone is a problem everywhere, not just in the car, the book you want is *The phone can wait*. This one takes the urge as read and deals with the car.

The notes at the back give my sources and their limits. Where I'm giving my own reasoning rather than a finding, I'll say so.

The red light, the knee, and the buzz

You're on the high street at ten past eight, third car back at the lights. The phone's in the cupholder and it lights up. You don't decide to look. Your hand is already there, and by the time the light goes green you've read the message, thought of a reply, and typed half of it. The car in front moves. You move. You finish the reply with your thumb at fifteen miles an hour, looking up between words, and put the phone back with the feeling of having done nothing at all.

Or it's the A-road at fifty. The buzz. You leave it for a bit, because you're not the kind of person who looks at fifty. Then the road straightens out and empties, and you pick it up and hold it low against your knee where nobody in the next lane can see it, and you read. Two seconds, maybe three. Your eyes come back up and everything's where you left it. It was a message about a parcel.

Or it's a call. You're on speaker, the phone in your left hand because the cradle's in the other car, and you're driving with your right. The call's fine. The driving's fine. Nobody could say you weren't in control.

Or it's the map. It's told you to turn where there's no turn, and you tap it to see what it meant, and then you tap it again, and for about six seconds you're a person looking at a screen who is also, in a secondary sort of way, steering.

Those are invented, but I'd guess at least two of them are yours. Some words. **The peek** is any look at the phone while the car is moving or in traffic, however short. **The knee** is where the phone goes to be read without being seen, and it's the position that takes your eyes furthest from the road. **The lights** is phone use while you're stopped at a red light or in a queue, which most people don't count. **The buzz** is the notification, and **the itch** is the urge that follows it, or arrives without one. **The safe moment** is the stretch of road you judge empty enough to look. **The clean sheet** is the fact that you've never crashed while doing any of this, and **the thousand** is roughly how many peeks that clean sheet contains. **Out of reach** is where the phone is going to live, which chapter 18 is about. **The drive setting** is the feature on most phones that silences it when it detects driving. **The standing message** is what you tell the people who expect replies, which chapter 19 is about.

Before you go on, do one thing for a week. Every time you peek, at the lights or on the move, make a note when you've parked. Where you were, roughly what speed, and what the message or the tap was actually about. Don't change anything yet. You'll want the list in chapter 11, and I think it'll surprise you.

Why the peek makes sense

Nobody reads a message on their knee at fifty because they've weighed it up. They do it because the phone buzzed and the itch arrived and the road looked empty, and in that moment looking is the thing that makes the itch go away. It's worth being honest about what the peek gives you, because a habit that gave you nothing wouldn't have survived the adverts.

It gives you relief. The buzz opens a question, who is it and what do they want, and the peek closes it. The itch is uncomfortable in a small way and the peek ends it. It gives you a use for dead time. The drive is twenty minutes in which you can't do anything else, and the phone turns it into twenty minutes in which you can. It keeps you reachable, which matters if you have a job or children or a parent who might ring. It gives you the map when you need the map. And it gives you, every single time, the experience of nothing happening. You looked, you looked back up, the road was where it was. That last one is the strongest, and it's the one chapter 6 is about.

Underneath those there's a set of beliefs, and they're the chapters that follow. That a glance is nothing. That you only do it when it's safe, and you're the one who knows when that is. That you're a good driver and the risk is other people. That you've done it a thousand times. That hands-free is fine, or voice is fine, or it's no different from talking to a passenger. That the message might be urgent. That you'd stop if it were really dangerous. That it's only at the lights, and everyone does it anyway.

Each of those has something true in it. Most glances are short. You are, probably, a decent driver. You have done it a thousand times. And each of them is doing the same job, which is making the peek feel like a decision you've already thought about, when it's a thing your hand does when the phone lights up.

This book isn't going to tell you the itch isn't real. It's going to look at each belief, with the research where there is some, and then it's going to give you a way of driving where the itch doesn't get a vote, not because you've resolved to resist it but because the phone isn't where your hand can reach.

"It's only a glance"

A glance is short. That's the whole case for it. Two seconds, eyes down, eyes up, and the road hasn't had time to change. Held against a crash, which is a big thing, a glance seems like nothing, and the belief that it's nothing is what lets you do it.

Here's what the research measures, and it's the glance itself. Bruce Simons-Morton and colleagues fitted the cars of forty-two newly licensed teenage drivers with cameras and sensors and recorded them for eighteen months. Then they looked at the six seconds before every crash and near-crash, and at random stretches of ordinary driving, and measured how long the driver's eyes were off the road ahead. The single longest glance was what mattered. When it went over two seconds, the odds of a crash or near-crash were 3.8 times higher across every kind of task, and 5.5 times higher when the task involved a phone. The longer the glance, the higher the risk, and it didn't matter what the glance was for.

Those were teenagers, and you'll want to know about adults. Sheila Klauer and colleagues ran the same kind of study with the same forty-two novices alongside a hundred and nine experienced drivers, and published it in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. For the novices, dialling a phone raised the odds of a crash or near-crash by more than eight times, and reaching for one by seven. For the experienced drivers, dialling raised it by two and a half times. Texting wasn't assessed in the experienced group, so I can't give you that figure, and I won't make one up. What I can say is that experience shrank the number and didn't remove it.

Now the arithmetic, which is mine. At thirty miles an hour you cover about thirteen metres a second. A two-second glance is twenty-seven metres of road you didn't see, which is about six car lengths. At fifty it's forty-five metres. The glance feels like nothing because nothing was there in the twenty-seven metres, this time, and the road doesn't send a reminder when something was nearly there.

Jeff Caird and colleagues pulled together twenty-eight experiments on texting while driving, nearly a thousand participants between them, and found that reading and typing messages affected everything they measured. Where the eyes went, what got noticed, how fast people reacted, how well they stayed in lane, how close they followed. Reading alone did less damage than typing, and it still did some. The glance isn't nothing. It's a measured thing with a measured cost, and the reason it feels like nothing is the subject of the next three chapters.

"I only do it when it's safe"

This is the belief that does most of the work, so it's worth taking seriously. You don't peek on a roundabout. You don't peek in the rain with a lorry alongside. You peek when the road is straight and empty and nothing's coming, and you know it's empty because you looked. The safe moment is real, in the sense that some moments are safer than others, and you're choosing them.

The trouble is who's doing the choosing. David Sanbonmatsu, David Strayer and colleagues put drivers in a simulator, some talking on a hands-free phone and some not, and afterwards asked everyone how safely they'd driven. The drivers who weren't on the phone had a fair idea. Their ratings of their own driving lined up with the number of errors they'd actually made. The drivers who'd been on the phone made more errors, which you'd expect, and their ratings of their own driving had no relationship at all to their errors. Being on the phone didn't just make them worse. It took away their ability to tell.

That's the problem with the safe moment. It's judged by the same mind that's about to be partly on the phone, and often by a mind that already is, because the itch arrived before the judgement did. You aren't assessing the road and then deciding. You're wanting to look and then finding the road acceptable.

Paul Atchley and colleagues found something stranger in a survey of three hundred and forty-eight young drivers. When drivers chose to start a text themselves, rather than replying to one or just reading one, they rated the road conditions at the time as safer.

The road hadn't changed. The choice had, and the sense of safety followed the choice rather than leading it. The authors put it as behaviour shaping attitude, and I'd put it more plainly. Once you've decided to look, the road agrees with you.

I'm extending both findings here and I should say so.

Sanbonmatsu's drivers were talking, not reading, and Atchley's were surveyed, not filmed. But the shape is the same in both, and it fits what you'll have noticed if you're honest. You've never once looked at the phone and thought, this is a bad moment. The moments always seem fine. That isn't because they always are. It's because the part of you that judges has already been recruited.

"I'm a good driver, it's the others"

You probably are a good driver. Most people who've driven for fifteen years without hitting anything are, in the ordinary sense. And the belief that follows is that good driving covers the peek. You've got the reactions, the anticipation, the sense of the road, and a less good driver shouldn't look at their phone, but you can afford it.

In 1981 Ola Svenson asked drivers to rate their own skill and safety against the other people in the room, and most of them put themselves above the middle, which can't be true of most people. The original paper's abstract isn't available to me, so I'm citing it through Lina Koppel and colleagues, who repeated the study in 2023 with just over twelve hundred people and a preregistered plan. They got the same result. The majority rated both their skill and their safety as above average, on every scale they tried. This is called the better-than-average effect and it turns up in most things people are asked to rate themselves on. Driving is the classic case.

So the belief that your skill covers it is one that most drivers hold, including the ones it isn't true of, and you can't tell from the inside which group you're in. But there's a more specific finding, and it's worse. Sanbonmatsu, Strayer and colleagues gave university students a test of actual ability to do two things at once, and asked them how much they did it in daily life and how good they thought they were. The people who did the most of it, including the ones who reported the most phone use while driving, scored worst on

the test. And their estimate of their own ability was the most inflated. The people most likely to look at the phone in the car were the people least able to afford it and most sure they could.

That's one study of students and I don't want to lean on it harder than it can take. But put it next to Svenson and the picture is consistent. The feeling that you're the exception isn't evidence that you are. It's the feeling everyone has, and it's strongest in the people who peek most.

There's one more thing about good drivers. Being good at driving is being good at the thing you're doing when your eyes are on the road. It's not a reserve that keeps working when they aren't. Nobody's reactions cover the twenty-seven metres they didn't see.

"I've done it a thousand times"

This is the belief under all the others, and it's the one that feels least like a belief and most like a fact. You've peeked at the phone hundreds of times, maybe thousands, over years, and nothing has happened. Not a scrape. Not a swerve. The clean sheet is real and it's long, and every time you look it gets one longer. What could be better evidence than your own record?

Here's the figure the record is up against. Redelmeier and Tibshirani, in 1997, took six hundred and ninety-nine drivers who'd had a collision and who owned a mobile phone, and got the phone company's billing records for the day of the collision and for the same time the week before. A driver on a call was about four times as likely to be in a collision as the same driver not on a call. Within five minutes of a call it was nearly five times. The comparison is each driver against themselves, which removes the argument that phone users are just worse drivers.

Now think about what fourfold means for a rare thing. A collision on any given drive is very unlikely. Four times very unlikely is still unlikely. So a person who peeks on every drive for a year will, most years, have nothing happen, and will have a clean sheet a year longer, and will feel more sure than ever that they're the exception. The clean sheet isn't evidence that the risk is small. It's what a fourfold risk of a rare thing looks like from the inside, right up to the one drive where it doesn't.

You've crossed a road without looking because it's always empty at that hour. The record was clean there too, up to the morning it wasn't, and the record was never the reason it was empty. That's the whole of the analogy and it's the only one in this chapter.

There's a general version of this that Neil Weinstein described in 1980. He asked students to rate their own chances of good and bad events against their classmates', and they put themselves above average for the good ones and below for the bad. He called it unrealistic optimism and one of the things that fed it was personal experience. The more often something hasn't happened to you, the less likely it feels, whatever the numbers say. If that pattern is familiar from the other direction, from worrying about things that never come, the book *It hasn't happened yet* is about it. This is the same machinery running the other way, and it runs the seat belt and the helmet too.

The thousand isn't a sample of what happens when you peek. It's a sample of what happens when you peek and nothing's there. The one that matters hasn't been in the sample yet. That's not a scare, it's just what the clean sheet is made of.

"Hands-free is fine"

The law says you can, and the belief follows naturally. The problem with a phone in the car must be the hand off the wheel and the eyes off the road, so a phone in a cradle, on speaker, or through the car's own system has solved it. Your hands are on the wheel. Your eyes are ahead. What's left?

Attention is what's left, and it's the part that was doing the driving. In 2001 Strayer and Johnston had people drive a simulator while doing various things. Listening to the radio didn't hurt their driving. Listening to a book didn't. Repeating words back on a handheld phone didn't, which rules out holding, listening and speaking as the problem. What hurt was conversation. An ordinary conversation, on either a handheld or a hands-free phone, doubled the number of simulated traffic signals drivers failed to notice and slowed their reactions to the ones they did. Two years later Strayer, Frank Drews and William Johnston showed why. Drivers on a hands-free call were worse at reacting to the car in front braking, and afterwards they couldn't recognise roadside billboards they'd looked straight at. The eye tracking showed their eyes had been on the billboards. The attention hadn't. The authors called it inattention blindness, and it means looking without seeing.

The crash figures say the same thing. Redelmeier and Tibshirani's drivers, from the last chapter, showed no safety advantage for hands-free units, and the point estimate was actually higher. Suzanne McEvoy and colleagues did a similar study in Perth with four hundred and fifty-six drivers who'd ended up in hospital after a crash, using phone company records, and found phone use in the

ten minutes before a crash was associated with about four times the risk. Hands-free was 3.8, handheld 4.9, and the difference wasn't significant. Their last sentence was that using a hands-free phone is not any safer.

Two meta-analyses pull the experiments together. William Horrey and Christopher Wickens combined twenty-three studies and found the cost fell mostly on reaction time, and that hands-free and handheld showed the same pattern. Jeff Caird and colleagues combined thirty-three, about two thousand participants, and put the average slowing at a quarter of a second, the same for both phone types. They also found that drivers on the phone didn't compensate by slowing down or leaving more room. Yoko Ishigami and Raymond Klein reviewed the two types directly and found hands-free was rarely better, and that some drivers compensated for a handheld phone and forgot to for a hands-free one, because it felt safe.

So the law permits hands-free, and that's a fact about the law. The law draws its line where a police officer can see it, at the hand. The attention research draws it somewhere else. I'm not telling you that a hands-free call is illegal or that you can never take one. I'm telling you the belief that it's fine is the belief the evidence is least kind to.

"It's no different from talking to a passenger"

If conversation is the problem, this belief says, then every car with two people in it is a hazard, and nobody's banning passengers. You talk to your partner on the motorway. You talk to your mate on the way to the football. A call is the same thing with the person somewhere else.

It isn't the same, and the difference is exactly where the person is. Frank Drews, Monisha Pasupathi and David Strayer had people drive a simulator while talking to a friend, either in the passenger seat or on a phone, about a time their life had been in danger, which is a conversation that takes some attention. Phone drivers made the most errors. And the recordings showed what passengers did that callers couldn't. The passengers talked about the traffic. Both driver and passenger simplified what they were saying when the road got harder. The conversation bent round the driving, because the passenger could see the driving.

Samuel Charlton went further. He compared passengers in the car, callers on hands-free, and a third group, callers who could see the driver's view through a window into the simulator. Passengers in the car slowed their talking as a hazard came up and sometimes said something about it. Callers did neither. The callers who could see the road did a little of it, and not enough to protect the driving. So it wasn't only about seeing. It was about being there, in the car, with your own body coming up to the roundabout too. Charlton also tried a phone that beeped at the caller when the driving got demanding, and that got the conversation close to what a passenger does. Nobody makes that phone.

The person on the phone doesn't know you're at a junction. They don't stop talking when the van pulls out. They keep going, because from where they are nothing's happening, and you keep up with them, because that's what a conversation is. A passenger is a second pair of eyes with a stake in the outcome. A caller is a voice that would like an answer. That's the whole difference, and it's a large one.

None of this makes passengers cost nothing, and a passenger who's upset or a child who's shouting takes attention too. But the belief that a call is just a passenger you can't see gets the difference backwards. The seeing is the point.

"I use voice, so I'm not looking"

The newer version of the belief has moved from the hands to the eyes. You don't hold the phone and you don't look at it. You say the message and it types it, you ask for the song and it plays, you tell it to ring someone and it rings. Eyes ahead the whole time. Surely that's solved.

Strayer, Joel Cooper and colleagues took two hundred and fifty-seven people and had each of them use the voice system in one of ten new cars, then gave them the car for five days to practise, then measured again. They rated the mental workload of using the systems as moderate to high, on average 3.34 out of 5, and it varied with how well designed the system was and how long the task took. Practice didn't fix it. Tasks that were hard on day one were still hard after a week. And the cost didn't stop when the task did. There were residual effects after the interaction had ended, meaning the driver's attention took time to come back even once they'd stopped talking to the car.

They ran a similar study on suburban roads with the voice assistants on three phones, placing calls, choosing music and sending texts by voice. Workload was significantly higher than driving alone. While drivers were talking to the phone their measured workload was no different from doing a demanding memory test, and again there was a residual cost that took a while to fade. I'm not printing the brand names, because the systems have changed since and the point isn't which was worst. The point is that none of them was free.

A voice message is a conversation with a machine that doesn't know you're driving, plus the composing of the message, plus the checking that it heard you. It's a tap you've left running in another room, one sentence, and that's the only analogy in this chapter. Eyes on the road, and some part of you listening for the overflow.

I'm not saying never use voice. If you must take a call, a voice command to answer it beats a hand on the phone, and the law agrees. I'm saying the belief that voice makes the phone cost nothing is the newest of the beliefs and the one with the freshest evidence against it.

"It's not like drink-driving"

You wouldn't drive after four pints. You'd think less of someone who did. But the phone feels like a different category. Drink-driving is a moral thing and the phone is a lapse, and the sizes feel different too.

Strayer, Drews and Dennis Crouch tested that directly. In a simulator, they compared drivers talking on a phone, handheld or hands-free, with drivers who'd drunk enough to reach 0.08 per cent blood alcohol, which is the legal limit in England and Wales. The two groups were impaired differently. The drinkers drove more aggressively, following closer and braking harder. The phone drivers braked later and had more collisions. When the authors controlled for the driving conditions and the time on task, they concluded the impairments from phone use can be as profound as those from driving at the limit.

That's one simulator study, and a simulator isn't a road. I'm not going to tell you that a text is a drink. What I'll say is that the feeling that they're in different categories isn't coming from a measurement. It's coming from the fact that one of them is what bad people do and the other is what you do at the lights. Categories that come from that source aren't much use for deciding anything.

The reason it's worth a chapter is that the drink category is one you already respect. You have a rule about drinking and driving, and the rule doesn't bend for an empty road or a short trip or a good driver. You don't say you only drink-drive when it's safe. If the

phone belongs anywhere near the same category, the rule it needs is the same kind of rule. Not a judgement made each time. A place the phone goes.

"It might be urgent"

The buzz might be anything. It might be the school. It might be your mother. It might be the boss, and if it's the boss it might be the one message that needed an answer in the next five minutes. The belief is that staying available is responsible, and that the peek is what availability costs.

Get out the list from chapter 1. If you did a week of it you'll have somewhere between ten and fifty peeks written down, and next to each one what it was. I'd guess, and it's a guess, that none of them needed an answer in the next five minutes, and that most of them didn't need one in the next hour. A parcel. A group chat. A friend asking if you're around. The boss saying call me when you can, which contains its own answer. The urgency was in the buzz, not in the message, and the buzz sounds the same for everything.

The one genuine emergency the law recognises is the 999 or 112 call when it's unsafe or impractical to stop, and that's the one you'd make, not the one you'd receive. Anything else that's truly urgent survives the four minutes it takes to reach a lay-by, and if it doesn't, it wasn't a message you could have done anything about at fifty anyway. The news will manage without you is about a similar belief with the headlines, and Sorry I'm late is about the optimism that turns four minutes into a thing you haven't got.

What the itch is actually about is the itch. The phone can wait makes the case in full, and I'll only summarise it. The urge to look isn't a response to the content of the message, which you don't know yet. It's a response to the buzz, and it's the same urge that has

you picking up the phone in a queue or on the sofa. In the car the urge has borrowed the word urgent, because it needed a reason that sounded like yours. But you didn't peek because it might be urgent. You peeked because it buzzed, and then urgent was the story.

So the answer to "it might be urgent" isn't "it never is". It's that you can't tell from the buzz, that the drive is short, and that anyone who genuinely needs you in the next five minutes will ring twice, which the drive setting lets through. Chapter 19 is about telling people that, so the belief doesn't have to keep doing the work.

"I'd stop if it were really dangerous"

This one's a comfort rather than a claim. You're a sensible person. If the peek were really as bad as the adverts say, you'd have stopped, and the fact that you haven't means some part of you has judged it and found it survivable. Your behaviour is the evidence of your assessment.

Atchley's survey of young drivers cuts through that. Ninety-two per cent said they read texts while driving, eighty-one per cent replied, seventy per cent started them. Two per cent never did it under any circumstances. And the same drivers rated all of this as very risky, riskier than talking on the phone. Their perception of the risk was a very weak predictor of whether they started texts and had no relationship at all to whether they read or replied. Knowing it was dangerous and doing it lived side by side without touching.

Heidi Nemme and Katherine White found the same in a study of a hundred and sixty-nine students, with a follow-up a week later. What predicted texting wasn't perceived control over the behaviour. It was attitude, what the person's friends did, and what they felt they ought to do. Intention predicted the behaviour. Believing it was risky didn't move much.

So the belief that you'd stop if it were really dangerous has the mechanism wrong. Knowing doesn't stop the habit, because the habit isn't run by what you know. It's run by the buzz, the hand, and the thousand times nothing happened. That's why the adverts

haven't worked on you, and it's why this book isn't trying to be one. You already know. The knowledge is filed. The hand doesn't check the file.

Which means the fact that you haven't stopped isn't evidence that it's fine. It's evidence that knowing was never going to be enough, and that the thing that changes the habit has to be something other than more knowing. Chapters 18 to 21 are that something, and none of them ask you to be more convinced.

"It's only at the lights"

A lot of readers will have got this far thinking, fair enough, but I don't do it on the move. I do it at the lights. The car's stopped. Nothing can happen while the car's stopped. Whatever the studies say about glances at fifty, they can't be about a car with its handbrake on.

Two things. The first is that the law doesn't share the belief. GOV.UK is specific that the offence still applies when you're stopped at traffic lights or queuing in traffic, and in a car that switches its engine off when it stops. Six points at a red light, same as at sixty. That's stated once here and once in chapter 15.

The second is what a peek at the lights actually looks like from outside, and you can check this at the next set. It doesn't start and finish with the car stopped. It starts stopped and finishes moving, because the light changes on its own time and not when you've reached the end of the message. The car in front moves and your foot comes off the brake while your thumb finishes the word, and for the first fifty metres, at ten and then fifteen miles an hour, you're a person looking up between words. That's not a stationary peek. That's a moving one with a stationary start.

And then there's the putting down. Thomas Dingus and colleagues, in the biggest naturalistic study there is, with cameras in the cars of more than three and a half thousand drivers over three years, found that reaching for a handheld phone carried nearly five times

the crash risk of ordinary driving. Not using it. Reaching. Which is what happens when the light changes and the phone's in your hand and it needs to go somewhere.

There's also the queue. The lights are one thing, but the belief extends to any time the car's slow, the queue on the ring road, the crawl past the roadworks, where stopped and moving alternate every few seconds and the peek has no clear place to end. Ask yourself what speed you were doing when you finished the last message you read in a queue. I don't think it was nought.

The lights are where the habit lives, and it's the part of the habit that feels most innocent. It's also the part the police can see most easily, the part the law is clearest on, and the part that most reliably turns into a moving peek without a decision. If the rule in chapter 21 only covered the moving car, this is where it would leak.

"Everyone does it"

Look around at the next red light. The driver alongside, head down, thumb going. The one behind, lit face. It isn't just you and it isn't a few people, and a habit that common can't be as bad as they say, or the roads would be a wreck.

The first half of that is true. Dingus and colleagues' cameras found drivers were doing something distracting, of any kind, in just over half of the ordinary driving samples they looked at. Handheld phone use alone took up more than six per cent of driving time, and while it was happening the crash risk was 3.6 times ordinary driving. Atchley's seventy per cent of young drivers starting texts is the same picture from a survey. Everyone does do it, more or less.

The second half doesn't follow. The roads aren't a wreck because crashes are rare even when the risk is multiplied, which was chapter 6. And the norm isn't a defence, because the norm is what the crash figures are made of. Dingus found distraction present in sixty-eight per cent of the nine hundred and five crashes his cameras caught. The people in those cars were also people who'd looked around at the lights and seen everyone doing it.

What the norm does do, and this is where it gets interesting, is run the habit. Nemme and White found that what a driver's friends and peers did predicted their intention to text, over and above their own attitude. If everyone in your car does it, you'll do it. If your passengers would say something, you'll do it less. That's not an argument that everyone's wrong. It's an observation that the norm is a lever, and it's currently pulling the wrong way.

Which gives you something to do with it. You're one of the everyone. When you don't peek, the person in the passenger seat notices, and the child in the back notices, and the norm in your car shifts by one. Chapter 22 comes back to this, for the case where you're the passenger and the driver's the one with the phone on their knee.

Six points, and the first two years

This is the chapter with the law in it, and it's short, because the law isn't the argument. It's a fact you should have straight, and one part of it matters more than the rest.

As GOV.UK puts it, it's illegal to hold and use a phone, sat-nav, tablet or any device that can send or receive data while driving or riding a motorcycle. Any use, for any reason, online or offline, including in flight mode. Texting, calling, photos, browsing, scrolling a playlist. It applies at traffic lights, in queues, when supervising a learner, and when the car has switched its own engine off at a stop. THINK!, the government's road safety campaign, describes the 2022 strengthening that closed the old gap where only calls and texts counted. The exceptions are calling 999 or 112 when it's unsafe or impractical to stop, being safely parked, making a contactless payment while the vehicle isn't moving, and parking the car remotely.

Hands-free is allowed, as long as you don't hold the device at any point, and that includes a cradle, a windscreen mount, a headset and voice commands. The device mustn't block your view. And separately, the police can stop you if they think you're not in proper control because you're distracted, whether or not you were holding anything.

The penalty for holding and using is six points and a two-hundred-pound fine. Taken to court, the fine can reach a thousand pounds, or two and a half thousand for a lorry or bus, with a possible ban.

Three points for not having a full view or proper control. I've checked those figures on the day of writing and they change, so the page is the source, not this paragraph.

Here's the part that matters most. If you passed your driving test in the last two years, six points means you lose your licence. Not a fine and a warning. The licence goes, and you take the test again. A new driver who reads one message at one red light and is seen doing it is, in that moment, back to being a learner. If you're a new driver, that's worth knowing. If you're the parent of one, it's the fact I'd want them to have, and chapter 22 has the thing that works better than telling them it.

That's the law. Everything else in this book is about why the law was never going to be what stops you, and what will.

What the peek costs you

The obvious cost is the crash, and this book has deliberately not described one. But most peeks don't end in a crash, which is the whole problem of chapter 6, and if the crash were the only cost then the thousand safe peeks would have cost nothing. They didn't. Here's what they cost.

They cost the drive its attention, and not just for the two seconds. Strayer's voice studies found residual costs, attention that took time to come back after the task had ended. A peek isn't two seconds of absence. It's two seconds of absence followed by a slow return, during which you're driving with less than you had, and the buzz that comes next lands on a driver who hasn't fully come back from the last one. A drive with six peeks in it isn't a drive with twelve seconds missing. It's a drive that was never quite all there.

They cost you the rest. A drive used to be the one place the phone couldn't follow. It's not a rest now. It's a queue of small interruptions with a car attached. You arrive having driven twenty minutes and having spent them half in the car and half in a message thread, and you feel the way you feel after any twenty minutes of that, a bit scattered, a bit behind. Chapter 17 is about this.

They cost you the passengers' view of you. Your partner sees the phone on your knee and says nothing, or says something and gets told it's fine, and either way learns what your rules are worth. Your child in the back sees the lit face at the lights, and in ten years' time will be a new driver with a phone, and will have had two thousand

lessons in what drivers do at red lights, all from you. Nemme and White found the norm predicts the behaviour. You're the norm in that car.

And they cost you the clean sheet, in a way you can't see. Every peek makes the thousand a thousand and one, and the thousand and one makes you surer, and the surer you are the less you check, and Sanbonmatsu found that the checking is the first thing the phone takes. The clean sheet is a record you can't cash. It doesn't reduce the next peek's risk by anything. It only reduces how much the risk feels like yours.

I'm not adding these up to frighten you, because chapter 12 showed that doesn't work. I'm listing them because "nothing's happened" has been standing in for "it costs nothing", and those are different sentences.

What the drive was for

There's a belief under the belief that the drive is dead time. It says twenty minutes in a car with nothing to do is twenty minutes lost, and the phone recovers it. That's the same belief that fills every queue, every advert break and every walk to the shop, and the book *Bored is fine* is about what it costs in general. Here it costs something specific.

The drive was one of the last places where nothing was asked of you except the thing you were doing. You couldn't answer the email. You couldn't check the thread. You could look at the road and think, or not think, and arrive with the twenty minutes behind you as a gap between one part of the day and the next. People used to say they did their best thinking in the car, and I don't think that was a boast. It was what happens when a mind has one simple physical job and nothing else to do.

The buzz took that. Not all at once, and not by anyone's decision. The phone came into the car because it was in your pocket, and it came out of the pocket at the first red light because it always does, and within a year the drive was a place with a phone in it like everywhere else. The dead time was never dead. It was the only quiet you had between the desk and the kitchen, and you've been filling it because the itch made it feel empty.

Here's the thing I'd ask you to notice, and it's an observation rather than a finding. On a drive with the phone out of reach, the first five minutes are restless. The hand goes to the cupholder and finds nothing, and the itch is loud. Then it goes quiet, and the drive

becomes what it was, and you arrive in a different state from the one you're used to arriving in. Not rested exactly, but not scattered. You've had twenty minutes of one thing.

I'm not making a case for boredom as a virtue. I'm pointing out that the peek was sold to you as recovering lost time, and that the time wasn't lost. It was the drive. The method in the next chapters gives it back, and that turns out to be a reason people keep the rule that has nothing to do with points or crashes.

Out of reach

The method has three parts and this is the first. It's the one that does most of the work, and it's the least dramatic. The phone goes somewhere your hand can't get to it at a red light.

Where it goes. The glovebox, if you have one you can reach from the driver's seat while parked and not while driving. The bag on the back seat. The boot, if you're the kind of person who'll otherwise reach behind you. The pocket of the coat you've put on the back seat. Anywhere that would require you to undo your seat belt or turn round to reach it. Not the cupholder. Not the passenger seat. Not face down on the passenger seat, which is the compromise everyone tries first and which lasts until the second buzz.

Why not face down. Because the peek isn't a decision, which was chapter 12. A phone within reach is a phone you'll reach for when it buzzes, and turning it over only means you'll turn it back. The whole point of out of reach is that the itch arrives and finds nothing to do. The rule needs to be something your hand runs into, not something your judgement has to win.

The drive setting. Most phones now have a setting that detects driving and silences notifications, and many can send an automatic reply saying you're driving and will see the message later. Turn it on. It's not a substitute for out of reach, because a phone that isn't buzzing in the cupholder is still a phone in the cupholder, and the itch arrives without a buzz often enough. But it removes most of the buzzes, and it does the standing message for

you, which chapter 19 is about. I'm not naming any phone or setting because they change. Yours has one, and the search terms are driving and do not disturb.

The two-call rule. The drive setting usually lets a repeated call through, or can be set to. That's the emergency channel. Tell the four people who might genuinely need you that if it's urgent they should ring twice, and the phone will ring. Then the urgent belief from chapter 11 has an answer that isn't the peek.

Before the engine. The phone goes out of reach before the engine starts, not after the first buzz. It's the last thing before the seat belt. Once the car's moving, out of reach means stopping, and you won't stop, so the order matters.

That's it. It's almost embarrassingly small, and it's the whole method. The next two chapters are what to do about the people who expect replies and the things on the phone you genuinely need while driving.

The standing message

Out of reach solves the hand. It doesn't solve the people, and the people are why the urgent belief has held up so long. If your boss, your partner, your mother and your friend all expect an answer within ten minutes, then every drive is ten minutes of letting someone down, and the peek is how you've been avoiding it. So tell them.

Who to tell. Look at the list from chapter 1 and see whose messages you peeked at. It's usually four or five people. Those are the ones who need to hear it, and it's one sentence each. "I don't see messages when I'm driving, so if you need me in the next half hour, ring twice." That's the standing message, and once it's said, it's said. You don't have to explain yourself at every drive. They know.

What it does. It moves the expectation. Before, a slow reply from the car was you being slow. After, it's you driving, and they knew that. The pressure you felt at the buzz was partly real, because the people did expect a reply, and the standing message takes the real part away. What's left is the itch on its own, and the itch on its own is much easier to leave in the glovebox.

At work. If your job involves being reachable, the standing message is a conversation with whoever needs you rather than a text. "I'm driving between sites for about an hour most days. Ring twice if it's urgent, otherwise I'll pick it up when I'm parked." Most managers say yes to that, because the alternative is either you

crashing the company car or you lying about not having seen the message, and they'd prefer neither. If yours says no, that's a fact about the job and chapter 22 has the on-call case.

The auto reply. The drive setting can send the standing message for you, which means people who message you for the first time get it too. It's blunt, and that's fine. "I'm driving and will reply when I stop" is a sentence nobody has ever been offended by.

What you'll find. I'd expect, and it's an expectation not a finding, that nobody minds. People are told all the time that someone's in a meeting, on a train, at the dentist. Driving is a reason everyone already accepts. The only person who ever thought you had to reply from the car was you, and you thought it because the itch needed a reason.

Set it before you move

The third part is the things on the phone you actually use while driving. The map. The music. The call you were always going to take. These are real needs, and out of reach can't be a rule that leaves you lost in a town you don't know with the map in the boot.

The handbrake rule. Anything that needs a screen happens with the handbrake on. The map is set at the kerb before you pull out, with the destination in and the route showing, and it lives in a cradle where you can see it without touching it. The music is chosen in the car park, a playlist or an album long enough for the drive, not a song you'll want to change. The call you were going to take is made before you start, or after you stop, or answered by voice if it comes in and you've decided you're going to take calls. If the map goes wrong on the move, you drive on, and it re-routes, because that's what maps do now. If you genuinely need to touch it, you pull over, and pulling over takes a minute, and it's the minute that used to be the peek.

The cradle. If you use the map, you need a cradle, and it's the one bit of kit this book asks you to buy. A phone in a cradle at eye level is a legal hands-free device you can see. A phone in the cupholder is a peek waiting to happen. Put the cradle where it doesn't block your view, which GOV.UK also requires.

The passenger navigates. If there's someone in the car, the phone is theirs. They hold the map, they read the message if you're expecting one, they change the music. This is the one time a

passenger is unambiguously safer than the alternative, and it's the case Drews and Charlton's research is about. The passenger can see the road. Let them do the phone.

What this doesn't cover. It doesn't cover the call that comes in on the move, which is chapter 7's problem and not this one's. My honest view is that the hands-free call is legal and costs attention, and that you should take fewer than you think. The clean rule is that calls happen parked. The compromise, if you won't have that, is that you answer by voice, keep it short, and say you'll ring back. What you don't do is pick the phone up, because that's the peek with a voice attached.

The three parts together, out of reach, the standing message, and set before you move, cover every reason the phone has ever come out of the cupholder. The next chapter puts them into a rule.

The decision

Here's the rule, and it's one sentence. The phone is out of reach before the engine starts, and anything with a screen happens with the handbrake on.

That's both halves. The first half removes the peek on the move and at the lights, because the phone isn't where the hand goes. The second half covers the map, the music and the message you're going to send, by giving them a place, which is the kerb. There's no judgement in it about what's safe or urgent or only a glance. Those are the beliefs from chapters 3 to 14, and the rule's whole design is that none of them gets asked.

Peter Gollwitzer and Paschal Sheeran, in a meta-analysis of when-then plans that earlier books in this series have leaned on, found that a specific plan of the form "when this happens, I'll do that" reliably helps people act on an intention they already hold, and the effect is medium to large. The rule needs three of them. When I sit in the driver's seat, then the phone goes in the glovebox before the seat belt. When the phone buzzes in the glovebox, then I say "later" out loud and keep driving. When I need the map or the phone on the move, then I pull into the next safe place and put the handbrake on. Say them once, write them if it helps, and keep them exactly that plain.

What to expect, and this is my expectation not a finding. The first week the hand goes to the cupholder at every red light and finds nothing, and the itch is loud, and you'll feel slightly ridiculous. The second week the hand goes less. Somewhere in the first month the

drive gets quiet in the way chapter 17 described, and the glovebox becomes where the phone lives without your deciding it each time. Phillippa Lally and colleagues followed ninety-six volunteers building a daily habit and found automaticity grew over weeks and varied a lot between people, so I won't give you a number of days. What I'll say is that this habit has an advantage most don't. The car is the same every day, the seat is the same, and the glovebox is in the same place. Cues don't get much more reliable.

Two things to say out loud, once, before you start. The standing message to the four people, from chapter 19. And to whoever's usually in the car with you, "the phone's going in the glovebox from now on, and if I reach for it, say so". That last one recruits the norm from chapter 14 onto your side.

Then start. The next drive, not Monday.

The sat-nav, the work phone, on call, the child in the back, driving for a living, and the driver beside you

The rule is short and lives can be complicated. Here are the cases readers will raise, each in turn.

The sat-nav. A phone in a cradle showing the map is legal and, kept at eye level and set before you move, is about as safe as a phone in the car gets. The risk isn't the map. It's the tap. So the map goes in the cradle and the rule is that it never gets touched on the move. If it sends you wrong, drive on and let it recover, and if it can't, pull over. What you don't do is hold the phone in your hand to look at the map, which is the knee with a road on it.

The work phone. Two phones don't change the rule, they double it. Both go out of reach. If your job requires you to be reachable by phone while driving, that's a hands-free call answered by voice and kept short, and you're in chapter 7 territory, taking a known cost because your job asks it. Say so to yourself, and take fewer than the job strictly needs.

On call. If you're genuinely on call, doctor, engineer, carer, then the two-call rule is your channel and the standing message is your arrangement. Calls ring through. Messages wait. If the job sends its emergencies by text, that's a conversation to have with the job, because a text you must read within a minute and a car you must drive are two instructions that can't both be followed, and it shouldn't be you who has to choose at fifty.

The child in the back. The water bottle goes down, the toy's out of reach, someone's crying. That's the passenger version of the peek and it has the same answer, which is that anything needing your hands or eyes happens at the kerb. A child who's dropped a bottle can survive four minutes. A child who learns that things get picked up when the car stops has learned something useful. And a child who's old enough to hold the phone is old enough to be the navigator, which gives them a job and the phone a place.

Driving for a living. If you drive all day, the drive setting's auto reply is doing your standing message a hundred times a day, and the cradle is doing your map. The peek is a much bigger part of your day than most people's, which means the risk is multiplied more often and the licence is your income. Six points is a different thing when it's your job. The rule is the same and the reason to keep it is larger.

The driver beside you. You're the passenger and the driver's phone is on their knee. Chapter 14 said the norm in the car is a lever, and you're it. Look up covers the phone across a table, and this is the same move in a car. One plain sentence, not a lecture. "Can I do the phone? I'd rather you drove." Most people hand it over, because being handed a reason to put it down is easier than being told to. If they won't, you've said it, and you say it again next time. The child in the back is listening to that too.

When you picked it up anyway

It'll happen. A week in, the phone's in the cupholder because you were on the phone when you got in and just put it down. The buzz. The hand. You're reading a message at the lights and you've finished it before you remember there was a rule. Or you're three weeks in and the glovebox has quietly stopped being where the phone goes, and you notice one day that the peek is back and you can't say when it returned.

One peek isn't the habit back. Lally's volunteers, from chapter 21, missed days without it materially affecting how the habit formed, and I'd extend that, as my own reasoning, to one peek. What matters is what you do with the next drive, not what you think about this one. The next drive, the phone goes in the glovebox before the seat belt, and the rule is as intact as it was.

What's worth doing, once you've parked, is asking which belief was running. It'll be one of the ones from chapters 3 to 14, wearing the same clothes. "It's only a glance" if you were at the lights. "It might be urgent" if it was someone you'd been waiting on. "It's safe here" if the road was empty. Naming it isn't a punishment. It's how you find out which belief has the most life left in it, and that's the chapter to reread.

Don't make the return into a resolution. The habit didn't come back because you weren't trying hard enough, and it won't leave because you try harder. It came back because the phone was within reach, and that's a fact about where the phone was, not about you. Fix the

where. If the cupholder is winning, the glovebox is too easy to skip, so the bag on the back seat is the new place. If the phone's in your hand when you get in, the last call finishes before the door shuts.

And don't count. Not the peeks, not the clean days, not the days since. The clean sheet was the problem in chapter 6 and a clean sheet of a different kind isn't the answer. The rule is about where the phone is before the engine starts. Either it's out of reach or it isn't, and the next drive is the only one you can do anything about.

The buzz on the A-road

A Tuesday, a month or so on. You get in the car, the phone's in your hand from the call you just finished, and you open the glovebox and put it in without thinking about it, because that's where it goes now. Seat belt. Engine. The high street, the lights, third car back. Your hand goes to the cupholder, still, sometimes, and finds the empty plastic, and comes back to the wheel. The light goes green.

The A-road. Fifty. A buzz, muffled, from the glovebox. Something in you sits up, the same something that always did. And then it sits back down, because there's nothing to do about it. The road straightens and empties, and it's the safe moment, and you notice it's the safe moment, and you notice that noticing it is a thing you used to do just before looking. You don't look. There's nothing to look at. The road stays the road for the whole forty-five metres.

There's a lay-by two miles on. You could pull in. You think about it for a second and decide the message can wait for the car park at the other end, which is nine minutes off, and it's a decision you can make now, at fifty, because the phone isn't asking you for one. Nine minutes later, handbrake on, you get it out. It was your friend asking if you're around at the weekend.

That's the whole of it. Not a story about a near miss, because there wasn't one, and there wasn't one in the thousand before either. Just a drive where the phone stayed where it was, the itch arrived and left, and you arrived with twenty minutes of one thing behind you.

One action, if you're going to do one. The next time you get in the car, before the seat belt, put the phone somewhere you can't reach it. Don't decide about the rest yet. Just do that, once, and see what the drive is like.

Notes

These notes give the sources behind the claims in each chapter, and say where I'm giving my own interpretation. The book isn't legal advice, and the GOV.UK page on using a phone when driving is the source for anything said about the law, read on 26 September 2026. The examples throughout, the message about the parcel, the boss who says call me when you can, the friend asking if you're around, the water bottle in the back, are invented to illustrate and aren't drawn from real people or real crashes. No crash described or implied in this book happened to anyone.

Studies were checked on 26 September 2026 by reading their published abstracts, except Dingus and colleagues 2016, which was read in full. None carried a retraction or correction notice at that date. Simulator studies measure driving in a simulator and can't show what happens on a road. Naturalistic studies film real driving and can show association but not cause. Case-crossover studies compare each driver with themselves at another time, which removes some but not all of the differences between people. I've tried to say which is which each time.

Chapter 1. No sources. The terms are the book's own.

Chapter 3. Simons-Morton, Guo, Klauer, Ehsani and Pradhan, "Keep your eyes on the road: young driver crash risk increases according to duration of distraction", *Journal of Adolescent Health* 54, 2014, supplement pages S61 to S67. 42 newly licensed drivers over 18 months. Klauer, Guo, Simons-Morton, Ouimet, Lee and Dingus, "Distracted driving and risk of road crashes among novice

and experienced drivers", *New England Journal of Medicine* 370, 2014, pages 54 to 63. 42 novice and 109 experienced drivers. Caird, Johnston, Willness, Asbridge and Steel, "A meta-analysis of the effects of texting on driving", *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 71, 2014, pages 311 to 318. 28 experiments, 977 participants. The distances at thirty and fifty miles an hour are my arithmetic from about thirteen and twenty-two metres a second.

Chapter 4. Sanbonmatsu, Strayer, Biondi, Behrends and Moore, "Cell-phone use diminishes self-awareness of impaired driving", *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review* 23, 2016, pages 617 to 623. A simulator study with hands-free conversation, sample size not given in the abstract. Atchley, Atwood and Boulton, "The choice to text and drive in younger drivers: behavior may shape attitude", *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 43, 2011, pages 134 to 142. A survey of 348 young adult drivers. The claim that the safe moment is judged by a mind already partly on the phone is my extension of both.

Chapter 5. Svenson, "Are we all less risky and more skillful than our fellow drivers?", *Acta Psychologica* 47, 1981, pages 143 to 148. No abstract was available to me and the finding is taken from the replication. Koppel, Andersson, Tinghög, Västfjäll and Feldman, "We are all less risky and more skillful than our fellow drivers: successful replication and extension of Svenson (1981)", *Meta-Psychology*, 2023. A preregistered replication with 1,203 participants. Sanbonmatsu, Strayer, Medeiros-Ward and Watson, "Who multi-tasks and why? Multi-tasking ability, perceived multi-

tasking ability, impulsivity, and sensation seeking", PLoS One 8, 2013, e54402. University students, sample size not given in the abstract. The point about skill not being a reserve is mine.

Chapter 6. Redelmeier and Tibshirani, "Association between cellular-telephone calls and motor vehicle collisions", New England Journal of Medicine 336, 1997, pages 453 to 458. 699 drivers, property-damage collisions, case-crossover with billing records. Weinstein, "Unrealistic optimism about future life events", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 39, 1980, pages 806 to 820. 258 students in the first study. The earlier book referred to is It hasn't happened yet. The reasoning about a fourfold risk of a rare event, and the road-crossing comparison, are mine.

Chapter 7. Strayer and Johnston, "Driven to distraction: dual-task studies of simulated driving and conversing on a cellular telephone", Psychological Science 12, 2001, pages 462 to 466. Strayer, Drews and Johnston, "Cell phone-induced failures of visual attention during simulated driving", Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied 9, 2003, pages 23 to 32. Both simulator studies. Redelmeier and Tibshirani, as above, hands-free relative risk 5.9 against handheld 3.9, difference not significant. McEvoy, Stevenson, McCartt, Woodward, Haworth, Palamara and Cercarelli, "Role of mobile phones in motor vehicle crashes resulting in hospital attendance: a case-crossover study", BMJ 331, 2005, page 428. 456 drivers in Perth. Horrey and Wickens, "Examining the impact of cell phone conversations on driving using meta-analytic techniques", Human Factors 48, 2006, pages 196 to 205. 23 studies. Caird, Willness, Steel and Scialfa, "A meta-analysis of the effects of cell phones on driver performance", Accident Analysis and

Prevention 40, 2008, pages 1282 to 1293. 33 studies, about 2,000 participants. Ishigami and Klein, "Is a hands-free phone safer than a handheld phone?", Journal of Safety Research 40, 2009, pages 157 to 164. A review. The remark about where the law draws its line is mine.

Chapter 8. Drews, Pasupathi and Strayer, "Passenger and cell phone conversations in simulated driving", Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied 14, 2008, pages 392 to 400. Charlton, "Driving while conversing: cell phones that distract and passengers who react", Accident Analysis and Prevention 41, 2009, pages 160 to 173. Both simulator studies.

Chapter 9. Strayer, Cooper, Turrill, Coleman and Hopman, "Talking to your car can drive you to distraction", Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications 1, 2016, article 15. 257 participants, ten 2015 model-year cars. Strayer, Cooper, Turrill, Coleman and Hopman, "The smartphone and the driver's cognitive workload: a comparison of Apple, Google, and Microsoft's intelligent personal assistants", Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology 71, 2017, pages 93 to 110. An instrumented car on suburban roads. The brand names appear only in the title here. The tap is mine.

Chapter 10. Strayer, Drews and Crouch, "A comparison of the cell phone driver and the drunk driver", Human Factors 48, 2006, pages 381 to 391. A simulator study. The point about categories is mine.

Chapter 11. The GOV.UK page, as above, for the 999 and 112 exception. The earlier books referred to are The news will manage without you, Sorry I'm late and The phone can wait. The claim that

the itch isn't about the message is my interpretation, argued in full in The phone can wait.

Chapter 12. Atchley, Atwood and Boulton, as above. Nemme and White, "Texting while driving: psychosocial influences on young people's texting intentions and behaviour", Accident Analysis and Prevention 42, 2010, pages 1257 to 1265. 169 students, Australia, one-week follow-up. The claim that the hand doesn't check the file is mine.

Chapter 13. The GOV.UK page, as above. Dingus, Guo, Lee, Antin, Perez, Buchanan-King and Hankey, "Driver crash risk factors and prevalence evaluation using naturalistic driving data", Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 113, 2016, pages 2636 to 2641. More than 3,500 drivers over three years, 905 crashes, read in full. The figure for reaching for a handheld phone is an odds ratio of 4.8. The observation about where a peek at the lights ends is mine.

Chapter 14. Dingus and colleagues, as above, for distraction in 51.93 per cent of ordinary driving samples and 68.3 per cent of crashes, handheld phone use in more than 6 per cent of driving time with an odds ratio of 3.6. Atchley and colleagues, and Nemme and White, as above. The claim that the norm is what the crash figures are made of is mine.

Chapter 15. The GOV.UK page "Using a phone, sat nav or other device when driving", read 26 September 2026. The THINK! mobile phones page at think.gov.uk, read the same day, for the March 2022 change. Penalties change and the page is the source.

Chapter 16. Strayer and colleagues 2016 and 2017, as above, for residual costs. Sanbonmatsu and colleagues 2016, as above. Nemme and White, as above. The rest of the chapter is my observation.

Chapter 17. No research sources. The earlier book referred to is Bored is fine. The chapter is my observation and is said to be.

Chapters 18 to 20. No research sources. The method is my suggestion. Drews and Charlton, as above, for the passenger navigating. The GOV.UK page for the cradle not blocking the view.

Chapter 21. Gollwitzer and Sheeran, "Implementation intentions and goal achievement: a meta-analysis of effects and processes", *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 38, 2006, pages 69 to 119. Lally, van Jaarsveld, Potts and Wardle, "How are habits formed: modelling habit formation in the real world", *European Journal of Social Psychology* 40, 2010, pages 998 to 1009. 96 volunteers, 82 with usable data. The rule hasn't been tested as a package and what I say to expect is my expectation.

Chapter 22. No research sources. The earlier book referred to is Look up.

Chapter 23. Lally and colleagues, as above. The extension from a missed day to one peek is mine.

Looked up and not used. McCartt, Hellinga and Bratiman's 2006 review in *Traffic Injury Prevention* was read and is consistent with the studies cited, but the primary studies are used instead. Oviedo-Trespalacios, Haque, King and Washington's 2017 study in *Traffic Injury Prevention* found drivers on the phone chose somewhat

lower speeds, which sits against Caird 2008's finding of no appreciable compensation, and the book prints Caird's finding only, so a reader should know the literature isn't unanimous on that point. Oviedo-Trespalacios and colleagues' 2016 systematic review had no abstract available to me. Klauer and colleagues' 2006 hundred-car study for the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration wasn't fetched, and the same group's 2014 papers cover the point. The Department for Transport's contributory-factor tables weren't read, so no British casualty figure appears. Dingus 2016's odds ratio for talking on a handheld phone, 2.2, is lower than the fourfold figures from the case-crossover studies, and the paper discusses why. The book uses the case-crossover figures in chapter 7 and the Dingus figures in chapters 13 and 14 without reconciling them, and a reader who wants the argument should read Dingus.