



With Cars, It's Always Just an "Accident"

Posted by [Glenn](#) on May 18, 2006 - 5:04pm in [The Oil Drum: Local](#)

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It seems the NY Times needs to get a dictionary and look up what the word "accident" actually means. For instance, when someone does something intentionally, [it's not an accident](#):

A man **intentionally ran over five people** in North Bellmore, with an S.U.V. after a fight last night, the Nassau County police said. The driver fled the scene of the **accident**, at 2800 Pacific Ave. But the police later located the vehicle they believed was involved in the accident in Garden City and took the driver in for questioning. The victims were taken to Nassau University Medical Center, the police said. One was in critical condition, a hospital spokeswoman said.

So basically, everything involving a car **including intentional actions** gets called an "accident". WHY?

It's absolutely nonsensical but I doubt many people picked up on it. There is obviously a deep psychological association between cars and "accidents" inserted into the public consciousness many years ago. Everything with cars is just a big whoops-e-dazy...sorry about that, I didn't realize I was surrounded by 3 tons of steel.

This is a perfect example of sloppy media coverage of automobile *crashes*. Even in cases where the car crash is not intentional, we never learn enough about the circumstances to make an informed guess as to what could be done to prevent accidents like this in the future. An automobile is every bit as deadly as a gun, and indeed cars kill far more people in the US than guns every year. On Staten Island, [1 in 7 ER visits is from a car crash](#).

I really wonder though how many deaths from automobiles are truly accidents? How many are from road rage? How many are from driver negligence (drunk driving, speeding, reckless turning, distracted by food/cell phone, etc)? How many are intentional? I can't find any good statistics on this so if anyone does, please link to it here.

And for the record:

[ac-ci-dent](#)

1 a : an unforeseen and unplanned event or circumstance

b : lack of intention or necessity

2 a : an unfortunate event resulting especially from carelessness or ignorance

b : an unexpected and medically important bodily event especially when injurious

c : an unexpected happening causing loss or injury which is not due to any fault or misconduct on the part of the person injured but for which legal relief may be sought



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