

It had to be one heckofa conversation

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The woman obviously was enjoying her cell phone conversation.

She was laughing, throwing her head back at times. She was gesturing wildly, shaking her head, totally engaged in what was being said, oblivious to anything going on around her.

And, frighteningly, she was behind the wheel of an SUV.

Fortunately for her and the vehicles around her, at the time I saw her she was stopped in a left-hand turn lane, just barely inching forward from time to time.

Unfortunately for me, she was blocking my exit from the Main Stop on Union Street.

All I wanted to do was go home for lunch. I was tired from a busy morning, and I was hungry.

And all I could do was just sit there, and sit there, and sit there some more, fuming as my blood pressure began rising by the minute.

I don't know how long she had been in the turn lane before I pulled up to the Main Stop exit. When I first arrived there was a steady flow of traffic in both directions, keeping her from turning. Finally, a car slowed and signaled, turning off a block ahead and clearing a way for the phone-talking SUV driver.

She was of course laughing, gesturing, and totally oblivious.

After the third or fourth gap in the traffic — each time giving the distracted driver far more than enough clearance to complete her turn — the driver of the car waiting behind her honked.

Each successive time the yammering woman in the SUV was given a chance to clear the way, the driver behind her honked again, to no avail. Finally the frustrated woman behind her laid on the horn, still to no avail.

After probably a dozen chances to move had been presented to the obsessive cell phoner, I added my own horn to the ruckus, which now began sounding like a discordant group of braying mules.

By this time my anger had turned to amazement. I could have backed up and pulled around to a different driveway, or turned right instead of crossing the street and driven home a roundabout way. But I was so astounded by the yakking driver's performance, I now had to see it out to the end.

Finally, after what seemed like forever, the woman came to her senses, realized she had a clear path ahead, and pulled into the Main Stop.

All I can say is, I hope it was one heckofa conversation.

Not content to simply go on, I honked to get her attention, which was already again focused on the phone. Getting no response, I laid on the horn, and waved my arm out the window.

When she finally looked, I used my fingers to imitate a phone held to my ear, then made the cut motion below my chin.

She looked at me blankly, then went on.

I doubt I made an impression, but I had to try.

This situation was extremely aggravating, but luckily only mildly dangerous. It's frightening to think what could happen if she was barreling down the highway with the same astonishing disregard.

It is my hope that the cell phone woman — or any other such driver — recognizes herself or himself, and puts the cell phone away when behind the wheel. All I experienced this time was some irritation, and a delayed lunch.

And I was able to eat that lunch at home, not from a hospital bed following a traffic crash.

Or, worse yet, at the meal following a funeral.
