

The Morning Thieves (Si Pencuri Pagi)

by
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There is a saying: “Tomorrow is a brand-new day”—a new chapter, a fresh start, a new episode. Embracing the idea of tomorrow as a new beginning brings hope that it will be better than, or at least as good as, the day before. Each morning, we aim to start our day with renewed energy and an uplifted mood. At least, that’s the plan—or the hope.

However, as we leave home for work, we often encounter what can be called “The Morning Thieves.” Yes, thieves—not just one, but many. These aren’t your typical criminals who steal physical belongings. No, these “thieves” rob us of something far more valuable—our good mood. And they operate in a place we know all too well: the roads and the familiar routes we take to work.

Their primary tools? Automobiles. The most common offenders include cars and vans, although their “equipment” isn’t limited to any specific type or brand. It doesn’t matter if the vehicle is old, new, or used, as long as the road tax is up to date—it’s all fair game to them. After all, most vehicles pay (almost) the same road tax, so the brand or condition is irrelevant.

Becoming one of these “thieves” is surprisingly easy. In fact, many are oblivious to the fact that they fit the description. All it takes is one action: cutting the queue. The term is self-explanatory and refers to the act of using a vehicle—usually a car or something similar—to jump ahead in line, disrupting the flow of traffic. Morning rush hour is their prime time, as everyone is on a mission: dropping kids off at school or getting to work on time.

If you want to see examples of these “cut-queue” incidents in action, there is no shortage of evidence. Videos documenting these behaviors are readily available on platforms like YouTube and Facebook. Check out accounts like *Sabah Worst Drivers* at <https://www.youtube.com/@sabahworstdrivers> and <https://www.facebook.com/sabahworstdrivers/>.

Dealing with the situation

To safeguard our morning mood from being stolen away, the following are advices and comment related to this kind of ‘thief’ from users of one of a popular user generated content social news website:

Keep calm and drive calm. It requires a lot of courage and will to not give in the urge to get back at these rude people. You don’t know what kind of person he/she is and what will the situation escalate to. It’s not your job or priority in life to teach people a lesson.

(Reddit username: Vaibhav Jain)

How can you deal with it? Accept that it is going to happen and keep your cool. Just because the other driver is a ‘morning thief’ it doesn’t mean you should be too. Drive defensively, keep your cool and remember Karma will catch up with people that drive like Jerks.

(Reddit username: Blair Blakely)

Don't leave them space to cut in. If they try just act like you don't see them. If they beep look around but not at them like you don't know they're there. They're pretending they didn't see the miles of cars so 🤡. If everybody did this traffic would be far less.

(Reddit username: Doris Sprang)

*I'll admit that more than once I'd try to close the gap before the person had the chance and force them to find another way but a couple things about this attitude eventually dawned on me. That guy's going to get in somewhere else no matter what I do. I'm not going to teach him any kind of lesson. He may be an out of townner who isn't familiar with the area, got kids in the car and a wife who's bi***ing him out for his lack of planning ahead. Even if he's local and he's just being an a***le better to let the guy in than possibly contribute to an accident.*

(Reddit username: Mark Decker)

When you're young, especially as a male, it's difficult to contain your emotions. I once tailgated a person who cut me off to their home address in a blind hot rage. I have since mellowed in my thirties and try to assume the best in people. They might have had a terrible day at work and were not even doing it intentionally. Even if they were, I think, does it really matter? Will arriving slightly later to my destination make any difference? The answer the majority of the time is no. Also, consider other incidents of extreme road rage. If you react, you can start a chain reaction of events. There have been a few instances in the news where the aggrieved driver tailgated the person and then it ends up in a brawl at the next petrol station or a ramming on the highway. Neither outcomes are worth your time. This is assuming they didn't cause an accident by cutting in on you. If they did, I hope you have a dashcam or make sure you take down their plate details.

(Reddit username: Shane J Curtis)

Depends on the day and the other driver. The ones that try to push in where there is no space do not get in. Those who are signaling, and politely waiting, may get let in. Often, it depends on where. Many intersections are poorly marked, so it's impossible for a first-time person to be in the correct lane. Some of the time, the right lane is straight or right, and the left is left only. Some of the time the left lane is straight or left, and the right is right only. Rarely, both lanes are straight or turn. And the lines/queues start before the signs indicating which.

(Reddit username: Marc Whinery)

Slow down and let them go. Drive defensively. Avoid road rage at any cost and if you are ever a victim of road rage back off if you can and try to diffuse the situation.

(Reddit username: Bruce Tharpe)

If you can't give up enough space for someone to come in, how do you have the moral high ground to call someone else "selfish?" Seems like a bit of pot and kettle to me. Unless it's your name on the highway, we all paid pretty much the same amount in taxes to build the road. Practice graciousness. You never know when someone may be watching.

(Reddit username: Karen Tiede)

It's not illegal per se in the sense that traffic cops won't do shit. Also, Malaysians are of the camp of 'if everyone does it, I will do it, too'

(Reddit username: thedirtyprojector)

Kind of. Especially if the road they're turning into has fewer lanes than the number of turning lanes in the road they came from. It's more like turning illegally from the wrong lane, which ends up with the same outcome of queue cutting. Unfortunately, the average Malaysian driver does not care for such things.

(Reddit username: niwongcm)

Final thought

Whether the culprits are regular offenders, the usual suspects, or one-time offenders, their identities remain uncertain. Queue-cutting is a common daily occurrence and undeniably a traffic offense. Figure 1, below is a Facebook post from the Polis Diraja Malaysia (Royal Malaysia Police), dated 23 June 2016. While the law exists, enforcement could be more effective if convenient reporting channels were provided and widely promoted to the public. Thought linger on my mind is “will this ever end or it is a never ending situation and accept it as our culture?”.

Sembang Trafik

POTONG 'Q'

Kenderaan hendaklah dipandu di sebelah kiri jalan dan bukan di lorong kecemasan.

Lorong kecemasan hendaklah digunakan sewaktu berlakunya kecemasan sahaja.

Ketika kenderaan berada dalam barisan/deretan untuk menunggu giliran bergerak, adalah menjadi kesalahan jika mana-mana kenderaan yang datang dari arah belakang untuk memasuki hadapan barisan tersebut.

Keadaan ini sering dikenali sebagai kesalahan memotong barisan atau potong 'Q'.

Kesalahan ini boleh dikenakan tindakan di bawah Kaedah-kaedah Lalu Lintas Jalan 166/59 (Kaedah 6) dengan denda maksimum RM300.

"Sayangi diri, ingat orang tersayang & berhati-hati di jalan raya"

Terbitan: Urus Setia KPN (Komunikasi Korporat) Polis Diraja Malaysia

Figure 1: Sembang Trafik: Potong 'Q'

Source: Facebook Polis DiRaja Malaysia (Royal Malaysia Police) 23 June 2016