



WOMEN'S SAFETY COMPROMISED BY "SUBCONSCIOUS CONSPIRACY"

"It's much more dangerous on the roads than women think."

Women are in much greater danger on the roads than they think, says the author of a new book of car advice for women, thanks to a "subconscious conspiracy" of government, corporate and media activity involving automotive safety.

"There's too much stress on those largely useless crash-test ratings," says Alex Law, a long-time auto writer and co-editor of Car Advice For Women (and Smart Men), "and little interest in promoting the many other realities that go into real-world safety and security."

Law points out that "This is a growing problem, because more women are thinking about buying small cars to offset the higher price of gas."

As for that "conspiracy," Law says "It's not like they all got together and decided to mislead women into thinking a five-star crash rating was all that mattered when it came to car safety, or even much use at all to women, but that's the way it's turned out."

Law points out that the testing NHTSA does to come up with those ratings uses dummies that represent the larger male anatomy, so women are more likely to be sitting closer to the steering wheel in a real-world crash and would therefore register a higher incidence of injuries and deaths.

"Just as importantly," says Law, "those crash ratings only involve one very specific type of crash and only apply within the same weight category, which means they are only relevant if you run into a car the same size as yours. Your chances of getting hurt or killed in a car go up the heavier the vehicle you crash into is. Since the most common vehicle on the road today is the large pickup truck, your chances of being in the big, safe vehicle in a crash is as small as your chances of avoiding injury or death."

Women are "encouraged" to believe in the five-star crash rating, Law says, by auto company and dealer advertising. "When an ad says a vehicle has the 'highest government crash rating' it's not telling a lie," Law says, "but it's not telling the whole truth either, not unless it mentions the importance of weight in vehicle safety. The car companies and their dealers don't like to point this out because they want you to think that all their vehicles are safe. Usually they fudge this by saying that small cars are 'safer than ever,' and that's true, but then so are larger cars, and they're still heavier."

Law says all of this is compounded by media coverage "that tends to equate crash ratings with safety." In the first place, Law says, the media should pay more attention to the importance that weight and size have with regard to vehicle safety, which is well documented in tests done by NHTSA and the IIHS as well as auto safety organizations in Europe, Japan and Australia.

"We did an exhaustive examination of weight issue when we were doing our research" says Law, "and it's all there for women to see in our book or on those official websites."

Beyond the concentration of concern over crash ratings lies the reality of safety and security for women, which Law points out involves many subjects that get little or no promotion or coverage from the government, the car companies, the media, or anyone else.

“I wouldn’t even let someone I hate sit as close to the steering wheel as most women do,” says Law by way of example,” or put any child in the third row of a compact SUV , or let my loved-ones go anywhere without a crash-notification system that works if they’re unconscious, trapped, lost and injured. And any pregnant woman should think hard about the avoidable risk she’s running by being in a car, since the physical forces involved in a spin, crash or rollover are tremendous. Where do you see coverage of those issues?”

Basically, says Law, “It’s a much more dangerous world for women on the road than the auto companies, the government and most of the media lead you to believe. So the smart woman will make an effort to inform herself better about the true nature of auto safety.”

Law hopes to educate women on the dangers of smaller vehicles and other safety issues through the book he co-wrote with Susan Winlaw. He says there’s a list of safety items at www.CarAdviceForWomen.com.

The book is only available there or at www.CarNewsForWomen.com

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