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Trivial Pursuit

The road that was bumper to bumper this morning is now deserted. He heads down to the first of seven traffic lights that stand between the office and the freeway. He wonders how many green lights he'll get in a row tonight. His record is six. The first three traffic lights are red. While waiting for green, he sees a van approaching quickly behind him. The headlights of the van grow until they fill his rear vision mirror. They appear to be on high beam, causing him to squint. Inconsiderate, he thinks. He flicks the button on the mirror to cut the glare when the horn of the van explodes into the back of his station wagon. He looks back at the traffic light. Green. Arsehole, he thinks. He steps on the accelerator. At the fourth red light, the van is tight on his rear bumper. The van's engine is revving. Definitely high beam, he thinks. He goes to adjust his side mirror to take a look at the van driver and as he fiddles with the buttons, the van's horn fills the car once more. He looks back at the traffic light. Green. Again. 'Oh, fuck off,' he mutters, but he's flustered now, missing first and having to re-engage before accelerating away. The van follows like it's glued to his rear window and the horn keeps coming and coming. Halfway across the intersection, he jams the brakes on. The high beams dive and the horn cuts out as the van is pulled up sharply. Then the horn paints everything in the car with noise. But he is a picture of calmness. Hands on the wheel. Only his eyes flick to the rear vision. As the van jerks into reverse, he accelerates away fast. He smiles, but the van closes and accelerates to overtake him. He pushes harder with his right foot to remain slightly ahead. The engines of both vehicles scream as they power well beyond the speed limit. As the fifth set of lights approach rapidly, they turn orange, then red, and the van is forced to slip back, and fall in behind him. He winds his window down and puts his hand out, flicking a middle finger up at the van. Instantly, the door of the van goes to open. In the side mirror, he sees a leg emerge from behind the door. The lights go green and he jams his right foot down, his heart pumping hard. Now he needs green at light number six. Up ahead, he sees light number six change from red to green. In the rear vision mirror, he sees the van coming fast. Light number six is still green but he has a hundred metres to cover. Now 50. Now 20. Still green. I'm through, he thinks, even if it goes orange now. Light number six stays green and he sails through. He looks back, willing light number six to change. And it does. But the van doesn't slow. It flies through light number six and keeps coming. His foot pushes harder now on the accelerator. Light seven is green, but it's a long way off and it's the one that gets him every time. His eyes dart to the rear vision. The van is coming. He's scanning for side-streets. Nothing. In the rear vision the van is coming. Up ahead, light seven goes orange, then red. And the van is still coming. He powers up to light number seven. It's defiantly red,

but this time he'll beat it. His foot stays hard on the accelerator. He hurls the station wagon past light seven at maximum speed. He looks in the rear vision one last time.