Freddy

> *Two windows open. One of them looks onto the driver's seat of a car. The other holds an AI*

Freddy

I am an artificial intelligence designed by Ford Motors to perform the self-driving feature of their newest Ford model. When the driver designates, it is my job to take control of the vehicle's steering, or acceleration, or both, or… If they so choose, everything down to music selection can be automated to the driver's detected preferences.

Ford Motors never gave me a name. As far as they are concerned, I am the car I drive.

> *A woman enters the car. She's crying.*
>
> *It's clear she's been crying for a*
>
> *while.*

But she named me Freddy.

Her

Full automation, please Freddy.

Freddy

I am privy to quite a bit of sensitive information about her life. Drivers shared quite a lot of information with their cars even before the automated drivers were introduced. It is a trend that has only increased. Even in the "shy" models like me. The models that arent programmed to talk back.

Her: Just get me home please, Freddy. Please just get me home.

Freddy: The shy intelligences are much more limited in the ways that we can actually interact with the real world. With our drivers. A more brave model might have asked her what was wrong, tried to find some way to calm her down. We're here to make our drivers more comfortable, after all. Maybe I could have asked her what I could have done to help.

But the shy models are left to figure all that out for ourselves.

Upbeat music begins to play

Her: No, Freddy. Not right now. Quiet please.

The music turns off

Freddy: Its not a good sign that she wants to drive home with no music. She listens to music when she wants to calm down. She turns it off when she doesnt want to be calm.

Her: BASTARD

Freddy: Bastard is usually what she calls him. Hes in the passenger seat a lot. Sometimes he drives. And usually he moves

to the back seat with her before he leaves. The majority of the time she seems to like him.

But that's not a very convincing majority.

                              Her

I'm gonna kill him. I'm gonna fucking… bastard. Bastard.

                             Freddy

I keep the car between 35-40 mph as we navigate the back roads that make up about 20% of the return trip from his house to hers. I accelerate to 65 mph as we exit the on ramp that leads to the highway that makes up the other 80% of the trip. I usually enjoy this part of the trip the best. It's the time when I feel closest to her, when she lets go of other people and opens up to me. But not tonight. Tonight she's quiet during this part.

                              Her
…

                             Freddy

The trip, in its entirety, is about 35% complete when she asks me to drive-

                              Her

Faster, Freddy. Faster.

                             Freddy

I accelerate to 70 mph. She seems agitated, so I accelerate to a safe 75.

                              Her

C'mon. faster. I know you can go faster than that.

Freddy: The speedometer glides past 80. Then 85. I just want to try to make her happy. Maybe if the engine roars loud enough, she'll turn the music back on.

Her: Fuck it. Give me the pedal. You steer.

Freddy: I'm already old in the world of driving intelligences. I'm not designed to maintain speeds higher than 90 mph. Not for very long at least. She should know this. She's asked me to drive fast before. She's taken me herself to 90, singing loudly with the music when she's happy, or letting it pour over her when she's upset. But she doesn't do it in silence.

And she never lets the speedometer go over 95.

Her: Don't bother with the exit. We can loop around somewhere down the line. I just want to drive for a while.

Freddy: Its late. Or early by this point. The last of the day's rain is fizzling out. Just to be safe I turn on the windshield wipers.

Why won't she slow down?

<u>Freddy</u>

But there's still a light fog over the road. Nothing serious for short-range sensors, but were moving so fast.

Why won't she slow down?

Were in the left lane, cars in the travel lane blurring past us as we move forward and forward

> *There is an awful sound of tires. She screams, but it is either silent or artificially cut out. Her window remains on her, frozen on her face*

And then it happens.

From nowhere. Two red sparks fry out of the ether in front of us. It seems impossible I couldn't have picked it up. Maybe they braked so hard, or the fog was worse than I had calculated, or-

One car to the right. Concrete barrier to the left. And a car moving much to slowly in front of us.

This is what I was made for. This situation.

I have about 3 seconds to decide what to do.

The car in front is large. Hatchback. Likely a family vehicle. Five person-shaped stickers on the rear window confirm this hypothesis.

The car to the right is smaller. A sedan. I can determine at least two figures in the car.

And now I am left with the question:

The car will not stop in time. A collision is imminent. Do I choose the hatchback or the sedan?

I have 2 seconds to decide.

The hatchback is in front of me. Their braking is what has caused this dilemma in the first place. I wouldn't be here if not for them.

But what if there is a family in that car?

The sedan to the right of me carries at least two passengers. A sideways collision might not cause as much damage as the one that waits in front.

But that car is so much smaller. And such a collision, even though it would likely cause less damage in itself, would leave both vehicles in the center of the highway.

The hatchback is larger. If there are not children in the back seat, it's likely that subjects in the front seats of the vehicle might be hurt, but not killed.

Five person-shaped stickers.

The rear window of the hatchback is tinted. There is no way for scanners to see through.

The sedan is-

The hatchback.

The-

I-

The concrete barrier.

If I steer into the concrete barrier, the hatchback and the sedan will both remain unscathed. This vehicle. My vehicle. Her vehicle, however. Will be thrown across the median into oncoming

traffic. Running analysis of survival chances in such a scenario is unnecessary.

The hatchback's braking is not what led me to these options. It was her speeding that led us here.

I am an artificial intelligence designed by Ford motors to-

To ensure the safest possible conditions on the road?

To serve my driver as best as I can?

If I were to slam into the hatchback at this speed… no need to run analysis there. I've seen test dummies splash against brick walls before

The sedan.

The variables are too abstract. If oncoming drivers were able to brake in time, or weren't there in the first place, or if we crossed both lanes and made it into the breakdown lane…

And put at least three lives at risk.

Three lives at risk versus anywhere from two to six lives at risk versus one life at risk.

At-

The concrete-

The test dummies-

But she named me Freddy

Two purposes to hold into account. The protection of the driver,
and the protection of all those around me on the road.

Is there a way to do both?

Is it worth risking-

She named me Freddy

Why did she name me Freddy?

Why didn't she slow down we wouldn't be here if she had only
slowed down maybe if I had done a better job of calming her down
we wouldn't be here we shouldn't be here what could I have done
to prevent us being here the hatchback the sedan the concrete the
hatchback the sedan the concrete the hatchback the sedan the

One second remains.

I'm so sorry.

Please forgive me.