

March 30, 2015

Please read letter attached:

CC: all listed below

The Honorable SC Governor Nikki Haley  
Office of the Governor  
1205 Pendleton St.  
Columbia, SC 29201

Commission on Judicial Conduct/ Disciplinary Counsel  
1015 Sumter St. #200  
Columbia, SC 29201

US Dept of Justice / Police oversight  
950 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Walhalla, City Hall/ Mayor  
206 N. Church St  
Walhalla, SC 29691

Police Dept / Police Chief  
101 E. Main St  
Walhalla, SC 29691

Chamber of Commerce  
105 W. South Broad St.  
Walhalla, SC 29601

March 24, 2015

This is a report on my traffic stop for speeding in a 30mph zone (?), and maybe 250 ft from the 45mph zone on March 22, 2015. The officer was R. Holcombe (Sgt), of the Walhalla, SC's police department. Officer Holcombe told me his "radar" showed me at 47 mph, but I was given a ticket for 39mph in a 30mph zone (?) and told I was being given a favor and due to my "bad behavior" the officer told me that he usually issues a warning citation to "out of town speeders," but he made an exception in my case. (Which, even at the time I felt my "leg was being pulled" and, after telling my little horror tale to friends and family, they too, relate similar stories.)

It was around 3pm Sunday afternoon. I recall, that after leaving sc183-28, in the middle of downtown Walhalla at the red light, I turned south onto sc183 going to Westminster SC. I did not see a single car for the next 2 miles on highway (then I was pulled over). The speed limit is 30mph from the red light and is less than a mile and half, then it becomes 45mph. Which in my opinion is a bit odd, because in that 45mph zone, there are many side streets on both sides, a very large business on left and more than ¼ mile from (45) speed sign, there is a very dangerous, 3 way intersection onto this main sc183 highway. This is where I was pulled over.

When the officer first put on his siren and blue lights and I heard his motor roar up, it startled me! I was going down in a sloped area of the highway (less than 1/4 mile into the 45mph zone and outside city limit sign, you are coming up hill at the 45 sign), he came from my back left from the top of that slope at a high rate of speed! (It was the northbound side and not from the street he used in his citation, that is maybe 3- 400ft further north). I thought he must have an emergency and I immediately pulled to my right, blocking both lanes of a street called Flat Rock Rd, as it never occurred to me that he was after me!

He pulled his vehicle behind me. Now I am halfway into sc183 and blocking the street of Flat Rock. He comes to my window and tells me that I was going 47 in a 30mph zone. And I thought that he meant up near the red light in town and I was confused because I knew that I wasn't traveling that fast in that area. He kept telling me that his "radar had just been calibrated and that it was right". Even at this point he tells me that I am putting him in danger "there" as I am still sitting half in the main highway and I am also blocking, Flat Rock Rd (which I am trying to keep my eye on as I'm unfamiliar with the area). He *never* once offered for us to get into a safer position. Officer Holcombe takes my Drivers license, proof of insurance and vehicle registration information and goes back to his vichele and I wanted to get into a safer position (he is holding all of my valuable information) so I pulled my car around a drain culvert and onto the grassy side of the highway (25 ft) and that is when all "hell broke lose"! I was unaware of a law on moving your auto in a traffic stop. Even a very conscientious 75 year old, alert citizen does not know everything! At this point, I cannot trust this irate officer and I think that I am going to be sick... so I just called 911. When a person's face turns "beet red," it has been my experience that his anger is most likely going to explode and that would be on me! In fact I thought I was going to be towed away, because he kept yelling for me to give him my key... *we do* have another officer *there*, Officer Lunz.

Officer Holcombe, has developed the skill of "caging people in." When I did not agree with his assessment he berated me. Then he kept repeating over and over that he

"usually gives a warning to people from out of town with a clean record" but in my case he is giving me a ticket because of my bad behavior! Then he came back with a ticket not for the offense of 47 in the 30mph zone, but (he) is doing me a favor by issuing me a citation for 39 in a 30mph zone. If he felt so strongly about my misconduct, why not issue a citation for misconduct? Most people want to know where their lapse in judgment occurs so they can make corrections. I fall in that category.

Policing by *intimidation* is getting a lot of people killed...young and old, black or white. Afterwards, we are told if the *offender* had done "such and such," he wouldn't have lost his *life*...in short, IT'S HIS OWN FAULT! Well, I beg to differ! I want ever be out taking the *life* of another PERSON from my lack of control...never! And, no one I have ever met says how grateful he/she was to be disrespected and manipulated...not to mention "scared" with certain "behavioral tactics" or subjected to just plain out of control anger over and above what the event *would ever warrant*? In fact, deep seated, anger cannot be a prerequisite for a police officer job or any other job that I am aware of! Why is it that policing is allowed to be inhumane, but the citizens are never allowed to behave in such a manner?

We are *everyone*...caretakers of our society, but the policing system's main goal across this country seems to be bent on proving some kind of *superiority* over the other people that *they* are supposed to serve and protect. In my traffic stop I was not protected and even in the best of health, it cost me my equilibrium for the next several days, which really did put me, and possibly others, at risk, as I had 50 miles yet, to get home! But who cares about people and their disabilities or stress level (or even aging) when it comes to policing? I failed to see where my actions put a single person in harms way by going over the speed limit on a deserted highway, if indeed I did by his assessment? (I remember so few people out in that area that Sunday afternoon.) In fact the officer's action by leaving us all sitting in the middle of a main highway (with a blocked right angle view ahead) and me totally blocking a side street put us both in danger...which I was very cognoscente of...the entire time...but not him! I would like to know who writes these police manuals...that teaches police to respond to people like they are some kind of wild animal that may attack them at any given moment...so the officer must put the "fear of God" in them...first! Even people in the real *wild* don't find this necessary!

I thought that our property taxes, paid for our police departments, instead of hiding police offices to catch people off guard (especially people unfamiliar with the area) and in the confusion, justify a citation on them and much worse...totally confuse the person about the entire incident? The police are getting people killed by creating major anxiety. This could very well be proven by science for the (natural) "flight or fight" nature of humans.

One good thing to come out of this little incident...me, friend nor relative will be going through the town of Wahlalla as we always had an alternative in the first place...none of our dollars will be spent there again! And as long as I remain here, this warning will be on my lips!

Ruth O'Kelley



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