

Calling all Speeders

The worst thing about getting a speeding ticket--besides paying it--is watching your fellow motorists speed by, GAWKING at you, while you sit there being reprimanded. This is especially awful if you get your speeding ticket right next to where you work, like I did. Twice.

That's why, when I was stopped the second time, I knew enough to pull off the road into the loading area of a neighboring business. I did not want the news of my ticket to get back to the office before I did--AGAIN. But, then the owner of the business came out and asked both me and the police officer to please move. Things were not going well. Then they got worse.

The police officer asked me how I was. What a peculiar question. How is anyone who has just been stopped for speeding? I wanted to say, "How am I? That depends entirely ON YOU!" I didn't. I said, "Fine. Never better." Yes, I LIED to a police officer.

Then she asked me that other question police officers are apt to ask--not that I've been asked it often. "Do you know why I stopped you?" What exactly are they fishing for? Honest, I had not been aware that I'd been speeding. But I was pretty sure I hadn't done anything else illegal.

Miraculously, I was saved from having to answer that question. Saved by the bell. Or rather the ring. Yes, it's true. My cell phone rang while I was being questioned by a police officer. I was mortified, but I managed to maintain my composure. "That's probably my bookie." I'm kidding; I didn't say that. I knew it wasn't my bookie.

But I was pretty sure I did know who it was. For two days, I'd been trying to speak to my doctor about the side effects of the sleep medicine she'd prescribed. Namely daytime loopiness—more than usual. They don't show that in the television commercials.

The phone rang again. The officer looked at me. I looked at my caller ID. It confirmed that my doctor's office was indeed calling. Do you know how hard it is to get a medical professional on the phone? Every time you call them, they're busy with a patient. And then they FINALLY call you back, and you're busy . . . with a police officer.

The phone rang again. That's when I made a serious error in judgment, obviously not my first of the day. I said, "Could I . . . get that?" Amazingly, she agreed.

I realized two things as soon as I picked up the phone. Number one, things would probably go better for me if I didn't talk long. And two, that was just as well. Describing my strange side-effects might lead the officer to suspect I was impaired, which now that I think about it, I might have been.

So when the nurse asked me what the problem was, I said, "That medicine is . . . is making me feel funny." Of course, she thought she needed more information. And had there not been a police officer, staring into my car, hanging on my every word, I would have told her that I was feeling extremely befuddled and more than a little bit ding-dong. Instead I said, "Could I call you back?"

If you've ever been ticketed, you know that the officer goes back to the squad car to write your ticket and check your outstanding warrants. Depending on how many of those you have, this should give you plenty of time to feel remorseful and fret about your

fate. But I didn't have time for that. I used my time to call the nurse who was, by that time, busy with a patient--naturally.

To make a long story not quite so long, I did finally get to speak to her, but not until the next day. And I'm no longer taking that particular medicine, which should be reassuring to anyone who drives the same roads as I do.

Also, the officer said my fine was much lower than it could have been, which was kind of her. It probably helped that I kept the call short.

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