

Stopped by a Cop!

By Marilyn Reeves

I was driving down Havana Street when I suddenly became aware of a police car following close behind me. He flashed his red dome light and made a short 'blipping' sound with his siren, so I signaled for a right turn and pulled into Wendy's parking lot. He pulled up alongside me.

My hands were trembling. I couldn't imagine what I had done to get this cop's attention! Was I driving too fast? Too slow? Was I weaving around in my lane? I didn't think so. Perhaps he thought I was too old to drive. But despite my glaucoma, I passed the eye exam this past March when I went in to the Driver's License Bureau to renew my license. It was right before everything shut down for the pandemic. Ironically, that very same evening I heard on the news that seniors no longer had to appear in person, but could now renew their licenses on line. If I had waited just one more day, I could have saved myself the hassle!

I opened my car door and started to get out as the officer approached. "Stay in your car, ma'am," he ordered.

"Oh, okay." Oh, dear! Leave it to me to do the wrong thing.

"License and registration."

As I pulled the items out of my billfold and I handed them to him, I timidly asked, "Did I do something wrong?"

"Right rear tail light's out, ma'am. You need to get that fixed."

He stepped away for a moment. I assumed he was writing me a ticket and I felt a bit miffed! How was I supposed to know my tail light was out? A moment later, he walked back up to my window and handed me a warning, not a ticket.

I looked at his face. He was just a young man, probably in his mid-thirties, but he looked tired. World-weary. And I thought how hard his job must be right now with so many people up in arms over police brutality, even demanding that we cut back on their funding!

I believe there are probably only a few bad apples in the barrel causing all the trouble. To be sure, there are some sadistic brutes on the force who definitely need to be weeded out. But the majority of them are just trying their best to protect the general public from harm. What on earth would we do without the police if they weren't able to respond when we needed them? If anything, I think we should *increase* police funding. Police officers – like teachers – are notoriously underpaid.

"This is a reminder to get that tail light fixed. You need to get that done within the next three days."

"Yes, sir. I will. Thank you, Officer. And Officer?"

"Yes, ma'am?"

"Thank you for putting your life on the line every day in order to keep the rest of us safe."

He looked at me and smiled. "Yes, ma'am. You have a good day, now."

"You too, sir."

Then, as he pulled out of the parking space and drove away, I thought to myself, What a nice man.