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Osoyoos Times



SELF-RIGHTEOUS COPS WHO TREAT INNOCENT TAXPAYERS LIKE CRIMINALS IS UNACCEPTABLE

Posted on 08 February 2012 by Keith Lacey

For 20 minutes this past Friday night, I was treated like a criminal and presumed guilty until proven innocent, which is not how the law is supposed to work in this country, especially when you have done absolutely nothing wrong.

But, according to Cpl. Ryan S. McLeod of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, he had every right to pull me over, treat me with basically zero respect and humiliate me in front of my girlfriend, who was so upset she got physically sick and was in tears hours later, just because he believes he has the power to do whatever he likes.

After a long week at work, me and my girlfriend headed to a local restaurant/pub to grab a meal with some friends and share a few stories and have a couple of laughs.

After consuming a meal, we made the decision to grab a bottle of wine at the adjacent liquor store to spend a nice, quiet evening at home.

However, seconds after pulling out of the liquor store parking lot, Cpl. McLeod flashed his cherry tops and pulled me over.

When I asked him very politely what the problem seemed to be, he told me he had pulled me over because my license plate was dirty, which remains as a very lame excuse as he proceeded instantly to asking me about whether I had consumed any alcohol.

I responded very politely, once again, and told him I had gone out after work for a meal with my girlfriend and some friends and he had no right to pull me over when I had done nothing wrong.

When I suggested to him I was not displaying any signs of impairment, I did not weave or speed and was wearing my seatbelt and he had no right to be interrogating me like this, he made it very clear he was going to make me undergo the humiliation of having to undergo a roadside breath test.

He had no reasonable or probable grounds to be doing any of this, but yet he persisted to show just how much power he had.

Of course, you don't have any choice but to oblige or else face some very dire consequences whenever a police officer asks you do anything in this country (that's another story for another day), so I politely stepped outside my truck, listened to his instructions and blew into the screening device.

When the readings registered, I could honestly tell Cpl. McLeod was disappointed as the readings were, how do I say this, pretty much close to zero.

He never said sorry, never apologized, informed me I was "Ok to drive" and more or less appeared ready to waltz back to his vehicle and carry on his merry way and harass somebody else I'm thinking.

But now I was upset and I made it very clear to him for a third time that pulling me over for having a dirty license plate was a very lame excuse because his police cruiser was 20 feet from my truck and I could read the plate no problem at all.

What Cpl. McLeod wouldn't admit was the truth. What really happened was he sat in his vehicle outside a licensed establishment - which he kept calling a bar and I insisted was a restaurant - and then watched me and my girlfriend head inside to buy a bottle of wine, so he instantly presumed I must have been drinking.

After the traumatizing experience of having to go through a breath test for doing absolutely nothing wrong and registering a reading so low it was laughable, I had had enough of his ridiculous treatment and told him I wanted his badge number, name and business card.

At this point, Cpl. McLeod commented to me about "not giving him attitude" because I dared speak back to him about his unfair treatment.

There was a lot of attitude shown our encounter up until that point and none of it came from me. I've been a journalist for 27 years and my integrity as a writer and reporter of the truth has never been questioned and I'm not going to let some stranger with a badge, gun and attitude take that away from me.

I'm 50 years old, was polite and co-operative, showed no signs at all of any impairment, yet this experienced officer couldn't help himself and had to humiliate and embarrass me just because he can.

It's disgusting.

When I left the Bonnyville Nouvelle newspaper to come to Osoyoos, Sgt. Luis Gandolfi, RCMP detachment commander, phoned to say thanks for all my hard work and wish me good luck. When I worked in my hometown of Sudbury, Ontario for 20 years, police chief Alex McCauley became a good friend.

I have no issues with police, but I have great issue with Cpl. McLeod's treatment and what happened to me

Friday night.

When I later informed him I was the editor of the local newspaper and was going to write about our little episode, he finally shut up and showed me some respect. And one final time, I told him he had no right to pull me over.

While he was a lot quieter and less cocky, he kept repeating his mantra he was a police officer and he could basically pull me over whenever he likes for whatever reason he justifies.

I found out this past weekend from other friends I've already made in Osoyoos this kind of incident happens on a regular basis in this community and it's not the first time this particular officer has been involved.

I know I speak for a lot of frustrated citizens out there when I say enough is enough. Sitting in the parking lot of a licensed establishment and pulling people over for whatever lame reason you come up with, is not what citizens want or expect from the police.

This is a free country, not a police state.

If someone is speeding, driving erratically or blows through a red light, of course they can expect to be pulled over by the police. If a RIDE spotcheck is set up, they have proven to be an effective and excellent way of catching drunk drivers.

No one condones drunk driving either, but that's not the point. I wouldn't be writing or expecting any sympathy if I was caught drunk driving. But I didn't know going for a meal and having a pint on a Friday night was against any law in this country.

Cpl. McLeod can justify his actions any way he likes, but I'm not buying what he's selling and I know most people out there won't be either.

This is another example of a cop who abused his position of authority.

It's incidents like this and officers like this, who are loaded with arrogance and self-righteousness, who give all the good officers out there, who are in the majority, a truly bad name.

Sitting in a parking lot outside a restaurant that serves liquor on a Friday night, then lying about the reason you're pulling someone over and humiliating him in front of his girlfriend isn't what I want my taxpayer dollars being spent on.

I suggest to Cpl. McLeod you get out there and catch the bad guys. I'm not one of them.

And if you're not cut out for treating people with dignity and respect, even though you have all this so-called power you're so easy to abuse, perhaps you find another profession.

When I told my girlfriend I'm sick and tired of police officers who feel they are free to do whatever they please whenever they want without consequence and I was going to write about this incident and let the people of Osoyoos know what's going on, she was worried this officer "might make my life a living hell."

I told her, "don't worry honey, I'm not a criminal and I don't break the law" and I refuse to live my life being worried about a person hired to serve and protect, who feeds his huge ego bothering and harassing innocent taxpayers who pay his salary.

I also told her if I ever run into Cpl McLeod again and he pulls this kind of crap on me again, I'll treat him with the same respect he showed me last Friday night. Zero.

And if he ever attempts to intimidate or harass me ever again when I've done nothing wrong, I'll be sure to let his boss and all the good people of Osoyoos know all about it.

One Response to "SELF-RIGHTEOUS COPS WHO TREAT INNOCENT TAXPAYERS LIKE CRIMINALS IS UNACCEPTABLE"



1. *LS* says:

[February 8, 2012 at 5:23 pm](#)

Wow, reporting at the Osoyoos Times has sure gone downhill in the past few weeks. The biased, unsubstantiated piece has an awful lot of judgement for someone who dislikes being judged himself. Given the vitriol you've just spewed, you likely were more than a little mouthy with the constable and not at all polite. Accept responsibility for your actions.

And, unless you are dating someone beneath the age of consent, your girlfriend needs to mature a little.

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