

Traffic stop

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Speeding down the tracks I approached the loop. Suddenly, I was upside down, laughing. Then, there was another ascent.

"Shit."

Tracks led down to the sharp left turn. Car stopped for a second and I took a deep breath. Then, I tumbled forward. With the ground on my left and sky on the right I felt joy, even though I was not experiencing any forces.

"Dispatch to car four-four, speeding vehicle is coming to you from the north. Intercept it. Car four-four, acknowledge," said voice as my seat vibrated.

Tracks were still moving before my eyes, making me disoriented.

"Car four-four, copy that." I took off the old VR glasses from my face and tossed them onto the passenger's seat. Something was not right. "Car four-four to dispatch, did you say speeding?"

"Dispatch to car four-four, that's positive, the vehicle is indeed speeding."

Activating my department issued lenses I saw the numbers from the license plate and basic data concerning the vehicle. Some old, expensive, manually driven car registered on the Church. I glanced at the video footage from the air – vehicle was going over eighty miles per hour. Exactly what I needed, some wacko from the Church.

Just as I hid my gaming glasses in the case, a light blue convertible sped past me. I turned on the engine and told the car to get on the road. There, I took the wheel. Driving fast with the lights and sirens blazing made me feel I was alive. Utility poles were moving quickly past the windshield and the road seemed to go on forever. Shrubs dotted the desert which spread out toward the horizon – I loved the Great Basin. Soon, I caught up with the convertible.

"Come on, let's race," I said to myself.

Seeing the right turn signal blinking, I slowed down and switched off the sirens. The convertible pulled over and I parked behind it.

"Car four-four to dispatch, I'm conducting a traffic stop."

"Copy that, car four-four."

Even though the lenses were blocking the UV rays, I put on my Aviator sunglasses. Every trooper in the country was doing that – I would bet on it. Trying to look more nonchalant, I put a toothpick in the mouth. Deciding against taking the hat, I got out of the car. On the roof, behind the lightbar, small quadcopter was waiting for my orders but I did not want to use it. Dispatch had the larger UAV hovering over the scene which provided me with the perfectly good video feed. Slowly, I walked over to the convertible.

Woman on the driver's seat was really young or relied on the sophisticated biotechnological modifications. Not that there was anything wrong with that – after the accident on duty, the reconstruction of my left leg involved a lot of 3D printing and tissue cloning. With a quick hand gesture, I closed the window with the video feed. The driver turned her head to look at me. Soft wind brushed her long, straight red hair.

"Good afternoon, ma'am. I'm a trooper Leonard Mitchell, badge number zero-eight-two, Nevada Highway Patrol. Please, take off your sunglasses."

She complied and put the glasses on the passenger's seat, near the white baggy purse. Just in case, I had my right hand on the pistol, ready to unholster it. At the same time, her red lace top with the deep neckline was stealing my attention. I wondered who in the command was watching with me.

"The reason why you're being stopped is that I got you going eighty three miles per hour while the limit is seventy. What is more, you're not using your seatbelt." I looked straight into her green eyes. "Now, I will perform the identification." As soon as I said that, her ID appeared to the left of her face. Not only was she really in the early twenties, but she also had an authentic driver license.

"Miss Shears, why were you driving thirteen miles over the speed limit?"

"Call me Mona." She smiled.

"I can't ma'am, I have to follow the protocol. Everything is being recorded."

She shrugged. "I need to get quickly to Vegas. Church duties."

Of course, I thought, it is all about the Church.

"Please get out of the car," I said. "We have to do a simple field sobriety test."

"Come on!" She rolled her eyes.

"I have plenty of time, ma'am."

Door opened and she swung her long legs out. I wondered how she could drive in that high heels. She stood up. White shorts tightly cupped the curve of her buttocks. Chewing the toothpick, I led her to the place between our cars.

"Now walk the line taking nine heel-to-toe steps, while looking down and counting out loud. At nine steps, pivot on one foot, turn around, and walk nine heel-to-toe steps back."

"All right, mister trooper."

Leaning against the trunk of her convertible, I observed the test. Despite keeping her head down as instructed, she still walked like a model on the catwalk. She could be an actress, too. Given that this information was not relevant to my current duties, I could not check her occupation. However, I was sure that she was some kind of a celebrity or in a relationship with one. The Church admitted mostly rich and famous.

She walked back with a mocking smile on her cute face.

"Done." She folded her arms.

"Well, I have no reason to suspect that you're intoxicated, ma'am. You passed the test."

"Am I free to go?"

"Before I let you go, we have to get two things done. First, I'll issue you a ticket for driving over the speed limit and not using the seatbelt."

"Wait, what?"

"Rules are rules."

I had to look up the traffic infraction fines and penalties before explaining them to her. She listened shaking her head. With few hand gestures before my eyes, I issued the ticket and her personal records got appropriately updated.

"What's the second thing, mister trooper?" she asked.

"I would like you to fasten your seatbelt and take off that shoes. Driving in the high heels is dangerous."

"Geez, what a buzzkill. Can I go now?"

"Yes, but remember about the shoes and the seatbelt."

"Fine!"

Trying not to swallow the toothpick, I watched as she walked back to the car swaying her hips. She sat sideways on the driver's seat with her feet on the ground. Slowly, she undid her shoes one at a time and slipped them off. Then, she picked them up and threw into the car. I came up to the passenger side. Looking at me, she buckled up.

"I care about your safety, ma'am."

She put on her sunglasses. "May our Creator bless you, trooper Mitchell, badge number zero-eight-two."

"Yeah. Good luck with your Church duties."

She laughed and drove away leaving me in the clouds of dust. Walking back to the squad car I told the dispatch that I was back in service. In the upper left corner of my field of view, green tick appeared next to the "intercept the speeding vehicle" task. Objective complete, good job, that was a rare catch. Sitting on the driver's seat, I took off my sunglasses, switched off the emergency lights and told the car to park itself perpendicular to the road.

Without anything to do, I reached for the case with the gaming glasses. My service AR interface was hiding at the edge of sight – I waved it away and looked through the windshield. Staring at the blue sky, I lost my feel for the roller coaster.

Virtual reality was so boring.

September 2015

Inspired by the Carpenter Brut's "Teaser EP II".