

Okay, so it was a late night. I stopped this vehicle. I pulled her over for speed and not signaling. I approached the vehicle, saw it was a female driver; I spoke with her. I let her know that she was being audio and video recording and I let her know where – I asked her where she was headed to, and she told me that she was visiting out of state and both her parents are in two different hospitals at the same time. And she kept telling me about her parents declining health, and all I did was just listen to her.

I felt really sorry for her situation. I could see in her eyes and just the way she was – just her voice tone and the way she was describing it to me, I just sent a – I felt a huge sense of empathy for her situation.

I had my grandmother, who was in the hospital, and she had cancer, and she was fading away. So I know how it feels to have a loved one in there, and you have to – you feel that empathy. I could relate to her situation if I was going to see a loved one who was in the hospital, you know? I want to get there as fast as possible. I want to see my loved one, so I felt a great deal of empathy for her, and I honestly wished her the best and wished her parents the best in that situation 'cause I can relate to it.

And after I was done listening to her, I told her that I was sorry to hear about her parents and to please drive safely. And when she looked at me, she was almost in tears, and she thanked me just by giving her the time of day and listening to her story, and she went on about her day. I'm just another person. I wear the uniform, but at the end of the day, I'm – it's what's underneath the uniform that matters, and I'm just a human being.

A few weeks after the incident, I received an email that was forwarded to me, and basically, she said that she was so thankful that someone was able to just listen to her and was so – had so much empathy towards her situation, and she was thankful for that fact.

It made me feel really good that I just did – all I did was just listen to her, you know? I stopped really good people on their bad days, and sometimes all you need to do is just listen to them; all they need is someone to listen to them, and I did just that simple fact, and obviously, it had a profound impact on her because she took time out of her busy day to email me, and it had an impact on me because I saw that someone really appreciated that, and just that empathy that I showed for her goes along with our motto, "Service with humility." I like to think that I'm doing good for the public, and this was a great example of that, and that's why I'm a trooper.

I've always had a desire to serve. So whether – two of my goals were to serve in the army and to be a law enforcement officer. I completed the first goal when I served a combat tour in Afghanistan, and I went on to my second goal, and now, I'm a fully commissioned law enforcement officer with the best agency in the state.

I'm Trooper Andrew Ramos with the Washington State Patrol.