

Routine Stop
by
Wayne Franklin

INT. MERCEDEZ-BENZ STATION WAGON - AFFLUENT SUBURB -
EVENING

ANDRE FULLER, late 30s, African-American, drives his car down a street lined with manicured lawns and equally-priced luxury cars in the driveways.

Gustav Mahler's 3rd symphony softly seeps from the speakers. A bag of food sits on the passenger seat.

He speaks with his wife JESSICA FULLER on the speaker phone.

Jessica sneezes.

ANDRE

Bless you, baby.

JESSICA

(V.O.)

Thank you. You didn't have to leave work early. I know you said you have a lot to do.

ANDRE

You know you're more important than that place.

JESSICA

(V.O.)

Are you close?

ANDRE

I'm pulling up now. I got you some...

Red and blue lights reflect from the rear-view mirror onto Andre's face.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

...soup. Fuck.

JESSICA

(V.O.)

Dre? What's wrong?

ANDRE

I'm being pulled over. Again.

Jessica takes a deep breath.

JESSICA

Where are you?

ANDRE

Right outside the house. You can look out the window and see me.

JESSICA

(V.O.)

Jesus... Do I need to come out there?

Andre watches the police car in his rear view mirror and chuckles to himself.

ANDRE

No, Jess.

JESSICA

(V.O.)

Dre, be cool. Just cooperate. Maybe it's legit. They're not all bad.

ANDRE

Yeah, so you say. I'll be in soon, I hope.

Andre ends the call and parks in front of his condo. He pulls out his license.

He closes his eyes and takes a series of deep breaths, each one deeper than the previous.

INT. POLICE CAR - AFFLUENT SUBURB - CONTINUOUS

Officer TANNER GREEN, late 20's, Caucasian, sits in his car. He speaks to a dispatcher on his radio.

FEMALE VOICE

(O.S.)

It's registered to an Andre Fuller. 4945 Old Dominican Way.

TANNER

Hmm. Has the car been reported stolen?

FEMALE VOICE

Negative.

TANNER

Okay, well... This is an African-American male, and he appears to be in the wrong car and the wrong neighborhood. Check for any and all wants and warrants.

FEMALE VOICE

10-4.

EXT. MERCEDEZ-BENZ STATION WAGON - AFFLUENT SUBURB -
CONTINUOUS

Tanner exits the car and slinks to Andre's door. He rests his hand on his sidearm as he reaches the window.

TANNER

What up, cuz? License and registration.

Andre eyes Tanner for a beat. He hands Tanner his information and notices his hand on the gun. He half-smiles and shakes his head.

ANDRE

Is there a problem officer?

Tanner takes Andre's license and clicks his flashlight on to read the name.

TANNER

Mr. Fuller, is this your car?

Andre does a slow burn.

ANDRE

Yes, it's my car. Can you tell me why you pulled me over, officer?

TANNER

How long have you lived in this area, Mr. Fuller?

ANDRE

What? Sir, why did you pull me over? Can you tell me what it is I did?

TANNER

Lower your voice, sir. I'm asking the questions. Now how long have you lived here?

Andre bites his tongue.

ANDRE

I'm not yelling... Nine years.

TANNER

Where were you heading sir?

ANDRE

Home. I live right there.

Andre points out the window to his condominium.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

My wife is sick, and I was trying to get this food to her.

Tanner looks at the house, and then at the car.

TANNER

Your wife, huh?

ANDRE

Yes, she has the flu. She's waiting on this food...

TANNER

You sit tight, sir, I'll be right back.

Tanner takes Andre's license and walks back to his car.

Andre shakes his head.

ANDRE

This shit is so tired...

Tanner stops in his tracks, turns, and walks back to Andre's car.

TANNER

What did you just say to me?

ANDRE

What?

TANNER

What did you say to me, Mr. Fuller?

ANDRE

I didn't say anything to you! I was talking to myself!

TANNER

Out of the car! Now!

ANDRE

Really?

Andre's face shows confusion and anger. He turns the car off and puts the keys in his pocket as he exits the car.

Tanner grabs Andre by the arm and pulls him over to the hood of the car. He makes Andre assume the position and frisks him.

TANNER

I didn't tell you to take the keys out of the ignition, homeboy! What's up with that?

Andre shakes his head in confusion.

ANDRE

That's just a habit. I didn't mean anything by it...

TANNER

You think I'm gonna take your precious Mercedes? My job is to protect and serve the people of this community from people like you! You're disrespecting my authority!

Andre chuckles.

ANDRE

People like me? What kind of people would that be, officer? You still haven't told me why you pulled me over! You are frisking me, for no apparent reason! I consider that being disrespectful to me! I pay taxes! I pay your salary, officer...

Andre reads Tanner's name plate.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

Officer T. Green, badge number 0515!

Tanner pins Andre down onto the hood of the car. He presses the barrel of his gun against Andre's temple.

Andre closes his eyes and grits his teeth.

He speaks directly into Andre's ear.

TANNER

Is this funny to you? I know my badge number, cuz! You don't tell me my badge number. I earned this badge. And you know exactly what kind of people I mean, cuz!

Andre takes a deep breath and chuckles again.

ANDRE

I'm not trying to disrespect you, but I haven't done anything.

TANNER

If I say you're disrespecting me, you're disrespecting me. You are in the wrong neighborhood, at the wrong time of day, with the wrong skin. If I were to blow your brains all over your precious Mercedes-Benz wagon, no one would blink an eye around here, is that clear?

Andre smirks.

ANDRE

Crystal.

Tanner stands up, holsters his gun and backs away.

Andre slowly raises off the car. He bites his lip and smiles.

TANNER

Get back in your vehicle and do not move.

Andre slowly returns to his car.

INT. POLICE CAR - AFFLUENT SUBURB - CONTINUOUS

Tanner drops into the driver's seat and picks up his radio, smiling.

TANNER

Smart ass.

He speaks into the radio.

TANNER (CONT'D)

Dispatch, this is 0515. You got anything for me on Fuller?

FEMALE VOICE

(V.O.)

Negative. Mr. Fuller is clean.

Tanner exhales sharply.

TANNER

Copy that.

EXT. POLICE CAR - AFFLUENT SUBURB - CONTINUOUS

Tanner exits the car. A group of neighbors stand outside, watching the scene. Some are taping the altercation on their smart phones.

TANNER

There's nothing to see, everyone. Please return to your homes. The situation is handled. And please turn off your phones.

The crowd disperses, aside from one Caucasian woman, wearing a bathrobe. She remains on the sidewalk, watching.

Tanner walks back to Andre's car.

EXT. MERCEDES-BENZ STATION WAGON - AFFLUENT SUBURB - CONTINUOUS

TANNER

Mr. Fuller, when's the last time you smoked marijuana?

Andre laughs out loud.

ANDRE

I don't smoke marijuana, officer.

TANNER

Well, I feel that your responses indicate that you do smoke marijuana. I'm going to have to take you in.

ANDRE

Officer, this is a big mistake.

Tanner stands Andre up and handcuffs him.

The woman in the robe protests.

JESSICA

Hey! He didn't do anything! What is your badge number?

ANDRE

Jessica, calm down.

TANNER

Listen to your neighbor, lady. Go back in your house.

Andre laughs a little harder.

Tanner shoves him into the side of the car.

TANNER (CONT'D)

What the hell is so funny?

Jessica walks over to the officer and reads his badge.

JESSICA

Officer Green, my name is Lieutenant
Jessica Fuller of the 17th precinct. What
precinct are you from?

Tanner stops cuffing Andre. He stares at Jessica for a
beat.

Jessica pulls out her badge, which hangs from a silver
chain around her neck.

TANNER

I'm from the 25th, ma'am.

JESSICA

Is this your first night, Green?

TANNER

No ma'am.

JESSICA

Why are you giving this gentleman such a
hard time?

TANNER

This was a routine stop, Lieutenant. I
pulled the suspect over to inform him of
a burned out tail light. He became
aggressive towards me, which led me to
believe he was under the influence of
marijuana...

Jessica cuts him off.

JESSICA

Did you give him a test of some kind? Did
you smell marijuana on him or in his
vehicle?

TANNER

No ma'am. His erratic behavior and
giggling indicate that he is under the
influence...

JESSICA

He doesn't smoke marijuana. He has
asthma.

Tanner looks confused.

TANNER

Ma'am?

Tanner's eyes go wide. He slowly turns to Andre, who is giggling uncontrollably.

TANNER (CONT'D)

This is your wife?

ANDRE

Yes. I told you this was a big mistake.

Tanner closes his eyes and sighs. He removes the cuffs.

TANNER

Mr. Fuller, can you...

Andre smiles and shakes his head.

ANDRE

Nope. Am I free to go?

TANNER

B-but sir...

ANDRE

Am I free to go? Cuz?

Tanner swallows hard and looks into Andre's eyes.

TANNER

Yes sir.

JESSICA

You're under Lieutenant Greiner down at the 2-5, right?

TANNER

Yes ma'am. Why do you ask?

JESSICA

Nothing of your concern. I'll call her in the morning.

Tanner pleads.

TANNER

Lieutenant, please...

JESSICA

You may go now.

Tanner's countenance drops as he turns towards his car.

TANNER

One of your tail lights is out. Have a good evening Mr. Fuller, Lieutenant Fuller.

Tanner sulks back to the squad car. He starts the car and drives away.

ANDRE

Baby, let's go in the house. You don't need to be out here in a robe if you're sick.

JESSICA

I know. I hope the soup isn't cold.

Jessica and Andre walk into their house.