

Police procedure

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hurry. She needed him.

But Brice wasn't the only one racing -- a policeman with his blue light flashing was close behind.

"I heard a siren and, when I looked in the mirror, I saw a police officer on a motorcycle," Brice says. "I told the officer that there was an emergency and I needed to get there and could he follow me. Well, he told me 'No.' I told him again that I needed to get to see about my grandmother and mother and he said, 'Pull it over.'

"By that time, I was within a block of the house; in fact, I could see the house."

But, fearing the consequences of resisting the officer's order, Brice says, he pulled over. By then, he adds, he could see his mother's house and could hear the siren of an ambulance nearing.

The officer asked if he knew he was speeding, Brice says. "I told him, 'Yes, but I'm not doing this to be doing this. I don't know how fast I'm going, I just need to get there.'"

Still, Brice says, the officer, who he identified as C.L. Newsome, refused to allow him to see about his sick grandmother, who eventually died at Forsyth Memorial Hospital, and insisted on writing him a ticket right then and there, not for speeding, but for running a red light.

Though he is unsure if he ran a red light or not, Brice says, he is sure that he stopped at the intersection before proceeding into the traffic and that he had his emergency flashers on.

As for the ticket, Brice says, he will accept it, but he is bothered by what he views as the insensitivity of the officer and the fact that the ticket he was issued does not indicate his violation.

Later, as Brice was getting into his car at his mother's home to follow the ambulance to the hospital, he says, another police officer drove up behind him and asked him to see the ticket he had just received.

"I told him, no, I was in a hurry, and went on to the hospital," he says.

Brice says it was not until days later that he realized his ticket did not specify his traffic violation. After realizing that, Brice says, he called the Police Department to inquire if his ticket was valid.

Brice says he was told by the sergeant on duty that he was charged with running a red light and that the officer could write his violation on the original without it appearing on his copy of the ticket.

"I think it's unfair for him to be able to write anything (on the original after signing the ticket)," Brice says. "My copy is a carbon copy but it has no charge on it. The sergeant said he can write anything on the first copy, ... but I think it's wrong."

The correct procedure to follow in an emergency, Brice says Sgt. Walt Luffman told him, is to call the Police Department and request a police escort. But Brice says his first instinct was to get to his grandmother as fast as he could.

"I drove as safely as possible and I had my emergency blinkers on," Brice says. "I don't think people know to call for an escort."

Luffman says no private citizens are allowed to drive as fast as Brice was traveling and that, under the circumstances, the officer acted according to police procedure.

"He's trying to make a big deal out of nothing," Luffman says of Brice. "He was traveling 70 in a 35 (zone)

and ran a stoplight. The officer kept trying to get him to calm down. He was endangering other people's lives by traveling that fast."

Officer Newsome did not allow Brice to leave the scene because the officer did not determine that Brice was involved in an emergency situation, Luffman says.

"The officer didn't feel it was a real emergency because somebody was at home with his grandmother," he says.

As for Brice's copy of the ticket listing his violation, Luffman says, Brice was told of his violation and violations aren't written on the ticket, but individual blocks listing violations are pre-printed on the ticket and an officer checks whichever ones apply.

The appropriate block was not checked on Brice's ticket.

Alderman Vivian Burke, chairman of the Board of Aldermen's Public Safety Committee, says she is aware of an incident similar to the Brice case and that, according to standard police procedure, it is proper to issue tickets to people speeding, regardless of the emergency situation.

"I had a case where a pediatrician was speeding to the hospital to see about a patient," Burke says. "When I called the chief (Police Chief Lucius Powell), he told me that, if everybody did that, there would be no need to have speed laws."

Though Burke acknowledges that citizens should request police escorts during emergencies, the one thing she feels the officer should have done that he didn't do was follow Brice to his grandmother's house once he was told of the emergency.

Brice was found guilty in traffic court and fined the cost of court June 5. He plans to appeal the case in Superior Court.

"I don't deny that I was speeding," Brice says. "I just think that anybody who thinks about a 99-year-old woman would have some sympathy. But he (the police officer) didn't have any sympathy."

Gospel Show scheduled

Eastside Church of Christ at 536 Barbara Jane Avenue will sponsor an "Old Fashioned Gospel Sing" Saturday, June 9, at 7 p.m.

The featured group, Straight Company, a seven member a cappella group, is no stranger to national television audiences. They have appeared on the show "You Can Be A Star," in which they competed against an array of talent for first place.

They have also appeared at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tenn.

Other musical guest featured at the concert will be Voices of Love of Augusta, Ga., Dill Avenue of Richmond, Va., Newburg Road A Cappella Chorus of Louisville, Ky., Southside A Cappella Chorus of Durham, Carver Road Ensemble, East Capitol Street Ensemble of Washington, The Gospel Notes of Tulsa, Okla., plus the Rouse Brothers.

The Rev. N.E. Sizemore is the host pastor.

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New librarian

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desk has been refinished, chairs have been ordered for the auditorium and the building will be painted in July or August.

"We have put a lot of money into the branch this year and, because of that, people have been coming," Sprinkle-Hamlin says.

Last year, the East Winston library ranked in the bottom three in circulation among the county's 10 branches, but that has changed recently. Circulation is up in the adult department and, consequently, new materials, magazines and books have been placed in the branch, Sprinkle-Hamlin says.

Adds Jackson: "We want people to know that this is more than just a library. When you come here, you are at home and among living history."

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