I was born blonde, and, despite the jokes about dumb blondes, have elected to stay that way. The pressing question is, has being a dumb blonde affected my life, and especially my interactions with cops? Have I learned from those interactions, or am I a perennial dumb blonde joke? Here are ten representative examples. You decide.

1) A Pasadena cop stopped me at age sixteen in 1961,and made a driving suggestion. No ticket.

**Lesson:** It certainly helped to be young and female. You are naïve, not dumb.

2) About 1965, a cop stopped me on the Pasadena Freeway for letting a passenger sit on the back of my MG Midget---three of us USC sophomores in a two-seater. There is a little ledge behind the seats, but technically still inside the car, just big enough for my academically disinterested but athletic blonde roommate to perch on. When she waved her tushy at him to explain, he let me go.

**Lesson:** The young and blonde thing—maybe…We certainly were dumb. The cop should have called my mother.

3) In 1975, a hunky Texas State Trooper stopped me. I was flying through a whole bunch of nowhere on an empty I-30 with my two small children in the backseat. “Do y’all know how fast you were goin’?”

 “No, sir.”

“You’all were doin’ ninety. Where you goin’ in such a hurry?”

 “Back home to New Jersey. “

 He glanced at my children in the backseat. “Well, I want you to get home safe, so you slow down, ya hear? You don’t wanna kill them pretty babies.” He tipped his hat.

**Lesson:** That thingy on the dashboard is a speedometer, but the gentlemanly state trooper let me go. So maybe the dumb blonde thing works.

4) All is quiet till about 1973 when the cops in Freehold, NJ, noticed me one night bent over in the street in front of my house, wearing a nightgown and my husband’s ski jacket, waving a pork chop trying to coax our unspayed and unruly cocker spaniel back into the house. They didn’t stop to help, but they did stop at my husband’s Toyota Dealership to tell him what they saw.

**Lesson:** Dumb blondes are so amusing! Cops can be assholes.

5) Fast forward to the nineties. I’m in my forties and living in Bloomfield Hills, MI. It’s about 6:00 PM on a winter evening and pitch dark. I’m on I-75, driving a newish Cadillac El Dorado in rush hour traffic and pouring rain. When the blue lights flash behind me, I struggle to the shoulder and push the down window button. A cop with a plastic rain bonnet over his gray felt hat shines his flashlight into the car.

 “Know why I stopped you?”

 “Not really. I thought I was driving safely.”

 “Your driving was fine. Your registration is expired.”

 “I pay it whenever they send the bill. I must not have gotten it.”

I feel sorry for the trooper getting soaked because I don’t have an updated sticker on my license plate. Headlights are rushing by his backside, and I think he might get killed. For what? An expired registration?

 “Did you move recently?”

 “Last year, not real recently.”

 “They probably sent it to your old address. The State is a couple of years behind in updating its records.” The rain dripped off his hat brim and splashed into my lap. He wrote a summons for $50 and headed back to his cruiser. Pissed me off, but I felt sorry for the cop sent out to get his quota in such terrible weather.

**Lesson:** Brunettes probably check the sticker.

6) On another dark night in a dangerous part of Detroit, alone in that same El Dorado, I deliberately eased through a red light on Cass Avenue out of fear of carjacking. This time the blue lights belonged to a short, brown kid not more than his early twenties with huge doe eyes. I wondered*, Are you old enough to be out here alone, Sweetie? This is a bad neighborhood.* I said, “Sorry, I’m lost. Can you give me directions to the Lodge Freeway?” He did and wished me well.

**Lesson:** I’ve hit fifty, and cops now look like children. The Detroit kid-cops know that suburbanites are afraid in that area at night. My husband would have gotten the ticket. The dumb blonde thing? Maybe.

 7) By 1999, I was living in South Carolina, but after thirty years in the New York or Detroit areas, I was plenty aggressive. I got stopped in a small-town speed trap, well, not a speed trap exactly. The hamlet was trying to slow traffic before it hit the three blocks of “town.” This one let me off with a verbal warning. A few weeks later, I got stopped at the other end of the same town. This time, a written warning. Whew.

**Lesson:** Slow down. They know you’re not really blonde anymore. But. . . shortly thereafter . . .

8) I sped by a county sheriff’s deputy on an I-85 on-ramp. He looked just like the boy-cop in Detroit. When I reached for my license and registration, the short little deputy repeated himself. “I said, I *might* couldgive you a ticket.”

**Lesson**: Oh, damn, girl, these southern boys are just tryin’ to teach you some manners.

9) In 2014, I got stopped by a middle-aged city cop on Hwy. 64 as I was leaving Asheboro, NC. I had put my foot on the gas to regain highway speed when the town disappeared. I could see the sign that said “Speed Limit 55” ahead of me when he pulled me over, but supposedly it was still 35 where he clocked me. He lingered in his Crown Vic poking at something on the dashboard. Finally, he unstuffed himself from his car and moseyed over to mine, where he sniffed around my Acura SUV like an old Plott hound. He checked the back seat. “What’s in the suitcase?”

“My clothes, toiletries. You can look.”

“Where you headed?”

“Chapel Hill.”

“What’s in Chapel Hill?”

“I’m going to watch my grandson play football.” *And, asshole, I’m going to miss kickoff unless you quit toying with me like I’m some drug mule.* Then he squeezed behind the wheel of his car, and slowly wrote me a ticket for 57 in a 35. “More than twenty miles over the limit, you gotta appear in person.”

A local attorney pleaded the ticket down to “faulty equipment.” The attorney cost $300, and the fine was $25, exactly the $325 I would have paid for the ticket, but no points. I’m hesitating to call this a scam, although . . .

**Lesson**: Cops can be assholes, and one is never too old to be a dumb blonde.

10) Last but not least, let’s return to 1997 and officers Adamo and Kelly of the City of Bloomfield Hills Police Department.

On a subzero Michigan night in January 1997, I got home from work about 8:00 pm, tired, hungry, and freeze-your-fingers cold. When I opened the door, steam drifted out, and I heard a gushing sound coming from the basement. I rushed downstairs without closing the garage door behind me. The finished basement had water cascading through the ceiling. Then, as I stood there, it changed to a trickle, and the gushing sound grew louder upstairs. I ran back upstairs to find that a firehose of hot water had broken through the wall and begun flooding the kitchen. I had no idea how to shut off the water. So, like all dumb blondes, I called 911.

A female voice answered. “Police. What is your emergency?”

“A pipe has burst and my house is flooding.”

 “You don’t need the police, you need a plumber.”

“Where am I going to get a plumber right this minute?”

“Where’s your husband?”

“Out with customers.”

“Sorry. Good luck.”

I rushed back downstairs. The shut-off had to be around somewhere. A few minutes later, wading around in the flooded basement, I heard male voices. “Hello, hello, police.”

I hurried up the stairs to see two young officers sloshing through the kitchen. “Oh, thank God. I can’t find the shut-off.”

“It’s probably in your basement.”

“Yeah, but I can’t find it.” We all headed back downstairs.

Adamo and Kelly looked around, noticed a disguised door in the paneling that opened into a cave-like space. On the back wall were two metal handles. The officers turned one of them, and the water stopped pouring into the house.

When they walked out through the garage, they discovered a three-foot squeegee with a long handle and a push broom, then stepped back into the kitchen to squeegee and broom the water out into the night.

**Conclusion:** Some cops are assholes, but most will save you from yourself if you let them. It’s why they became cops. Still, the blonde thing doesn’t hurt if you are young enough. And the dumb thing? Well, that may be forever.