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## How to Talk Your Way Out of a Speeding Ticket, Part II

By GEOFF WILLIAMS, AOL SMALL BUSINESS

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Unless you're a practically perfect driver, it's almost inevitable. You're driving to or from work, and suddenly you see those red headlights flashing behind you.

If you're pulled over and it's clear you won't be able to talk your way out of a speeding ticket (using our tips in Part I), Matthew J. Weiss has some advice for you. Weiss is a [traffic lawyer](#) on Park Avenue in New York City who says he has defended tens of thousands of motorists for over 18 years and has heard just about every type of excuse out there. (The best and worst excuse for speeding rolled into one? Weiss had a client who was pulled over for speeding -- he told the officer he was worried he'd be late for his scheduled court appearance to contest a speeding ticket.)

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If you're pulled over, "there are no magic words to avoid a ticket," admits Weiss, but he does have some good ideas for minimizing the damage to your wallet and auto insurance.

*Suggest a different charge.* Weiss himself was once pulled over for speeding. When he handed over his license and registration, he pointed out to the officer that he didn't have his insurance card and asked if he could be written up for that *instead*. The officer agreed, and Weiss was able to get the "no insurance



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ticket" charge dismissed by going into court and providing proof of insurance.

Just don't blame Weiss if you try this, and the officer replies, "No, I won't do that, but thanks for reminding me of *another* charge I can cite you for." But it is a clever idea. Officers are people, too. Most of them aren't getting jollies by ruining someone's day, which is probably why Weiss has another related idea.

*Suggest a less serious charge.* "Almost everyone asks to be let off," reasons Weiss. "Be different. Ask for a less serious charge, and maybe you'll get lucky. Suggest a lesser speed."

Weiss says this is called a "road side plea," and you have nothing to lose by trying it. "You can even say -- if you mean it -- that you will not contest the ticket if he simply reduces it now," says Weiss. At least in that case, your insurance company may react more kindly and gently, and of course, the ticket may cost less, too.

*Signal that you have friends who are police officers.* Don't be overt about it, but Weiss says that if you have a PBA (patrolmen's benevolence association) card or some other police card, allow the officer to see it as you're "searching" for your license. That may trigger a moment of sympathy. Just be warned, says Weiss, that the officer may start asking questions, and if it's clear you have no understanding of this organization ... well, you can imagine the fun conversation you're going to have.

*Ask for a warning -- don't ask to be "let go."* Weiss says that asking for a warning is better "because it sounds more contrite. This language suggests that you will behave and won't object if the officer were to catch you again."

*Be polite.* "Rudeness has 'brought' many a motorist additional summons," warns Weiss. Treat the officer like a human being, and he or she may do the same. (Or not, but it's worth a shot.)

*Follow directions.* "Don't make an officer ask you twice," says Weiss. "It will only encourage him to flex his authority muscle."

*Don't deny your guilt.* If you are innocent, that's one thing -- protest nicely, and then again in court. But if you know you're guilty, and the officer knows it, and "you deny that you committed the offense, it will only irritate him," says Weiss.

*Avoid the excuses that won't help you in court.* These include:

-- "I was going with the traffic." Weiss explains that "this is not a defense. The speed limit is the speed limit. If everyone is looting, it doesn't make it okay to loot."

-- "My speedometer was broken." Again, not a valid defense, notes Weiss. "You are responsible for your car's proper functioning and for knowing how fast you are going. If it was broken, then you shouldn't be driving the car, or at the very least, you should be driving extra slow."

-- "Everyone was speeding, but I was the only one pulled over." Nice try, but Weiss says that for his or her safety, the officer is only allowed (at least in New York) to pull over one motorist at a time. And see his "if everybody else was looting" comment.

-- "The officer was rude." One of Weiss's favorites: "While officers should not be discourteous, this is irrelevant to whether or not you were speeding."

[Click to go to Part I](#)

*Geoff Williams is a frequent contributor to AOL Small Business. He is also the author of C.C. Pyle's Amazing Foot Race and co-author of the new book Living Well with Bad Credit. Williams has been pulled over for speeding four times and has never been able to talk his way out of a ticket. His last ticket -- knock on wood -- was on January 1, 1999.*

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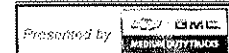
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