

Missouri: Police Roadblock Harassment Caught on Tape

St. Louis County, Missouri threaten to arrest a teenager for refusing to discuss his personal travel plans.

A teenager harassed by police in St. Louis, Missouri caught the incident on tape. Brett Darrow, 19, had his video camera rolling last month as he drove his 1997 Maxima, minding his own business. He approached a drunk driving roadblock where he was stopped, detained and threatened with arrest when he declined to enter a conversation with a police officer about his personal travel habits. Now Darrow is considering filing suit against St. Louis County Police.



"I'm scared to drive for fear of being stopped at another checkpoint and arrested while doing nothing illegal," Darrow told TheNewspaper. "We're now guilty until we prove ourselves innocent to these checkpoint officers."

On that late November night, videotape confirms that Darrow had been ordered out of his vehicle after telling a policeman, "I don't wish to discuss my personal life with you, officer." Another officer attempted to move Darrow's car until he realized, "I can't drive stick!" The officer took the opportunity to undertake a thorough search of the interior without probable cause. He found nothing.

When Darrow asked why he was being detained, an officer explained, "If you don't stop running your mouth, we're going to find a reason to lock you up tonight."

The threats ended when Darrow informed officers that they were being recorded. After speaking to a supervisor Darrow was finally released.

"These roadblocks have gotten out of hand," Darrow told TheNewspaper. "If we don't do something about them now, it'll be too late."

A full video of [the incident is available here](#). A transcript is provided below as the audio is at times very faint.

Article Excerpt:

Transcript of audio made by Brett Darrow:

00:40

Officer #1: How are you tonight sir?

Brett: Hi.

Officer #1: Can you put your window down for me.

(I roll the window ALL the way down.)

Officer #1: Do you have a driver's license and proof of insurance?

(I begin to get my information out of my wallet)

Officer #1: Where you headed tonight?

Brett: I don't wish to discuss my personal life with you officer.

Officer #1: Alright, come on up here.

(I start to move my car)

Officer #1: As a matter of fact, just stop your car right here and step out.

(I stop the car, roll up my windows, pull up the emergency brake, and shut the car off)

Officer #1: Leave your car runnin with the keys in it.

Brett: What's that?

Officer #1: Leave your car runnin with the keys in it.

Brett: I don't want it to roll away officer.

Officer#1: Turn the car on.

Brett: It's a manual officer.

Officer #1: Okay. That's fine, then leave it off. Just leave it off. You're right, that's dangerous.

(I step out, and lock the doors.)

(He then calls another officer over)

Officer #1: Give me your keys.

Brett: Why officer?

Officer #1: I need to move it out of the street.

Brett: Can I move it?

Officer #1: No.

(Officer #1 takes my keys)

Brett: Why are you moving my car?

Officer #1: Because I'm going to talk you--I'm going to interview you because you didn't want to interview. You didn't want to sit down and have a talk with me.

Brett: I do not want to talk about my personal life.

Officer #1: Okay.

(We walk to the side of the road)

1:48

(Officer #2 then unlocks my car and looks around inside of it. You can see his flash light moving around in the car.)

Officer #2: Hey uh, I can't drive a stick. (laughs about it) I can't drive a stick.

(Officer #3 enters my car and attempts to move it. He stalls it once. He then lets it roll back down the hill before giving it a lot of gas and ridding the clutch while trying to move it forward. He then exits the car 62 seconds after entering.)

(While the officers are trying to move my vehicle, this audio not heard)

Officer #1: Where are you headed tonight?

Brett: I don't want to talk about my personal life.

Officer #1: Have you had anything to drink tonight?

Brett: No.

Officer #1: Alright, I'll be right back

(Officer #1 then calls 2 other officers (Officers #4 & #5) to stand by me as he goes to a patrol car to check my license)

Brett: Why am I being detained officer? (directed toward Officer #4)

Officer #4: You better stop runnin your mouth or the other officer will find a reason to lock you up tonight.

(Audio can now be heard again)

3:22

Brett: You're saying you're going to make up a reason to arrest me?

Officer #4: No I didn't. I said we would find a reason.

Brett: Okay. I just want to let you know all of this is being recorded.

Officer #4: That's good, we're recording it too. Do what he tells you to do--

Brett: I don't have a right to talk right here in a normal voice?

Officer #4: Yes you do.

Brett: You're saying I'm going to be arrested.

Officer #4: I'm just saying...

Brett: You just said you're going to find a reason to lock me up.

Officer #4: I said do what he told you to do.

Brett: You said if I keep runnin my mouth, I will be locked up.

Officer #4: I said he'll find a reason.

Why are you going to find a reason to lock me up when I'm only asking why I'm being detained in a normal voice?

Officer #4: Do what he tells you to do.

Brett: Am I being detained?

Officer #4: Yes you are!

Brett: May I leave?

Officer #4: No, you may not.

Brett: Why am I being detained?

Officer #4: Because you don't have a driver's license.

Brett: I do have a driver's license. I gave it to the other officer.

Officer #4: When the other officer comes back--When he comes back--When he comes back you can talk to him about it.

Brett: Why are you saying I don't have my license?

Officer #4: Nineteen years old and you know everything.

Brett: Yes sir.

4:38

Brett: I'm being detained because I didn't tell the officer where I was going?

Officer #4: I wasn't here, you can talk to him when he comes back.

4:55

Brett: What was your name.

(Officer #4 ignored me)

Brett: Officer how do you spell your last name?

Officer #4: It's right there.

(points to chest, but his name is covered by the traffic safety vest. He then moves it so I can see.)

Officer #4: Hallquisd.

Brett: H-A-L-L-Q-U-I-S-D?

Officer #4: Yep.

5:09

(I then turn toward the other officer standing by me. Officer #5)

Brett: And what was your name officer?

Officer #5: Schmit.

(Officer #5 then talks to Officer #4 about stopping someone that had his last name)

8:38

Brett: Are you stopping everybody and getting them out of the car?

Officer #4: You can talk to the other officer (Officer #1) when he comes back.

10:10

(Officer #1 comes back and hands me my license and insurance card)

Officer #1: Thank you very much. Thank you very much for your time.

Brett: Why exactly was I detained and why did you get me out of the car?

Officer #1: You didn't want to answer my questions.(unsure of the rest of his comment)

Brett: Where does me having to go have anything to do with a DWI checkpoint. I don't have the right--

Officer #1: I was trying to have a conversation.

Brett: I didn't want to have a conversation. You stopped me officer in the middle of the road.

Officer #1: I was trying to have a conversation with you (unsure of the rest of his comment)

Brett: Do you stop everybody and get everybody out of the car? Or you did that just to me?

Officer #1: (unsure of audio)

Brett: Is St. Louis County Police going to pay for a new clutch, after he just killed it here and burnt up my clutch.

Officer #1: Would you like to talk to a supervisor?

Brett: Yes I would.

(Officer #1 goes across the street to get the supervisor.

12:43

(Supervisor comes over)

Supervisor: How you doin'?

Brett: Hi.

Supervisor: I'm sergeant (unsure of his name)

Brett: I'm Brett Darrow

Supervisor: Brent?

Brett: Brett.

Supervisor: What's the problem tonight?

Brett: I have a problem because I was stopped here and uhh I offered to move my vehicle. The officer said I could not move my vehicle to park it. He told me to leave my keys in the car. I got out. Locked the door. He took my keys. Uhh. And they attempted to move my car here. They stalled it a couple of times. Burnt up the clutch. I mean it's all on tape and video. Now I'm going to have problems with my clutch. Who's going to pay for that?

Supervisor: How do you know they messed up the clutch?

Brett: I saw it right here. I saw smoke coming off as he tired to take off. It's a pretty easy way I guess for you guys to get inside a vehicle on a DWI checkpoint and that's where I have a problem.

Supervisor: Well, DWI checkpoints are authorized.

Brett: I understand they are authorized, but drug checkpoints aren't and you know when I see a K9 unit over here--

Supervisor: That's not the point.

Brett: Well why would there be a K9 unit?

Supervisor: The dog is part of the police department.

Brett: That just happens to be at a checkpoint. I know, I know you get a lot of drug busts off DWI checkpoints.

Supervisor: Actually the dog comes out very rarely. He's not walking by every car.

Brett: Not tonight he's not?

Supervisor: I'm at most of these checkpoints--

Brett: Okay.

Supervisor: And you can't walk the dog by every car. He just physically can't do it.

Brett: Okay

Supervisor: As far as your clutch--I have no idea what kind of damage was caused.

Brett: It's obvious it caused some damage. I mean you could see smoke and he killed my car and I don't know what other problems I'm going to have from that and if I do have problems, I'm going to be coming to the St. Louis County Police and I just want to let you know that tomorrow--this next week--

Supervisor: Do the officers have your name?

Brett: Uhh, I don't know.

Supervisor: Did they give you your ID back?

Brett: They gave me my ID.

Supervisor: Let me copy done your information. The issue obviously is, how do I know you didn't have clutch problems before because you're not driving a newer car?

Brett: That's correct.

Supervisor: What year is it?

Brett: It's a 1997.

Supervisor: So it's an older car?

Brett: Yes.

Supervisor: And you didn't have issues with the clutch before?

Brett: No, probably because I've had it replaced recently.

Supervisor: Well if that is an issue that actually does happen, you'll have to file a complaint with our insurance department.

Brett: Okay

Supervisor: The officers do have a right to..(unsure of audio)

Brett: I understand that, but I don't think they have a right to drive my vehicle.

Supervisor: Well we can't leave it in traffic.

Brett: Well I offered to pull it over here and the officer declined.

Supervisor: When were conducting an investigation. We can't say, oh you can drive your car and then that person takes off and runs over someone, we'd have a problem.

Brett: We'll I'd expect them to pull me off the road originally and not stop me in the middle of traffic.

Supervisor: Here ya go.

(Hands me my license)

Brett: Okay.

Supervisor: Anything else I can do for you?

Brett: No, I mean I just don't understand why I had to get out of the car because I didn't want to tell the officer where I was going. I think that is my own personal business and that has nothing to do with this.

Supervisor: And the officer said because your not telling him where--

Brett: Exactly, that is exactly why he asked me to step out of the car. Because he asked me where I was going and I told him officer I don't wish to speak with you about where I'm going tonight and he said get out of the car.

Supervisor: Okay, I'm sure there was something else besides that.

Brett: That's exactly it and you can bring him over here right now and actually I would like if you would so we can talk about this.

Supervisor: We're not going to do this on the side of the road.

Brett: Okay, and what was your name?

Supervisor: (Unsure of audio)

Brett: And how do you spell it?

Supervisor: (Unsure of audio)

Brett: May I leave?

Supervisor: Certainly, the officer said you could leave before.

(I get in the car, turn the video toward the officers and then behind me at the supervisor. I then drive off.)