

The Facts Behind Facebook: Crosswalks and tall boys - what really went down?

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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WOOD RIVER – A video depicting what appears to be a Wood River woman being let go by police after drinking a beer in a crosswalk has gone somewhat viral on local Facebook pages.

The video, which was posted by a man on Facebook by the nomenclature, Jim Bob, shows a woman parked in a crosswalk outside of Lewis and Clark Junior High School in Wood River. She appears to be drinking something while in the driver's seat of a blue Chevy crossover vehicle. The man filming makes some remarks about her behavior before two Wood River Police officers converge upon the vehicle and talk to the woman. The video ends with the woman pouring liquid from a can at the bottom of her opened driver's side door and appearing to drive away from police, who walk away from the scene, but she was told by police to move her vehicle.

That is not the end of the story, however, but the video has been shared 367 times and viewed nearly 16,000 times by people. Wood River Police Chief Brad Wells said “I've had that thing sent to me about 40,000 times now” when asked for comment on the matter Friday afternoon.

The video was originally posted on Facebook at 12:31 p.m. Friday with the status: “So if you drink tall boys n park in the Cross Walks in front of the WoodRiver Jr High School, You will be asked to dump your beer out and park somewhere else ????

#HOODRIVERLAWS .”

But, the woman, who Wells said did not appear to be impaired by the beer, which officers on the scene said was still cold with little missing from it, was told by police to leave the crosswalk and park on the other side of the road. She was then issued a citation for illegal transportation of alcohol.

“The woman said she was having coughing fits, and usually has a soda to fix it, but only had a beer that day, so when she started coughing, she took a drink of her beer, because she didn't have a soda,” Wells said. “You can tell in the video she is not impaired, and I talked to the officers on the scene who agreed she was not impaired. She did not just drive away, though, she was given a citation.”

Wells said the woman and Jim Bob taking video did have an interaction prior to the video, saying the man was asking why she was drinking a “tall boy” in that location before calling the police.

Jim Bob said he believed her to be an elderly woman who had mistakenly parked in a crosswalk and approached her with the word, "ma'am." He said the woman responded negatively and continued to drink her beer. He then called the police.

He said he was there to pick up his children from school. He said after the woman was told to move her car, she was moved to the passenger seat and given a ticket.

Wells said the officer was experienced and did not feel she was intoxicated at the time, despite the absence of a breathalyzer and field sobriety test. Wells said he has reviewed that footage himself from the officer's body camera and reached the same conclusion.

Since posting the video, Jim Bob said he has been called by the Wood River Police Department who said they could not tell him to take down his video but asked if he would. He said he would.

Jim Bob said the spouse of the assisting officers has reached out to him harshly on Facebook since the video's posting. Wells said the spouse of one of the officers involved did take to social media to "take up" for her husband, but said he would not comment further on such Facebook issues.