

A TRUCK DRIVER'S APOLOGY

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More than 25 years of experience and currently the Director at The High Option Ltd.

I love my family. All of them. I love my children enough to stay out on the road longer than I should so that they can eat and go to a good school. I am no different from you Sir, or you Madam. I sleep at home, but only sometimes. Most of the time I sleep in the back of my truck, somewhere in the dark next to the road where I make my living.



Driving is the only thing I know, and I am good at it. My manager tells me so, and I know it is so, because I see the other drivers abusing their vehicles, running them up after cold starts, neglecting to check their loads and tyres before they leave. I don't do this.

I am a good driver.

I stop in time. I leave enough space in front of me in traffic, and I remain cool when a car takes up the space in which I planned to slow down and come to a safe stop. I cannot afford to panic, because on my shoulders rests my own life, the lives of those around me in their cars and on their bikes, in their buses and on foot. I also have the responsibility of the load I have been keeping safe for the last 1500 kilometers, as I have safely navigated lonely miles and tired hours in order to make the deadlines I am pushed to make.

Despite these, I stop every two hundred kilometers. I get out, stretch my legs, and take time to breathe. I love the quiet of a Karoo night. I love to hear the truck creaking and groaning as it cools down while I take my flashlight and slowly look at every component, every tire, every wheel nut. I inspect my load to ensure it does not fall on you when I go around a corner too narrow for the size of my truck, but have no other choice but to make. I look for leaks, and listen for sounds that should not be there, all to make sure I can deliver safely.

You see, it's not about making money. The pay I get is merely enough to survive on. It's about the love of the open road, and the freedom it brings.

I am a good driver.

I look at the cars around me, and the people frowning and waving at me when I have no choice but to go slowly. It's for the safety of the people around me. I have to make sure that I can control this 40 ton vehicle in case something goes wrong in front of me. So I go slowly and carefully down the hills. It is for the safety of the people around me, and for the love of my children. But it is also for the love of your children. I do not want to hurt or kill them. If I were reckless, they, and you, would be at risk. My truck is big and powerful and strong, and I will probably survive it if I drive over your new micro car.

But I drive carefully, so you can be safe. I drive slowly and within the speed limits, so that you can make it home safely to your children, while I am going to have to spend another night away from home, sleeping in the cab of my truck.

I am a safe driver. I do my best to be safe at all times.

I do not ask for your respect, or your praise. I only ask for your understanding.

Every time you open the fridge, chances are that I brought what you see there to you. Somewhere along the run of events during the day, you and I will be connected. Every time you go to the shopping centre, chances are that I delivered to that facility. We are connected, you and me, in more ways than we care to admit. In this country, we will always be close, and it is our responsibility to look after each other.

So I ask for you to understand that I am doing my best to help you, and to make your life better. I bring goods from all over the country to where you are, just for you and your family. I try my best to do it safely without harming you and your family.

From all this, I only want your understanding. I will do the rest. And I do so because I understand that we are all in this together. In this beautiful country we share, we have to look to each other and help each other so that we can all prosper. I will bring the goods to you, faithfully and regularly. All I ask, is that you understand me better. I am a father, a husband, an uncle and a friend. I am no different to you.

I am a safe driver.