

# When Cops Choose Empathy

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## *The New Yorker:*

About four years ago, in a city park in western Washington State, Joe Winters encountered a woman in the throes of a psychotic episode. As he sat down next to her, she told him that she had purchased the bench that they now shared and that it was her home. “I didn’t buy the hallucinations, but I tried to validate the feelings underneath them,” Winters told me. His strategy resembled Rogerian psychotherapy—unconditionally accepting a patient’s experience, even when it is untethered from reality. But Winters is not a roving psychologist; he is a deputy in the King County Sheriff’s Office. He had been called to the scene in response to the woman’s behavior, which nearby residents deemed disruptive. After talking with Winters for several minutes, the woman left of her own volition, without Winters having to arrest her or resort to physical force.

Read the whole story: [The New Yorker](#)