

TESTIMONY AS PRESENTED

to

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

on

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1997

by

**MAJOR RICHARD D.A. MORRIS
LEGISLATIVE LIAISON
PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE**

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, I AM MAJOR RICHARD MORRIS, LEGISLATIVE LIAISON FOR THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE. ON BEHALF OF COLONEL PAUL J. EVANKO, COMMISSIONER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR INVITING THE STATE POLICE TO PRESENT TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 522.

THE USE OF SECURITY DEVICES BY RETAILERS HAS BEEN AN ACCEPTED WAY OF PROTECTING THEIR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS WHILE ASSISTING LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE INVESTIGATION OF CRIMES AND THE APPREHENSION AND PROSECUTION OF SUSPECTS. ORIGINALLY THE DEVICES WERE LIMITED TO BANKS AND LARGE RETAILERS. TODAY, AS TECHNOLOGY HAS IMPROVED, DEVICES HAVE BECOME COMMON PLACE IN MOST CHAIN OR FRANCHISED CONVENIENCE STORES.

THEIR INCREASED USE HAS BEEN KEY TO MANY INVESTIGATIONS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH.

THE FOLLOWING ARE REAL INCIDENTS WHERE VIDEO CAMERAS LOCATED WITHIN A CONVENIENCE STORE ASSISTED IN THE APPREHENSION OF A SUSPECT.

- DURING THE FALL OF 1996, AN 18 YEAR OLD WAS KIDNAPED FROM A LOCAL MALL IN ARMSTRONG COUNTY AND SUBSEQUENTLY MURDERED. THE YOUNG MAN WAS REPORTED MISSING BY HIS FAMILY THAT

EVENING. INVESTIGATORS NOTIFIED THE MISSING INDIVIDUALS CREDIT CARD COMPANIES TO PLACE AN ALERT ON HIS CREDIT CARD USAGE. TWO DAYS LATER INVESTIGATORS WERE NOTIFIED THAT THE VICTIM'S CREDIT CARD WAS USED AT A LOCAL CONVENIENCE STORE. THE SURVEILLANCE TAPE WAS REVIEWED AND REVEALED THE SUSPECT USING THE STOLEN CREDIT CARD. THE SUSPECT'S PICTURE WAS IMMEDIATELY RELEASED THROUGH THE MEDIA AND POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION WAS RECEIVED FROM THE SUSPECT'S NATURAL MOTHER. AS A RESULT THE SUSPECT WAS TRACED TO ARIZONA WHERE HE LATER COMMITTED SUICIDE WHEN THE ARIZONA STATE POLICE ATTEMPTED TO ARREST.

- DURING THE WINTER OF 1996, IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY, MARYLAND A SUSPECT ENTERED A CONVENIENCE STORE TO USE A PHONE BOOK. THE SUSPECT LOOKED UP A NUMBER FOR A ROLLBACK TOW TRUCK AND THEN USED A PAY PHONE OUTSIDE OF THE CONVENIENCE STORE TO SUMMON THE TOW TRUCK OPERATOR. THE TOW TRUCK OPERATOR ARRIVED AND WAS

SUBSEQUENTLY KILLED AND HIS BODY DUMPED IN BEDFORD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA. THE ROLLBACK TOW TRUCK WAS STOLEN AND DRIVEN TO A "CHOP SHOP" IN BEDFORD COUNTY. THE TOW TRUCK OPERATOR WAS REPORTED MISSING IN MARYLAND, BY THE VICTIM'S WIFE WHO STATED HER HUSBAND HAD RESPONDED TO A CALL FROM A CONVENIENCE STORE. INVESTIGATORS FROM PENNSYLVANIA AND MARYLAND WENT TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE AND REVIEWED THE TAPE AND ACTUALLY OBSERVED THE SUSPECT LOOK UP THE PHONE NUMBER FOR THE TOW TRUCK OPERATOR. FINGERPRINTS OF THE SUSPECT WERE LIFTED FROM THE PHONE BOOK. AN ENHANCED PICTURE WAS OBTAINED FROM THE CONVENIENCE STORE'S VIDEO WHICH LEAD TO A POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION AND ARREST IN PENNSYLVANIA. THIS SUSPECT WAS ALSO WANTED FOR A HOMICIDE COMMITTED IN SOUTH CAROLINA. TWO ILLEGAL "CHOP SHOPS" WERE ALSO DISCOVERED AND DISMANTLED.

- IN 1994 IN GREENE COUNTY A TROOPER'S PERSONAL VEHICLE WAS PARKED AT THE WAYNESBURG STATION.

A SUSPECT PLACED AN ACCELERANT IN A SNAPPLE BOTTLE AND FIRE BOMBED THE TROOPER'S VEHICLE IN THE STATION'S PARKING LOT. CRIMINAL INVESTIGATORS LOCATED THE ONLY CONVENIENCE STORE IN GREENE COUNTY THAT SOLD THE SNAPPLE BEVERAGE. THIS SMALL CONVENIENCE STORE HAD VIDEO SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT. THE TAPE WAS REVIEWED AND A SUSPECT WAS IDENTIFIED AND ARRESTED FOR ARSON.

EVERY EVENING ON THE LOCAL NIGHTLY NEWS VIDEO PICTURES OBTAINED FROM CONVENIENCE STORES, BANKS, MAC MACHINES, AND PARKING GARAGES ARE AIRED TO REQUEST THE PUBLIC'S ASSISTANCE IN IDENTIFYING SUSPECTS THAT HAVE COMMITTED HEINOUS CRIMES. FREQUENTLY, CALLER RESPONSES LEAD TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND ARREST OF THE SUSPECT.

IN ADDITION, MANY OF THE CRIME STOPPER PICTURES PUBLISHED IN NEWSPAPERS ARE ENHANCED SURVEILLANCE VIDEO FROM THESE SAME ESTABLISHMENTS.

THANK YOU FOR EXTENDING THE OPPORTUNITY TO THE STATE POLICE TO TESTIFY ABOUT THIS IMPORTANT MATTER.