

Phony cop sightings reported

A phony cop continues to terrorize Lower Bucks motorists. There were two more incidents reported by a woman in Lower Makefield Saturday. Police believe it could be the same person who accosted a woman motorist in Bristol Township two weeks ago.

By George Mattar
Courier Times

Police say the phony cop may have struck again.

A woman motorist reported she was followed by a man driving a car with a flashing blue light near the Wawa on Main Street in Yardley and again on Taylorsville Road in Lower Makefield about 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Lower Makefield police said yesterday.

The woman's description of the driver, and the car match those reported two weeks ago by a victim in Bristol Township.

A Lower Makefield police officer would confirm only that two incidents occurred. The officer referred all questions to police Chief Charles Ronaldo, or Lt. Robert Margerum.

The Courier Times was unsuccessful in reaching either for comment last night.

Unlike the Bristol Township incident, though, the woman in Lower Makefield was only followed and not stopped, police said.

The suspect is described as a white male in his mid- to late-30s. He was wearing a dark shirt and dark jacket.

The description is similar to that of the man in Bristol Township who stopped a woman on Bath Road near Hatfield Street, police said.

That woman became suspicious and asked for identification. The suspect then punched her in the forehead, opened her car door and tried to grab her. She kicked him near the groin and then sped

off. Saturday's incidents involved a white 1985 Chevrolet Caprice, which matches the description of the car used in the Bristol Township incident, police said.

The Lower Makefield area incidents are the third and fourth reports of a phony cop in two weeks. Police caution motorists to be wary of vehicles with single-color flashing lights, and say motorists can travel to a well-lit and populated area if they feel unsafe.

Meanwhile, state police are checking whether the Bristol Township incident could be connected to last summer's murder of Aimee Willard, a college student from Delaware County.

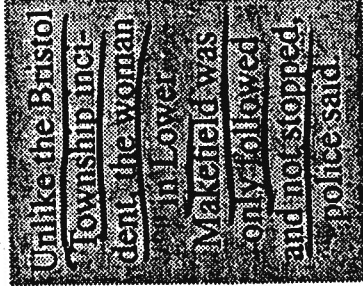
Willard, 22, was murdered June 20 after she left Smokey Joe's Tavern in Wayne. Her car was found idling along Interstate 476, also known as the Blue Route, about an hour later.

And last week in Falls, an alert Officer Mike Phillippe, who was taking prisoners in a nearby district court, was in the right place at the right time.

He was driving behind a suspect's vehicle in which he saw flashing red lights in the rear window. Phillippe arrested Steven King, 38, of the Indian Creek section of Bristol Township.

King allegedly pulled over a motorist on Oxford Valley Road, but the motorist drove away before Phillippe could find out who it was. Falls police would like to talk to the motorist.

Police have said the Bristol Township and Falls incidents are not related.



Police suspect link in a couple phony cop cases

Police in two Lower Bucks townships believe a suspect impersonating an officer has struck twice in the last three weeks. With five similar incidents in Lower Bucks, some people say they're becoming edgy.

By Dave Sommers
Courier Times

2/17/97

An elusive suspect wanted by Bristol Township police for impersonating an officer may have resurfaced last week in Falls.

Police said a 22-year-old Falls woman reported she was harassed Thursday by a man who drove a white car and wore a similar police-style uniform used by a suspect in Bristol Township on Jan. 24.

Since late January, Lower

Bucks police have reported five incidents of male suspects posing as officers and pulling over drivers. In nearby Ewing Township, N.J., last week, police arrested another suspect who pretended to be an officer.

With so many incidents, some local residents say they're becoming more cautious.

The cashier at the Mobil station in Falls near the site where Thursday's incident occurred said people are on edge.

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Here is a list of phony police incidents since late January:

■ Jan. 24: A woman was injured in a scuffle with a man who pretended to be a police officer. Police said he was driving a white four-door car. The incident happened on Bath Road in Bristol Township at 8:30 a.m.

The man used blue flashing lights on his dashboard to pull the woman over and then tried to yank her from the car.

Suspect's description: 200-pound white man in his late 30s with short brown hair and a brown mustache with red highlights.

■ Jan 28: Police charged Steven King, 38, of Bristol Township with impersonating an officer. Falls police said King allegedly turned on his flashing red lights and pulled over a motorist on Oxford Valley Road. An officer happened to be driving by and witnessed the incident.

■ Feb. 1: A Morrisville teen reported that a man driving a white four-door Chevrolet Caprice zoomed up behind him, flashed on blue lights and high beams and followed him to the Wawa store in Yardley. The teen said the man sped away after he turned onto a side street. The incident happened at 8:30 p.m.

Suspect's description: a white man in his mid- to late-30s with dark hair and dark jacket.

■ Feb. 5: A Croydon woman reported a man who pretended to be a police officer tried to pull her over at a traffic light on Dunksferry Road in Bensalem. She said he had a "police badge" and claimed he was an officer. Two days later, Scott Holtz of Levittown turned himself in to police and said the incident was a "misunderstanding." Police charged him with impersonating an officer.

■ Feb. 10: Police in Ewing Township, N.J., arrested John Gkahopoylos of Tobyhanna, Pa., at an Olden Avenue auto repair shop wearing a partial police uniform. He allegedly pretended to be a U.S. Air Force police officer. Police from Ewing and Bristol townships have since said they don't believe the Jan. 24 and Feb. 10 incidents are connected.

■ Feb. 13: A Falls woman said a man tried to stop her at the intersection of Oxford Valley Road and Hood Boulevard around 10:05 p.m. She said he wore similar police-style uniform used by a suspect in Bristol Township on Jan. 24. Officers in both townships believe those incidents could be related.

Anyone with information can call Falls police at 349-9100, Bristol Township police at 784-4707 or Lower Makefield at 493-4055.

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"I saw a white Caprice in here sitting gas the other night," the cashier said. "We didn't want to go out there and pump the gas. When we saw the man had a woman with him, and we figured it was OK."

In Thursday's case, the woman, whom officers wouldn't identify, told police she stopped at a red light at Hood Boulevard and Oxford Valley Road around 10:05 p.m.

She said the suspect pulled up behind her in a white car with a window tint, similar to a police patrol car.

The suspect got out of his vehicle wearing a "police-type uniform and hat" and walked up to the driver's side window, the woman told police.

"She thought he looked like a security guard," Falls Lt. Charles Schaffner said.

The woman said she began to

roll down her window to see what the man wanted, and just then, the light turned green. She inched her car forward then drove off.

The phony cop then got back inside his car and followed her, she told police. She made several turns onto side streets while driving to her parents' house in Falls. The suspect eventually drove the other way.

Schaffner said police are comparing details of the Falls and Bristol Township incidents.

In the Jan. 24 case, a male suspect flashed lights that were sitting on the dashboard of his white, police-style car and pulled over a 42-year-old woman on Bath Road. She escaped but not before being punched in the forehead.

"They sound very similar," Schaffner said of the two cases.

Fake cop said he was a storm chaser

Steven King had flashing red lights in his back window when he pulled a motorist over in January. He was sentenced yesterday for impersonating a police officer.

By Laurie Mason

Courier Times 5/14/97

A Bucks County Judge has sentenced a Levittown man to one year probation for posing as a police officer and pulling

a motorist over on Bristol-Oxford Valley Road.

Steven King, 39, of Incurve Road, was placed on the county's accelerated rehabilitative disposition (ARD) program yesterday by Judge Isaac Garb. The ARD program allows probation for first-time offenders who have committed nonviolent crimes.

King was arrested Jan. 28 after a Falls Township police officer spotted him pulling off the road to let a car pass, then following that car and flashing his high beams. King then activated a pair

of red flashing lights mounted in the back window of his 1990 gray Ford Taurus.

The officer stopped King and asked him what he was doing. King first denied trying to pull the car over, then said the driver was following him too closely on Route 1, so he decided to get the motorist's attention when they turned on to Bristol-Oxford Valley Road.

When King was interviewed later by Bristol Township Police, he said he was a "storm chaser," and needed the lights

to drive around the area during bad weather. A placard from Fairless Hills Rescue Squad was also seized by police. King admitted he was not a rescue squad member, court records show.

King was arrested and charged with impersonating a public servant. He was sent to Bucks County prison and later released on \$25,000 bail. A charge of improper use of emergency equipment, the flashing lights, was dismissed.

King's arrest followed a similar incident on Bath Road on Jan. 24. A woman

was pulled over by a man who claimed to be a police officer and showed her a silver badge. The woman kicked the man and escaped. The suspect in that incident is described as a 6-foot tall white male with brown hair and a thin mustache. There has been no arrest in that case.

Garb also ordered King to undergo a psychological evaluation and report the finding to the District Attorney's Office.

King's lawyer, Senior Deputy Public Defender John Fagan, said King asked him not to comment to the press.

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Testimony on House Bill 1154 Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts August 4, 1997

Thank you Chairman Clark and the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to discuss the problem of fraud and the impersonation of our law enforcement officers.

I sponsored HB 1154 originally in 1993 after the occurrence of an incident in my legislative district. A local woman was stopped by a car using a flashing light. The man dressed in plain clothes identified himself as a "State Police Officer of PA" and requested her drivers license and registration card. He was driving a large unmarked vehicle, provided no identification and was carrying a handgun. Later, after an investigation, it was determined that the man was neither a local nor a state law enforcement officer. There had been no incident or injury that had developed out of this situation. It is believed though that the perpetrator had desires to obtain the victims name and address.

This occurrence happened in Bucks County, a suburb of Philadelphia, which is rapidly becoming developed. Over the following years, additional incidents have occurred. Without listing all them, I will discuss those which have happened since the beginning of this year just in Bucks County alone. I have attached copies of the local newspaper accounts of the incidents for your benefit which will help to provide, in greater detail, the events as they occurred.

•**January 21, 1997** - A security officer was arrested after being pulled over for a traffic violation. He apparently attempted to use his security company badge to imply to the police officer that he too was a legitimate police officer and should receive special attention. The newspaper article was not clear to what charges were filed or the disposition of the case.

•**January 24, 1997** - A woman was pulled over by a man driving a large white four door sedan using a flashing blue light. The suspect was dressed in a blue sweater and official looking pants. When the driver asked for identification, the suspect refused. The suspect reached through the victims car window, hit the driver and attempted to commandeer the vehicle. The driver successfully drove off and the suspect fled. No arrests have been made in this case.

•**January 28, 1997** - A local police officer driving past a scene where a man had pulled over a woman using a flashing red light. Apparently there was a traffic altercation and the man was attempting to intimidate the woman. The police officer arrested the man at the scene. It was not clear what the man was charged with or what the disposition of the case was.

•**January 29, 1997** - A woman alleges to be pulled over by a car using a flashing blue light. There apparently was no altercation and the newspaper article did not disclose any other details.

•**February 1, 1997** - A man using a flashing blue light attempted to pull a woman over. She became leery of the situation and drove to a nearby convenience store parking lot. Subsequently the suspect did not follow her and fled from the scene.

•**February 5, 1997** - A woman was flagged down by a man flashing a "badge" at her from his vehicle. Upon pulling over, he berated her about her driving ability. She then became suspicious and asked the man to follow her to the local police station. The suspect instead fled the scene. After media coverage of the incident occurred, the suspect later turned himself in claiming the incident was a misunderstanding. I am not aware of the disposition of the case.

•**February 10, 1997** - A man was arrested at an auto body shop after a dispute with the mechanic over an auto repair bill. The suspect was dressed in uniform looking clothes and identified himself as a police officer in an attempt to intimidate the mechanic. He was actually enlisted in the US Air Force. The mechanic became suspicious and called the local police department.

•**February 13, 1997** - A woman was followed by a car flashing a blue light and appeared to want her to pull over. She became suspicious and refused. She continued on her way to work and the suspect gave up and fled.

•June 19, 1997 - A woman was forced to pull off the road after a man continuously flashed his lights, pulled his vehicle up next to her car and flashed a "badge" out of his window. Once stopped, the suspect ordered her out of her vehicle. She refused. The suspect became agitated, argumentative and then eventually fled the scene. It is suspected that this incident arose out of a traffic altercation.

I have brought to your attention nine specific cases of fraud and impersonation of a law enforcement officers that have occurred in Bucks County just in the past eight months. I will admit that what has occurred is probably a rash of incidents and not normal occurrences of events. Never the less, the incidents do illustrate a point. People are perpetuating fraud to gain an advantage, to commit a crime or simply in a moment of anger or frustration.

The acts of fraud in the examples presented range from verbally claiming to be an officer, wearing clothing or driving vehicles which would imply to law enforcement authority, using flashing lights or presenting fake badges. While impersonating a law enforcement office is already a crime, each specific type of fraud which I had described may not clearly fall into this offense. I do believe that the proposed legislative change would help to clarify and update the statutes regarding today's new fraud tactics.

House Bill 1154 attempts to improve the identification of proper law enforcement officers within the Commonwealth. It will not solve the problem of fraud or even attempt to resolve all of this problem's facets. But, HB 1154 should establish a more clear and standardized identification system. It requires all municipal police and authority security officer to display at all times a uniform photo identification card for public identification purposes. Undercover officers are excluded from this requirement.

This proposal would direct the Municipal Police Officers Education and Training Commission (MPOETC) to develop and administer this identification program. The Commission

would work with the Department of Transportation to develop a standardized photo card and utilization process using PennDOT's existing camera card system. The Commission will create a central computerized registry of all current municipal police and security officers employed in the Commonwealth to which inquiries could be made. The Commission will also create educational programs to promote public awareness of the new program. All expenses for establishing and continuing this program shall be paid for by legislative appropriations and not born by the local police departments.

House Bull 1154 will not address other fraud issues involving lights and fake badges but I would hope the Judiciary Committee will continue to review these matters of what I believe an escalating form of fraud.

I ask that the Judiciary Committee please consider HB1154 in its current form or even in concept in order to reduce the chances of the public being put in jeopardy.

Thank you.

Woman pulled over by fake cop

LOWER MAKEFIELD

Carrier
11/2/73

A 20-year-old New Jersey woman was stopped on Interstate 95 in Lower Makefield by a man who allegedly impersonated a state police officer Friday, police said.

The woman told police that she pulled over on Interstate 95 near Stoney Hill Road about 10 p.m. after observing a vehicle with flashing lights behind her. A man who identified himself as a "state police officer of Pennsylvania" approached her car but offered no identification, state police said.

State police officials said he asked her for her license, and when she complied, he went back to his vehicle. He then allegedly returned a short time later and returned her license without explanation, officials said.

The man was described as white, 35-38 years old, 5-foot-6 inches tall, about 140 pounds, wearing a tan, possibly a "Member's Only," jacket. He was carrying a handgun inside his jacket. He was driving a large vehicle of an unknown make.

Woman fights off fake cop

By Dave Sommers
Courier Times

A 42-year-old woman was injured Friday morning after getting in a scuffle with a 200-pound man who wore black gloves and pretended to be a cop, police said.

Bristol Township police are searching for a 200-pound white man in his late 30s with short brown hair and a brown mustache with red highlights.

The suspect had no police belt or weapon and was driving a white four-door car that was slightly dirty, police say.

The unidentified woman, who works in Bristol Township, told police she was driving to work along Bath Road around 8:30 a.m. when the man pulled up behind her at the intersection of Bath Road and Lakeland Avenue.

The man turned on the blue flashing lights on his dashboard and yelled for the woman to pull over, police said.

She complied and pulled her vehicle to the side of the road at Bath and Hatfield Street, police

said.

The suspect walked up to the driver's door and asked for her identification. While getting out her wallet, she asked for proof he was a cop after noticing the man wasn't in full uniform, police said.

Frustrated, the man punched her in the forehead, grabbed her legs and tried to yank her out of the car, police said.

"She kicked him in the upper leg area and pushed him backward," said Bristol Township Detective Vic Tunis. Then she swung her back around and took off.

The woman drove to work and called police a short time later.

Tunis said the suspect wore a blue sweater and blue ski cap. He also wore blue pants with a one-inch gold stripe down the side similar to those of most police officers' pants, Tunis said.

The woman said she had no clue why the man tried to pull her over. She said she hadn't broken any traffic laws.

Anyone with information is asked to call police at 785-4707.

Another phony cop harasses driver

A woman approached by a fake cop did all the right things to escape. But police still are searching for suspects in three other fake cop incidents.

By Dave Sommers
Courier Times 2/10/97

For the fourth time in two weeks, someone pretending to be a police officer threatened a Lower Bucks motorist.

The latest incident happened Wednesday when a man driving a Volkswagen Beetle flashed a "police" badge at a 58-year-old Crofton woman and claimed he

was a cop.

Police said the woman, who wasn't identified, was driving west on Street Road around 4:39 p.m. when she observed the man driving erratically, police said.

Having read about previous fake cop incidents, the woman yelled at the man to drive with her to the police station. Instead, police said the suspect

sped away.

The woman, who reported the incident to Bensalem police at 7:40 p.m., said she tried to get a license plate number, but the man left the scene too fast.

Wednesday's incident prompted more warnings from police who say drivers should be wary of stops, especially if it involves an unmarked police car.

"If the person feels in danger, make sure you get to a safe, well-lit area ... and make sure the officer has proper identifica-

tion," said Bensalem Sgt. Steve Moran.

"In (Wednesday's) case, the woman asserted herself and got the upper hand on this guy. She asked the cop to follow her back to the police station," he said.

Police said the badge, described by the woman, was oval in shape and larger than a real Bensalem police badge.

"He was probably a security officer," Moran said.

Both vehicles turned left onto Knights Road and stopped at a

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traffic light on Dunksferry Road in Bensalem.

The man started screaming vulgar language at the woman, police said.

"Where'd you get your license?" the man reportedly yelled.

The woman yelled back, saying the man was disrespectful, police said.

The man then reached in the back seat and pulled out a black jacket with a "police" badge pinned on the front. He claimed to be a Bensalem cop, the woman said.

Officers describe the latest suspect as a white male in his mid-20s with a round, pock-marked face. He had a white baseball hat. His light gray

Volkswagen Beetle had a Pennsylvania license plate, the woman said.

Bensalem police are asking that anyone with information on the incident to call them at 633-3700.

Meanwhile, District Attorney Alan Rubenstein yesterday said impersonating a police officer is a second-degree misdemeanor punishable by a maximum sentence of two years in jail and a \$5,000 fine.

The first incident occurred Jan. 24 on Bath Road in Bristol Township when a man driving a boxy white car tried pulling over a 42-year-old Bensalem woman. She kicked him near the groin and sped off.

Last week, a 38-year-old Levittown man was arrested after he flashed a red light and

tried to pull over a woman on Oxford Valley Road in Falls, police said.

Last Saturday, a 17-year-old Morrisville teen outwitted a man who flashed blue lights while trying to pull him over.

The most notorious incident involving a fake cop occurred in 1986, Rubenstein said, when Albert Altimari picked up a 13-year-old girl in Philadelphia.

Altimari flashed a fake police badge and told the girl to get inside the car because it was past her curfew. He raped and murdered the girl and dumped her body in Falls Township, Rubenstein said.

Altimari was convicted of murder and was sentenced in jail life plus 20 years, Rubenstein said.

"It was a victim's nightmare," Rubenstein said.

Bristol Twp. man held in impersonation case

Steven King, 38, is charged with posing as a police officer and stopping a motorist on Jan. 28.

By Richard V. Sabatini
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

FALLS — A 38-year-old Bristol Township man who was charged with impersonating a police officer by using flashing red lights on his car to stop another motorist was ordered held for trial yesterday.

Falls Police Officer Michael Philippe testified at yesterday's preliminary hearing that he stopped Steven King the night of Jan. 28 after seeing King's blue Ford Taurus with two red lights flashing in the back and a car pulling over in front of it.

King was arrested just five days after a 42-year-old woman in Bristol Township was stopped by a man with a blue light in his car, who then assaulted her and fled. Police are still looking for him.

Five incidents involving men impersonating police officers have been reported in the suburbs since Jan. 21. Suspects have been arrested in three of those incidents.

The reports piqued the interest of Delaware County authorities and state police, who are trying to solve the Aimee Willard murder case.

Police have theorized that Willard, a 22-year-old college student, may have been stopped on an off-ramp of the Blue Route June 20 by someone impersonating an officer. None of the recent incidents have been linked to the case.

Philippe testified that he was taking a prisoner to an arraignment at 7:10 p.m. when he saw King and the other motorist stop on Bristol-Oxford Valley Road. The other motor-

ist drove off as Philippe stopped. Public defender Peter Hail elicited testimony from Philippe that King was wearing street clothes and did not display a badge. Hail then told District Justice Jan Vislosky that the state had not established a prima facie case.

Vislosky disagreed and set March 27 for King's arraignment in Bucks County Court.

The latest of the five incidents happened Feb. 5, when a Croydon woman reported that she got into an angry exchange at a red light in Bensalem with a man who flashed a badge and said he was a police officer before driving off.

On Feb. 7, Scott Holtz, 22, of Levittown, admitted to Bensalem Police that he had been involved in that

dispute but denied posing as an officer. He was cited for impersonating an officer and faces a preliminary hearing on March 18.

Mesha Chizkov, 46, director of security for the Radnor School District, is being held for trial in Montgomery County Court. He is accused of flashing a fake police badge when he was stopped for speeding in White Marsh Township on Jan. 21.

The other of the two unresolved incidents involves a Feb. 1 report from a 17-year-old Morrisville youth who said he was tailed by a white Chevrolet Caprice with a flashing blue light on the dashboard while he was traveling through Yardley.

It was the fifth time since Jan. 21 that motorists have reported phony officers.

■ FALLS/CRIME

Man who police say posed as officer ordered to stand trial

By Dave Sommers

Courier Times 2/27/97

At first glance, the two flashing red lights mounted inside Steyer King's light blue Ford Taunus would seem rather innocent to most people, police said.

But those lights could land the 38-year-old Bristol Township resident in jail — or cost him hundreds in fines.

King, of the Indian Creek section, was ordered Tuesday to

stand trial during his preliminary hearing in front of District Justice Jan Vislosky. King was charged Jan. 28 with impersonating a public officer and violating the Pennsylvania vehicle code. King allegedly used his phony police lights to pull over another motorist.

Police said King was driving south on Oxford Valley Road near Twin Oaks Jan. 28 around 7 p.m. when he got into a traffic dispute with another driver.

King turned on his lights and tried to pull the motorist over, police said, but did not realize he was being followed by Falls Officer Mike Phillippe.

Phillippe instead pulled King over and arrested him, police said.

Court officials yesterday said King's phony police lights were red. They were designed to be mounted on the rear dash with velcro, police said.

Further, the lights had a wire

coming from the bottom that would plug into a cigarette lighter, officials said.

King pleaded not guilty, court officials said.

King, through his public defender, argued that the motorist in front of him could not have seen the flashing lights. That would negate that charge, the public defender said.

Vislosky said she didn't agree.

"He certainly did not qualify to have those type of lights in

his car," Vislosky said. "Other firefighters and police chiefs have those type lights in their personal car."

Impersonating a police officer is punishable by up to three years in jail, court officials said. King meanwhile remains in prison on his own recognizance pending his full trial, which is expected to be in several months.

King did not testify at the preliminary hearing, court officials said.

■ LOWER SOUTHAMPTON / CRIME

FBI impersonator gets probation

From a mail-order catalog, Philip Reade Gaughens bought an FBI-style outfit. He tried entering a home in Lower Southampton, but instead, police arrested him for impersonating an agent.

By Laurie Mason
Courier Times

3/12/97

A Delaware County man pleaded guilty in a Bucks County courtroom yesterday to telling a homeowner he was an FBI agent and demanding to use the telephone.

Philip Reade Gaughens, 34, of Brookhaven, was sentenced to six months probation by Bucks

County Judge Isaac Garb.

According to court records, Gaughens knocked on the door of a Lower Southampton residence on Westbrook Avenue Oct. 20 and told the homeowner he was a federal agent.

He said he was chasing a wanted criminal in the woods near Westbrook and needed to call FBI headquarters.

Gaughens was wearing a blue mesh vest with shotgun shells attached, over a blue T-shirt emblazoned with the words U.S. Federal Agent. He showed the homeowner a gold badge with "U.S. Federal Agent Tech" inscribed on it.

The homeowner got suspicious when Gaughens could not identify which branch of the government he worked for and called police. Meanwhile, Gaughens' girlfriend showed up and he left in her car.

Police called the FBI and were told Gaughens had never been employed as an agent. He was

arrested a short time later.

In court yesterday, Gaughens said he ordered the clothing through a mail-order catalog. He said he was wearing the outfit to impress his girlfriend, but was drinking 190 proof grain alcohol that day and got lost a wooded area near her home.

He said he went to the house on Westbrook to use the phone because it was raining.

As part of his sentence, Garb ordered Gaughens to continue treatment at a psychiatric clinic and an alcohol dependency treatment facility.

Man faces charges of posing as police

A woman said he showed a security guard badge in Bensalem. He said there was only a traffic dispute.

By Richard V. Sabatini
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

3/11/97

BENSALEM — A security guard accused of impersonating a police officer during a traffic dispute may well have chosen the wrong person at whom to flash his badge.

Sara Ferrari, 58, of Croydon, testified yesterday during a preliminary hearing for Scott Holtz, 22, of Levittown, that she had been a security officer for 19 years and knew well what a security badge looked like.

"I laughed. . . . 'That's a security badge, not a police badge,'" Ferrari said she told Holtz as he waved a shirt containing the badge at her as the two exchanged words on Knights Road on Feb. 5.

"It was too big and wasn't cut out on the top like a police badge," Ferrari added.

Ferrari said she was driving on Street Road about 4:30 p.m. when Holtz's gray Volkswagen began zig-zagging in front of her.

As she was about to turn onto Knights Road, Ferrari said, the Volkswagen "cut right in front of me, and I had to slam my brakes on."

When they met at a red light on Knights Road, Ferrari said, Holtz "started hollering and cursing at me. He told me I was driving crazy.

"Then he reached into the backseat and held up this shirt with a big badge on it, saying he was a Bensalem police officer.

"I told him, 'No, it's a security badge.'"

At the next light, the dispute continued, with Ferrari suggesting an easy way to settle the issue. "I said, 'Let's go to the Bensalem police headquarters,'" Ferrari said. Holtz drove off.

Ferrari reported the incident to police. On Feb. 7, Holtz, who at the time was a security guard in Philadelphia, came forward, admitting he was involved in the dispute but

GUARD from Bi state had failed to establish a prima facie case against Holtz because the law "requires specific intent. He did not induce her into doing something," Conurso argued.

Senior District Justice J. Robert Hunsicker disagreed and ordered Holtz held for trial, setting an arraignment date of April 18 in Bucks County Court and releasing Holtz on \$500 signature bail.

The case is one of five incidents involving men impersonating police officers in the suburbs since

Jan. 21. Suspects were arrested in three.

The reports piqued the interest of investigators trying to solve the Aimee Willard murder case.

Police have theorized that Willard, a 22-year-old college student from Brookhaven, may have been stopped on an off-ramp of the Blue Route June 20 by someone impersonating an officer. None of the recent incidents has been linked to the case.

Judge gives fake cop probation

Scott Holtz admitted to cursing and yelling during a traffic dispute but denied saying he was a Bensalem cop.

By Laurie Mason
Courier Times

6/4/97
When the clutch on his 1965 Volkswagen Beetle failed on Street Road during rush hour, Scott Holtz pulled into the turning lane and headed for a parking lot. Behind him, Sara Ferrari was forced to brake as her Ford Bronco came dangerously close to Holtz's bumper.

What happened next is a matter of "he said, she said," that landed Holtz in a Bucks County courtroom yesterday facing charges that he impersonated a police officer.

In the end, Judge Edward Biester believed the "she said" side of the story and sentenced Holtz to six months probation.

Holtz, 24, of Boulder Lane in Levittown, surrendered to police on Feb. 7, two days after the fight with Ferrari.

In court yesterday, Ferrari, 58, of Croydon, said Holtz began shouting obscenities to her after their near collision in Bensalem, then showed her a silver badge on his jacket and said he was a Bensalem cop.

Holtz testified that he did show her the badge from his security guard uniform because he "wanted her to leave (him) alone," but denied saying he was a police officer.

"... I told her she was a terrible driver," Holtz told Biester. "I was cursing and yelling because I was frustrated about my car. But I didn't say I was a cop."

Ferrari, a mother of seven and former security guard, said she knew immediately that Holtz's badge was bogus and yelled to him "If you're really a cop let's go to the police station." Holtz drove off and Ferrari reported the argument to police.

Bensalem Police Sgt. Steve Moran said Holtz called the station after reading about Ferrari's claims in the Courier Times, and he brought the two together to hash out their differences.

"It may have been an unorthodox move on my part, but I think it speeded the healing process and helped the victim be less afraid," Moran said.

The incident happened on the heels of another similar case, when a man, posing as a police officer, forced a woman off Bath Road and tried to assault her. The woman escaped without injury, and no arrest has been made.

Biester referred to that incident when he said "This happened at a very bad time, when women in the area were very afraid. You are just lucky that (Ferrari) is a very smart lady who knew it was not an official badge. The situation could have been a lot worse."

Prosecutor Heather Castellino said impersonating a public servant is a second-degree misdemeanor that carries a maximum of two years in jail. In addition to serving probation Holtz was ordered to undergo a psychological evaluation and report the findings to Biester.

Ferrari asked to make a statement before Holtz was sentenced. She told Biester that Holtz apologized to her, and asked him to take that into consideration when he handed down his decision. And, she said, she thought Holtz needed his "mouth washed out with soap."

Holtz refused to comment after the trial. Ferrari said she was "traumatized" by the media attention to the case and refused to answer questions.

■ BRISTOL TOWNSHIP/CRIME

Fake cop forces victim off road

By Athena Merritt
Courier Times

Police are searching for a man who impersonated a police officer and forced a motorist off Mill Creek Road in Bristol Township.

The victim was driving near Green Lane shortly before 8 p.m. Thursday, when a gold Nissan Maxima began tailgating her vehicle.

Police said the suspect pulled alongside the victim's vehicle and hollered for her to pull over. When the victim refused, po-

lice said the suspect began weaving his vehicle toward her car and forced her to the side of the road.

The suspect then exited his vehicle and began shouting at the victim to get out of her car. Police said the suspect displayed a badge and claimed he was a cop after she refused to leave her car.

According to police, the victim remained in her vehicle, so the suspect then began shouting profanities at her and again ordered her to get out of her vehicle.

The suspect got in his vehicle and fled after a man driving a van pulled over to the side of the road and got out.

Police said the suspect drove off on Mill Creek Road toward Edgely Road.

The suspect is described as an African-American male, 6 feet 3 inches in height and 190 pounds. He was last seen wearing a multicolor skull cap, a pullover shirt and dark pants.

Police are asking anyone with information to call police detectives at 785-4707.

Bristol Township police are still searching for another fake cop suspect who pulled over a woman on Bath Road in January and tried to drag her out of her car.

She fought him off and kicked him in the groin before he sped away in a white Chevrolet Caprice that looks like a police car.

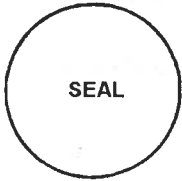
That suspect is described as a white man, in his late 30s, 200 pounds, with short brown hair and a brown mustache with red highlights.

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Please review the printed information on the bottom portion of this form. If an error has been made, notify us when you visit the Driver License Center. The address shown below is the address to which you requested this form be mailed. Your permanent address of record will be printed on your permanent license or ID card.

If you applied for a driver's license, the bottom portion of this form is valid as a temporary driver's license for 60 days from the issue date. After 60 days, the form is no longer valid as a driver's license, but it may be taken to a Driver License Center to be processed as a valid photo license.

To receive your photo license/ID card, take the Camera Card to a Driver License Center. Enclosed is a list of Driver License Center locations. It will tell you what kinds of identification you will need to bring with you to the Driver License Center.

Please read the enclosed pamphlet, "The Greatest Gift," for organ donation information. If you wish to become an organ donor, please ask to have the ORGAN DONOR designation placed on your photo license/ID card when you visit the Driver License Center. If you are under the age of 18 and do not have parental consent on file with the Department, you must bring your parent or guardian to the Driver License Center in order to have the ORGAN DONOR designation placed on your new license/ID card.

Please read the enclosed "Motor Voter" pamphlet. You may wish to apply to become a registered voter when you visit the Driver License Center.

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1. Do you wish to have the organ donor designation on your license? Yes or No
2. Would you like to register to vote? Yes or No
*** NOTE: If you are already registered to vote, select "No." This will not affect your current voting status.
3. Do you live in (name of county) County? Yes or No
4. In which political party do you wish to be enrolled?
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