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Twenty-five cents

Dentist lucks out in brush with kidnapper

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

When West Bloomfield's Dr. Martin Levy swung his gold Mercedes out of the driveway Saturday morning and headed for his dentist's office in Farmington Hills, he fully expected to work half a day and meet a buddy for a 2 o'clock tennis game.

But an afternoon of horror awaited him. Levy was abducted from his office at 27620 Farmington Road by a man requesting a test drive in the Mercedes, listed for sale in the Detroit News' classified ads.

The 43-year-old University of Detroit graduate credits "top-notch, professional" police work and his attentive office staff for his safe escape and his abductor's arrest.

Chester Gordon Nelson Jr., 20, of Inkster was arraigned before 47th District Judge Michael Hand Monday on charges of armed robbery and kidnapping. He was unable to post \$100,000 bond and is being held in Oakland County Jail.

Last week, Nelson called Levy, expressing interest in buying the car. The two agreed to meet at the office.

Dressed in gold plaid pants, a black shirt, and yellow tie, Nelson waited for half an hour in Levy's waiting room before the dentist finished with his patients. Levy then accompanied him out to the parking lot with "no intention of getting into" the \$38,000 car.

"All I wanted to do was show him the outside and inside. I was armed at the time because I had a feeling something was wrong," However the 5-foot-11, 160-pound Nelson talked Levy into driving him around the parking lot.

"We went about 30 yards and he told me, 'this is a stick up. Just drive,'" said the dentist.

Levy told police the man pulled out a long barrel revolver and ordered him to "take 96 to Detroit." It was later dis-

covered that the partially concealed weapon was a pellet gun.

"I was pretty shook up, and I was reprimanding myself severely for being stupid," said Levy, who celebrated his 43rd birthday Tuesday with special vigor.

"But you settle down, gauge the situation minute by minute and make the best of it, waiting for a chance to do whatever you have to do to get away." Instead of taking a direct route to 13 Mile, Levy turned west onto 12 Mile from Farmington Road, thinking it was safer to remain in the area, which was unfamiliar to his assailant.

"(Nelson) said he did not intend to hurt me, all he wanted was my wheels. There was no way I was going to his territory in Detroit — he knew exactly where he was going to drop me off," Levy said.

If necessary, the dentist was planning to "slow down to about 30 on the freeway and roll out the door. It's better to have a broken arm than a bullet through your body."

While the pair travelled south on Novi Road, east on I-96, and elsewhere — finally exiting onto Grand River — Farmington Hills Police were alerted by Levy's employees that he was missing.

Shortly afterwards, an officer spotted a gold Mercedes occupied by a white and a black male near Grand River and M-102, and followed it.

"The fellow had me make two right turns near the Red Roof Inn, and told me to make another right at the second driveway past the Red Roof Inn and 'floor it,'" I yelled, 'it's a dead end,' jammed on the brakes, and rolled out the driver's side," Levy said.

"The police were 100 yards behind us. I figured either he could take me hostage, or I could be a missing target."

Nelson then got out of the car, fleeing south to the Red Roof Inn. Farmington Hills Police, assisted by Farmington Police, Michigan State Po-

lice, Oakland County Sheriffs, Novi Police and Detroit Police in two helicopters, tracked Nelson from the Inn east to Grand River and Drake roads.

When he was spotted at 1:45 p.m. talking on the phone at Efros Drugs in the Drakeville shopping center, officers surrounded the building, requesting customers and employees to leave.

A plain clothes officer identified Nelson, and several officers entered the store, arresting him without a warrant.

Levy, who'd been told by police to wait in his car at a nearby gas station, later followed officers to the Hills station for processing.

TUESDAY, LEVY was "feeling

lucky," and grateful that his experience as a U.S. Marine in Viet Nam helped him "to put things into perspective."

"At first I thought I was in trouble, but then I thought, 'as long as I'm driving the car, he's not going to do me in. Going 60 m.p.h., that's suicide.'"

Even if he was able to post \$100,000

bond, Farmington Hills Detective Daniel Krause said Nelson couldn't have avoided going to jail. He is wanted in Wayne County for failing to appear for an exam on two felony charges, and in Washtenaw County for failure to appear for sentencing for two counts of armed robbery and one count of commission of a felony with a firearm.



Intersection collision

An accident at 1 p.m. Monday at 13 Mile and Farmington roads upended this Ford van, driven by Paul Clancy of West Bloomfield. Bryan Baergen of Farmington Hills, driver of the Camaro, told po-

lice he was southbound on Farmington Road approaching the intersection on a green light when he collided with Clancy, who was traveling westbound on 13 Mile. No one was injured in the mishap.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Only if temporary

Bureaucrats see need for tax boost

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington and Farmington Hills officials support a Democratic-backed 38-percent state income tax increase recently approved by the state House Taxation Committee — as long as the hike is temporary.

"On the face of it, it does seem like a very reasonable approach to the problem," William Costick, Farmington Hills assistant city manager, said. "It sounds more reasonable than a permanent increase."

The committee's bill would increase the income tax rate from 4.6 to 8.35 percent, retroactive to Jan. 1. The temporary hike would be tied to the unemployment rate, decreasing as the jobless rate drops.

The plan to eliminate the state's projected \$900-million budget deficit also includes a 25-percent surcharge to eliminate an estimated \$800-million deficit from previous years.

Although unfamiliar with the committee's complicated formula of tying the tax increase to the unemployment rate, Costick said he can't imagine "what else they'd tie it to" to ensure the increase is temporary.

"It sounds like a temporary tax, but a permanent solution," Costick said. "A permanent tax increase would be very difficult for many people to handle."

CONSIDERING GOV. James Blanchard's financial options, a tax increase is inevitable, said Robert Deadman, Farmington city manager.

"The tax increase is permanent in the sense that it'll be reinstated when the unemployment rate goes up," Deadman said, pointing to Michigan's boom-and-bust economic history.

According to the Democratic plan, when the average seasonally adjusted unemployment rate drops below 13 percent, the income tax rate would decrease by .1 of a percent. When the jobless rate drops to 7.8 percent, last seen in 1978, the tax rate would return to

the current 4.6-percent level. Last month, the state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 15.5 percent.

The temporary tax increase plan has the same effect as a permanent tax increase because the state's unemployment rate is so changeable, particularly in the auto industry, said state Rep. Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington.

"The unemployment rate is the most volatile and unreliable source we can rely on," Brotherton said. "If we're going to live with chronic unemployment, then we need to make cuts in spending."

State Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Southfield, was unavailable for comment.

The Democratic bill most likely will be voted on in the House today, Brotherton said.

"THE SENATE then will change it and make it more temporary," he added.

Both Farmington and Farmington Hills officials are hoping the proposed

tax increase will provide the state with the needed revenue to make its payments to school districts and local governments.

"It looks like it might bring the state back to an on-time payment basis," Deadman said.

At least the sales tax portion of Farmington's February state shared revenue payment of \$90,000 would be paid, Deadman guessed. State shared revenues account for about 16.5 percent of the city's \$2.9-million budget.

Farmington Hills expected to receive approximately \$400,000 of state shared revenue in February, Costick said. State shared revenues account for approximately 15 percent of Farmington Hills' \$14-million budget.

So far, the delays in state shared revenues haven't hurt either city's operation, officials said.

"We think we can shoulder the burden it creates on us without making any drastic changes in our operation," Costick added.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

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Michael Shpiece

Feds' plan aids science, math

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Despite scheduled U.S. Senate debate on a funding proposal to improve math and science education, local educators said it's too soon to determine the proposal's impact on the Farmington district.

"There are so many proposals in Congress that we just don't react until they're in concrete," Farmington Superintendent Lewis Schulman said.

Although the federal funding proposal is supported by the National Education Association (NEA), Farmington Education Association (FEA) officials said they are unaware of it.

But if passed, the American Defense Education Act (ADEA) would provide local school districts, colleges and universities, with \$2 billion in the program's first year to improve math and science education. Local school districts would voluntarily participate in ADEA with federal payments increasing each year.

"It's a broad approach to the technological explosion," NEA president Willard McGuire said.

The ADEA was proposed in response to President Ronald Reagan's increased funding for defense, Debbie Shon, NEA legislative specialist, said.

Under current educational standards, students are unprepared for jobs in advanced technology, or in the maintenance and operation of weapons systems, she said.

"WE ARE producing a generation of children who are unable to manage these things," Shon said.

In the last four years, however, as high school students have become more interested in more rigorous academic courses, enrollment has increased in the district's math and science courses, Schulman said.

Of the district's 3,937 high school students, 88 percent are enrolled in math courses. About 70 percent are enrolled in science courses.

All high school students are required to take two years of math and one year of science, Schulman said. But if students only were taking their graduation requirements, he said, enrollment in math and science classes would not have increased as sharply.

Because of recent teacher layoffs (20 in 1982-83) due to the district's declining enrollment, the teaching staff is older, Schulman said. But he said that many of those teachers are receiving training in technological subjects, such as computer programming.

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oral quarrel

Would you prefer sales or income tax?

Taxpayers are anxiously waiting to see how the state legislature will deal with Gov. James Blanchard's proposed income tax increase to pay off the \$900 million state debt.

Groups are converging on Lansing to voice displeasure over the proposal. Some say a sales tax would be a wiser move. Still others are looking at increasing the gasoline tax to put the state back in the black.

Today's Oral Quarrel is: IF YOU WERE GOVERNOR WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO PAY OFF THE STATE DEBT? WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL?

Call Oral Quarrel at 477-5498. You have until 1 p.m. on Friday to answer the question. Look in Monday's paper for the responses.

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591-0900

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Unidentified gunman holds up restaurant

A Farmington Hills restaurant was robbed of about \$8,000 by an unidentified gunman at 12:45 a.m. Monday.

A man wearing a nylon stocking over his face entered the back door at the Elias Brothers Big Boy at 24084 Orchard Lake Road as three employees were cleaning up, police said.

Holding a .25 or .380 automatic, the man ran towards the buzby, grabbing him and pushing toward the walk-in freezer, police said. The gunman then told the buzby and cook, Ronald Vestevich and Christopher Boyce of Farmington Hills, to get in the freezer. He ordered the manager, Vincent Milazzo of Roseville, to take him into the office and open the safe.

Because the manager was "too slow removing receipts," the gunman ordered him out of the way. The man placed \$7,600 in a white 10A shopping bag.

Milazzo was then forced into the freezer with Vestevich and Boyce and wanted to stay there because a second person acting as a backup was watching him, police said.

The man fled out the back door, and no vehicle was spotted by witnesses. Police have no suspects and are investigating.

Witnesses said the gunman was about 24 years old, 6 foot 3 inches tall with dark hair. He was dressed in a zippered brown leather jacket and blue jeans.