

Reporter spends night on beat

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stock officer match the light that's twirling on top of the patrol car. He steps before he reaches the driver's side, checking the back seat by shining his flashlight through the window. HE POSITIONED himself so the driver is forced to turn around to face him. After collecting the driver's license, registration and explanation, Cranston returns to the patrol car to write the ticket. He says he didn't see the light. According to his driver's license, he should be wearing his glasses. Cranston points out.

"I always give drivers a chance to explain. But the one factor that helps them get an expensive ticket is their big noses. They end up admitting that they did something they shouldn't," he says.

Cranston always wears his helmet when he's out of the car to give a ticket. "We started wearing the helmets when we were given tickets. They aren't too comfortable with the winter jacket on this chilly day," he says. But the kids know that the guy with the helmet is going to ticket them," he explains.

Cranston says he puts him in contact with

Farmington Hills' student population.

"You develop informants," he says, as he rests his right arm on top of the helmet placed on the seat next to him.

"YOU DEVELOP a rapport with repeaters. You give them a break when you can. If they know us, it gives us some leverage. I don't charge a kid for something he didn't do," he says.

"Suburban police deal with different problems than city police departments do. Here, we deal with juvenile problems, breaking and entering.

"I'm on my second generation of kids, right now. I run into the younger brothers and sisters of the kids I knew when I started out. They tell their younger brother and sisters about us. We don't have the problems we once had with the kids," he says.

He concludes that it isn't easy for a kid to find a place to go in the area. "Even if they have a car, where can they go? There's just not that much for kids to do around here," he says.

While the police are watching them, the residents watch the police.

"I had a partner who on one of his last days at work, wanted to shock me. I was driving and when we stopped at a light, he switched the bottom of his flashlight. Cranston remembers, chuckling.

THE PARTNER tipped the bottom of the flashlight toward his mouth, pretending to drink from it. While it must have been funny inside the patrol car, pay singers in the surrounding cars weren't in on the joke.

The phone rang off the wall in the excitement that night," he says.

Towards the end of the night, Cranston had to check out an accident on North Western Highway and Fourteen Mile. Rushing to the scene with sirens wailing, four drivers just before the patrol car. The driver was so far to the right and left, almost out of sight.

Cranston's partner, who in the patrol car, was up to the driver as he arrives at the scene.

A young man who obviously drank too much at a company party is half heartedly

running through the snow, trying to out-stumble two other officers. He had managed already to drive his orange sports car into a ditch.

The man's arms flail about as Cranston searches and handcuffs him.

No one reads the man's Miranda rights. That's necessary only when a person is questioned to reveal something that could incriminate him, Cranston explains.

"IT'S OBVIOUS that he's drunk. We can go on physical appearances alone," Cranston adds.

The young man vows that he's had only three beers, nods asleep, then jerks awake several times in the back seat of the patrol car.

You could have hurt somebody driving like that," Cranston reprimands. "You could have killed somebody. Did you think of that before you got into the car to drive?"

Did I hurt anybody? The man says carefully pronouncing each word like a elementary school child learning to read. He's driven to the Farmington Hills police station and put into a cell next to another intoxicated young man.

We've got a legal eagle in there," an officer offers says to Cranston.

I'll see you. I'll get my lawyer, the cell mate yells.

For \$100, he continues, Cranston and the others grumble at the noise.

For \$200, in the next bulletin.

He keeps screaming until he reaches \$20,000.

A moment of silence. Cranston looks up from his paperwork two rooms away from the cell block.

JUST BEFORE HE CAN EXPRESS some relief from the noise, the man starts counting from \$100 all over again.

Everyone shakes their heads and continues to fall out their forms.

Cranston looks at the stack of about six forms to be filled for the arrest of the driver of the vehicle.

This unit bad. Sometimes it takes us six hours to get all the information to arrest someone," he explains.



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