

# It takes a real cop to drive a real cop car

The struggle with urban crime seems to have a wearing effect that results in a lot of strange scapegoats, almost as if it's too difficult to believe that a certain percentage of your fellow man is simply out to get you.

So we have had campaigns against vacant houses as if they were stepping out and molesting young girls, a man with street lights, as if a couple of light bulbs act like garlic against vampires. And now comes Stanley Brock and Charlotte St. Aubin, who think the real problem is a lack of operating squad cars in Detroit.

Then again, Brock and St. Aubin may be on to something.

IT TURNS out that about 10 percent of the city's squad cars are down for repairs at any given time. I'd guess that's about average.

According to department reports, the average squad car sees about 75 miles a day in action — strangely enough, not much more than a commute from a fringe suburb to downtown, and considerably less than my wife puts on delivering flowers from her shop.

"They spend a lot of time idling,"

said Executive Deputy Chief James Hamon. Not to mention substantial time parked in local restaurant parking lots.

A cop car is the most visible symbol of police protection we have today, a kind of surrogate badge and horse for the town marshal. It's not so surprising that a few departments have tried parking empty squad cars alongside busy highways and discovered they are about as effective deterring speeders as when they are full.

EVEN A used cop car has a kind of charisma akin to collecting WWII machine guns. A plain white Plymouth, black wall tires, parked in front of the drug enforcement office, with a "For Sale, \$1,300" sign in the window makes you feel like you just finished reading something by Raymond Chandler.



auto talk  
**Dan McCosh**

A cop car is a full-size American sedan, with black wall tires and a V-8 engine. Period.

Some effete towns in Massachusetts tried buying Saabs or something once, which were taken as seriously as if those towns were using Volkswagens with Kewanis gum machines on top.

I REMEMBER sitting through a couple of council sessions in Farmington where an effort to improve

fuel efficiency was deterred by arms-folded cops insisting their plywood first-aid kits wouldn't fit in a small car, apparently hoping the council would think they had lost the nails and saw they used to built them the first time.

This sounded better in front of a budget committee than the real problem, the fact that a mini-car just isn't intimidating enough. I figure cops take new cars out back and start kicking the doors a little and use a brick on the wire mesh screen

between the seats, just so they won't look like a kid in school with a new pair of jeans.

AS FAR as I'm concerned, a real cop car is still a Plymouth, like the one driven by Jake and Ellwood in "The Blues Brothers," with a cop engine, cop suspension and cop shock absorbers.

Unfortunately, Chrysler abandoned the chassis, and later torched a short-lived effort to sell wimpy K-car-based squad cars. Now Ford is showing a new Taurus police package, as if anybody is going to jump out the back window of a crack house when a car looking like an overstuffed jelly bean pulls up in front.

Recently, I attended a demonstration of the new Caprice squad car special, which at least has the basics

— four doors, a chrome grille and a big V-8. It was being certified by the testing specialists at the Michigan State Police, which, it turns out, produce such a thorough report that nearly every police department in the country reads it before buying new cars.

IN ANY case, a handful of other wise nondescript automotive journalists poked around a bit, and when nobody was looking, took off around the track. Halfway down the track, straight, on came the blue lights and by the end of the loop, most got tangled in a "no standing" zone.

Getting out, it was tough to fight the urge to push back the sun glasses with an index finger and say "What a heap of trouble, boy, but a well-managed."

## marketplace

MultiGard/Audio Alert acquired Alarm Systems Inc. of Farmington Hills.

Grossman & Associates of Southfield will handle marketing, advertising and public relations for the Caucus Club restaurant.

Key Multi Media Inc. opened in the Key Media Center, 660 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 200, West Bloomfield. The telephone number is 626-2350 and the fax number is 626-2137.

Robert Davis Travel Inc. of Bloomfield Hills was bought by Thomas B. Torgerson. The agency's new name and address is: Torgerson-Davis Travel Inc., P.O. Box 70, 1533 N. Woodward Ave., Suite 1555, Bloomfield Hills. The telephone number is 644-5700.

Paul W. Tryloff, former special assistant attorney general for the state of Michigan, opened a law office 1441 E. Maple, Suite 307, Troy. The telephone number is 680-0550.

The Berlae Group Inc. received a Merit Award Citation in the 17th Annual Dandy Awards Competition. The Dandy was received for the ad, "The Cako... The Frosting," created for the Chevrolet Dealer Network.

VOPLEX Corp. and Bleur Plastics Inc. have reached final agreement in forming a joint venture to be called Hillsdale Plastics.

Compass Group Ltd. of Birmingham was named one of the 100 Leading Management Consulting Firms. Compass Group was also on the 1987 "100 Leading" list.

Cook Mazda in Farmington Hills was one of 26 winners out of 131 dealerships who won a five-state 1989 Mazda Paris Guild Competition. The competition is designed to improve a dealership's parts operation by challenging each parts department to achieve high standards of business.

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