

For Immediate Release

Jan. 9, 2008

Asheville Police Department

Contact: Capt. Sarah Benson, Patrol Division

Phone: (828) 259-5915 or (828) 777-9670

E-mail: sbenson@ashevilleenc.gov

Police issue warning about law enforcement impersonators

Suspects using ruse to rob victims

Attachment:

(1) Incident report

ASHEVILLE – The Asheville Police Department is notifying the public of a report that two men are impersonating law enforcement and have used this ruse to rob people.

Police have received a report that shortly after 8 p.m. on Jan. 8 at a residence on Bingham Road, a man and a woman who were parked in the driveway of the residence were approached by two white males getting out of what appeared to be an undercover police vehicle. The suspects' vehicle, a white Dodge Charger, displayed both blue and red lights.

The suspects approached the victims' vehicle with flashlights and said there had been an accident in the vicinity and that they needed to examine the victims' vehicle. In the process of the search, the suspects asked the male to step out of the car and patted him down. The suspects then said they needed to search the vehicle. While doing so, they took the woman's personal belongings, including cash, an ID card and a debit card. The suspects then told them everything was O.K. and that they were free to go. Both suspects were about 6' tall, with dark hair. One had a thin build and a tattoo (unknown design) on his left forearm. The other suspect was described as heavier set and he had a goatee. Both were said to be in their 20s-30s.

The public should be aware that the Asheville Police Department has no Dodge Chargers in its fleet, marked or unmarked.

The APD is offering the following tips to the public in light of this report:

- If you're not sure that a law enforcement vehicle is legitimate and you have a cell phone, dial 9-1-1, and tell the call-taker you are being followed or are being signaled to stop by an unmarked vehicle. Ask them to send a marked law enforcement vehicle to your location.
- If you don't have a cell phone or are still not sure, turn on your dome light and flashers and drive slowly to the nearest well-lit, populated area — a gas station or convenience store, for example — before pulling to a stop.
- Never jeopardize your personal safety. Cooperate and keep note of as much information as possible, such as suspect and vehicle descriptions, so that you can be a good witness.

Anyone with information about this incident should call the APD at (828) 252-1110 or Asheville-Buncombe CrimeStoppers at (828) 255-5050.

###