

Pants

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Throughout our law enforcement careers we come in daily contact with many situations and incidents, some very serious, others very comical. There are times when certain things, although totally unrelated, seem to fit many situations. Take pants for example. Yes, pants: trousers, jeans, outerwear, underwear, slacks, chinos, and the list goes on. The following incidents reveal that *pants* played an integral role in solving those investigations.

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It was a routine day tour, fairly quiet, in the beginning of July. Most residents were either working or away on vacation and the streets were not overly busy. After the morning rush hour, traffic seemed to quiet right down. My partner and I had just hit the streets in our unmarked to do a little routine patrol in certain areas of town, to catch up on any changes that may have occurred. Patrol was doing their thing — radar setups, bank escorts, and the like. The Chief had mentioned that he wanted to attend a meeting later that day and asked if we could be available later that afternoon. Other than that, there were no pressing issues we were expecting.

Around 11:30 a.m. headquarters detailed sector cars to a convenience store where a customer's wallet had been stolen. The desk officer advised that a white male, approximately 20 years of age, wearing blue jeans, a yellow t-shirt and red baseball hat, had taken the victim's wallet and headed south on the Boulevard on a red mountain bike. We headed for the location knowing we would be called to handle the investigation. Upon arrival we were

advised by the victim that the described suspect had been in the store and the victim took his wallet out to pay for his purchase and placed it on the counter. At that the suspect ran over, grabbed the wallet and ran from the store. The clerk advised that he saw the male jump on a red mountain bike and head south.

Suddenly one of the patrol units advised that he had spotted the male and was attempting to get him to stop. We advised our victim to respond to headquarters as he was going to provide information for an Identikit composite. He said he would go to headquarters. We headed for the area the suspect was spotted in. The patrol officer advised that the suspect slowed down, flipped him the bird and proceeded to go in the opposite direction. By the time the patrol unit was turned around he had lost sight of the suspect. As my partner and I approached the area we observed the suspect go by an intersection. We took off after him. He was evidently a very experienced bike rider as he suddenly stood up on the seat, then jumped back down facing the rear of the bike as it was still going in a forward motion. All the while he was yelling obscenities at us. He was on a grade so the momentum kept him going. He made several turns into streets, still facing rearwards, and was now pedaling the bike to keep going.

Then we saw it — the chainlink fence that was blocking part of the street at a construction site. Apparently the suspect was not aware of it and — you guessed it — WHOMP right into the fence and down he went. As we approached, our very agile suspect jumped up and started over the fence. There was a resounding RRRRRRIPPPPPPP as his right rear pant leg became attached to

the fence and separated itself from him. Off he went. We retrieved the pant leg and started after him. A younger officer now passed us and yelled that he was heading for a yard two houses further down the block. As we all entered that yard the homeowner came out and said that a male had just run into her garage. There was no other entrance or exit to the garage so we took up positions outside. We finally convinced the suspect to exit the garage. The male came out slowly whistling and said, "Hi, fellas, what can I do for you?" He was put in the appropriate position and patted down. The wallet was removed from his left front pocket. He was advised he was under arrest for robbery and he proceeded to tell us we had the wrong guy. He said he was sleeping in that garage for quite awhile and unless we had a witness he would swear that the police had placed that wallet on his person. Oh, a jailhouse lawyer we had. Well, as only approximately 8 minutes had gone by, we radioed headquarters to send the victim to the scene via patrol car for a possible ID of the suspect. The male was further searched and a small amount of marijuana was also located on him.

The victim appeared and after viewing the suspect positively identified him as the person who stole his wallet. Patrol had also retrieved the bicycle he was riding. The suspect now said, "I can get alibis for where I was and you know how people mistakenly identify someone in police custody." This guy was starting to irritate us, so we told him we had other compelling evidence, the observations of the victim, the clerk, the officers pursuing him, the bike and the best was — the rest of his pants! We proceeded to show him that the piece we had matched the entire rear pants ➤

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leg that was missing from his jeans. At that he lowered his head and said, "Well, I guess you can say you got me by the pants." Yes, we did, and off he went to the happyland hotel for processing.

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Another incident that occurred involving pants happened during a raid to conclude an undercover narcotics investigation. We had just completed a 7-month investigation into the distribution of marijuana and heroin by three individuals. Our undercover had made several purchases of CDs, and we had our arrest and search warrants ready in preparation for a raid on the apartment in question. This apartment was located at the upper right of a 4-family residence. We assembled at headquarters with our 4 detectives, 2 uniformed officers, 4 agents of the county Narcotics Task Force, and an assistant prosecutor. The AP accompanied us on raids to ensure legalities were adhered to. Our CI had informed us that that morning that a new buyer of large quantities of drugs would be present, a female he did not know. The CI stated that the operation was going down early as they knew that the "narcs" wouldn't be around at that time of day. How wrong they were. They also were unaware that the "female buyer" was also an undercover officer who was wired and whom we had been monitoring since she arrived at the suspected location. We formulated our raid, assigning tasks to the officers as to who would search, who would collect evidence, and so on. Then we headed to the location.

It was now 5:00 a.m. and we arrived at the scene as quietly as we could. We all took our assigned positions and proceeded to knock on the door with the required "Police, search warrant." The door came down and we entered the apartment. There were 2 of our 3 suspects present, 2 unknown males and the "female buyer," our undercover. We had our female agent take her into "custody" on an "outstanding warrant" and she was removed from the scene. We started our search. The suspects were all being secured when one of the unknown

males, who apparently had been surprised by our entry, messed his pants. Unbeknown to the searching officer, the suspect's excrement had exited his pants and was on the floor. The suspect decided to take a swing at the officer and in so doing, slipped on the mess and headed down and to a window sill close by. He was headed for an open window and no doubt would have ended up on the hood of a Grand Prix in the driveway below, but several officers grabbed him and had hold of his legs when his pants started to slide down and off his posterior. The officers tightened their grip and succeeded in preventing him from certain serious injury had he kept up his momentum. That was a good save as such an incident would no doubt have led to a "Dear Chief" letter.

We concluded our search and were able to retrieve several ounces of marijuana, a good quantity of heroin, some LSD tabs, and methamphetamine. The remaining suspect was subsequently located and arrested. All-in-all, a good investigation. All suspects present were charged for their possession of CDs and the one male for assault on an officer. The scene was secured and all suspects transported to headquarters for processing. The assaulter was afforded shower facilities and expressed his appreciation for the officers saving him from certain injury. He said, "I guess I was saved by the seat of my pants." He was right on on that one.

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Another incident that evoked memories of pants occurred one early spring morning. We had been having burglaries occurring between 9 a.m. and 12 noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays for several weeks. Our street info did not provide any information on suspects and there was no physical evidence left at the scenes. The only items that were taken were small concealable items such as jewelry and cash. Many larger valuable items had been left behind. That led us to believe that any suspects were more than likely on foot. The area that was being targeted was a certain section in the southeast corner of the town. We

started an unmarked street crime detail and were saturating the target area. We began to observe the bus stop areas as the bus routes were direct corridors to NYC less than 15 minutes away. We spoke to other surrounding towns who advised they were also experiencing the same type of activity and had subsequently grabbed two males from NYC who took the busses to their locations.

At approximately 8:45 a.m. a bus heading northbound stopped and a white male got off. He was approximately 20-23 years old, was about 5'8" tall with a slim build and brown hair, and was wearing a blue hooded sweatshirt, blue jeans and Nike sneakers. He started walking north and suddenly turned east on one of the side streets. The officers that spotted him radioed the information to the others and we all started to head for that area. The observing unit then advised that they had lost sight of the individual. After approximately 45 minutes of no contact, we were all on edge, our instincts telling us that this could be our suspect.

Another 20 minutes and then it happened: "Headquarters to burglary detail, respond to 306 Luhmann Drive, report of a burglary in progress." We descended on the location, taking care to observe any movement of vehicles and persons leaving that area. There was no action at all. My partner and I and another team responded to the residence and were met by the homeowner. He advised us that he had just returned from getting his morning paper and upon entering his residence observed a male wearing a blue hooded sweatshirt and jeans in his bedroom. He further advised that the male jumped up and slid over the open window sill and ran from the property in a westerly direction. He advised that several watches and jewelry items and an number of 1880s silver dollars were taken

The victim further advised that he had just finished painting all the windows and trim on his home that morning and that the suspect had nice white paint down the entire rear of his pants. We radioed the information to the ➤

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other units and started to process the scene. We left the residence, leaving the processing team to complete their work and advised the homeowner to see what else was taken. At that he stated that his wallet was also missing and contained his driver license and credit cards and approximately \$45 in cash. As we reentered our unmarked vehicle, one of the other units advised that they spotted a male wearing an "orange" hooded sweatshirt at a bench at a bus stop 3 blocks south of our location. We all responded to the location and found the male seated on the bench. He was asked for identification and he took out a wallet and fumbled through it, finally handing us a driver's license. That was fine, but the license was in the name of our victim, a 62-year-old male and the suspect was 20. He was advised that he was under arrest for receiving stolen property at which he replied, "No way, man. I found that wallet here at this bus stop" The silver dollars, watches and jewelry items were located on his person. He was advised that there was other compelling evidence such as our observation of him, the fact that his sweatshirt was reversible and, when we removed it, we found white paint on the back of the elbow area. The best we saved for last. We told him that his nice blue jeans were totally smeared in nice fresh white paint on the entire rear. Some of that paint was now on the bus stop bench. He knew we had him. Once again, pants saved the day! He was taken to headquarters and processed and subsequently admitted to the string of burglaries we had been experiencing. Some of the items were recovered from pawn shops and the suspect was later sentenced to jail. All in all, a nice piece of Police work.

Always remember, if you are alert enough and have enough imagination, many things that normally would not draw your attention may in fact be the piece that completes your investigatory puzzle. Keep up serving in the finest, proudest profession in the world and above all keep your sense of humor, stay safe and wear your vests. □