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Photo by Ted Kirk

Mike Williams and Mike Garnett, Lincoln police officers assigned to the department's Countermeasure Squad.

Suspect booked for DWI; 'Thank you, Mr. Recorder'

Continued from p. 6

For the next 10 minutes, officers Garnett and Williams are busy trying to get the suspect back into the cruiser, calm down the man's wife, who was a passenger in the car, get everybody to understand that the suspect is going to the police station, and generally restore order.

Once the man is returned to the cruiser, as a matter of form, the officers ask him where he works.

"The University of Nebraska."
Oh God, don't let him ask who I am.

"Who's this guy?" the suspect immediately wants to know.

"He's just an observer, sir," Williams tells him.

At the station, the man asks to have the procedural and legal forms read to him over and over, but he finally consents to blowing into the breath machine, and 90 seconds later, when the numbers stop changing, he registers a ".185" and is booked for driving while under the influence of alcohol. The legal limit of blood alcohol in Nebraska is .10 per cent. As he leaves the testing room, he says to no one in particular, "Thank you, Mr. Recorder."

Work five nights

Garnett and Williams work 7:30 p.m. to 4 a.m. five nights a week, Sunday and Monday off. They report that the hours are not conducive to the maintenance of a well developed love life.

We spend the next few hours picking up a country boy, who I didn't suspect was drunk, but who finally tested out at .12; taking a break for a midnight snack; and just generally cruising.

Cruising south on 16th St., Garnett spots a pickup truck ahead of us without any tail lights. The officers try to close in on the truck, but in the traffic, fall further behind and get bad breaks at stoplights.

The truck keeps gaining, but finally the

cruiser gets some running room. And Williams shows amazing skill.

When the cruiser is at 16th and K Streets Williams spots the truck (without tail lights) turning off of 16th St. at A St.

When we finally pull the pickup over, at 12th and A, I get to see that the little breath-tester box can show something besides a "fail." The driver passes the test and is sent off with a warning ticket admonishing him to get his tail lights fixed.

No headlights

It's 3:15 a.m. and we'll be able to quit this pretty soon. At 16th and P we find a car traveling down the street without its headlights on.

When the car is stopped and the driver brought back for questioning, he immediately informs us that he is a sick man, overweight and subject to heart attacks.

Like most DWI suspects, he tells the officers that he's only had a couple of beers tonight, some hours ago.

Garnett and Williams have a hard time getting the suspect to blow into the breath-tester. It's an on-again-off-again affair with the man pleading a weak physical condition.

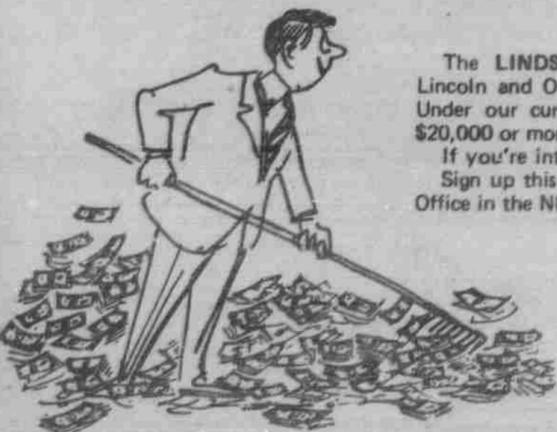
Finally after several attempts, he blows enough air into the machine for a test, and he fails.

But Williams wants to be fair. So another test is arranged, and after the on-again-off-again routine he fails again.

At this point the suspect decides he is having a heart attack, and in the events that follow I see Garnett hurriedly move the suspect's car from the street and sprint a block to get behind the wheel of the cruiser; Williams, in his former-ambulance-attendant-best try to work with the afflicted; and Garnett, using flashing light and siren, gun the cruiser down 16th St. to Lincoln General Hospital.

5 a.m.—it's over. Goodnight Garnett and Williams. You do a helluva job for \$800 a month.

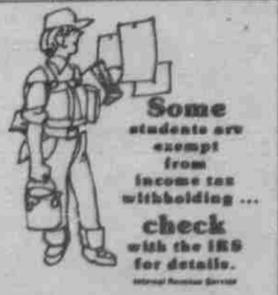
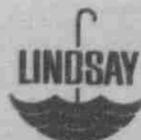
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