



FOR YOUR SAFETY  
PLAINCLOTHES POLICE ARE  
RIDING OUR BUSES.

"Bluebird is watching"

## Bluebirds continue; aid asked

The Detroit Police Department is applying for extension of a state grant to finance continued operation of the Bluebird detail, which provides police protection to bus riders.

The Bluebirds — code name for the undercover officers — were assigned to Department of Transportation buses last October after the Legislature approved a \$930,000 grant.

The state grant for the Bluebirds ran out this week, but the program will continue with regular department funds until an extension is approved.

A study released in March by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments showed an overall 33 percent decrease in reported transit crimes during the first six months of the program.

Transit crimes are categorized as those which occur on a bus or at a bus stop. The most serious crimes, such as robbery and rape, were reduced by 28 percent, while the less serious, such as assault, declined by 38 percent, the report said.

In that period, the Bluebird officers made 290 arrests for felonies and issued citations for 2,662 minor crimes, the report said.

Lt. Carl Watkins, commander of the detail, said plainclothes officers ride buses, tailed at some distance by marked patrol cars. If trouble develops, the officer on the bus is able to radio those in the patrol car for help.

The officers also keep close watch on bus stops in high-crime areas.

"I'd say it has been extremely successful," Watkins said.



# GENERAL ORDER

TSS

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EFFECTIVE DATE

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Trouble Lights - DOT Coaches

FILE CODE

REFERENCE

RESCINDS

AMENDS

EXPIRATION DATE

DISTRIBUTION

12-9-77

B #113

The City of Detroit Department of Transportation is in the process of equipping all its coaches with trouble lights. These trouble lights are designed to alert police that a situation which requires police assistance exists aboard a coach.

The lights are oblong in shape and of a high intensity. They are located on the coaches as outlined below:

1. One white light in the front center of the coach, above the windshield.
2. Two lights together in the rear center of the coach, at the top. One light is amber and shines straight out from the rear of the coach. The other light is white and shines up into the air.

The lights are designed to flash off and on at short intervals.

DOT drivers have been instructed in the use of these trouble lights and have been instructed to assist the police in any way possible. Any patrolling member, upon observing a DOT coach with trouble lights flashing, shall stop and determine the seriousness of the situation aboard the coach. If immediate police action is required, such action shall be taken and the dispatcher notified. If immediate action is not required, and if the member has already been dispatched to a police run, the member shall advise the dispatcher of the nature of the trouble aboard the coach and shall be governed by the dispatcher's directions.

THIS GENERAL ORDER SHALL BE READ AT EACH ROLL CALL ON THREE CONSECUTIVE DAYS AND POSTED ON THE BULLETIN BOARD FOR THIRTY DAYS.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

December 2, 1976

WILLIAM L. HART  
Chief of Police

WLH:cg

# Detroit Free Press

ON GUARD FOR 145 YEARS

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## 14 Rowdy Teenagers Ride Decoy Bus to Jail

BY JACK KRESNAK  
Free Press Staff Writer

A group of junior high school students who have been bothering passengers on an east side Detroit bus route got a ride to jail Thursday after they boarded a decoy bus and tried to hassle plainclothes police officers posing as passengers.

Police arrested 14 Farwell Junior High students aged 13 to 16, including one girl. The officers had watched them smoking cigarets, yelling pro-

*All but the 14 rowdies were transferred to the real Russell coach.*

fanities and pushing other passengers, according to Cmdr. Richard Dundy of the special operations division.

The bus stopped and all but the 14 rowdies were transferred to the real Russell

coach, which had pulled up behind.

The bus then drove the arrested students to the 11th (Davison) Precinct where seven were issued tickets for being disorderly persons (smoking on a city bus) and seven were ticketed for using profanity on a bus.

Under an ordinance passed last fall by City Council to deal with juvenile crime, all the youths were held at the precinct until they could be

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## Rowdies Ride Decoy Bus to Jail

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picked up by their parents.

POLICE WERE notified by Department of Transportation officials two days ago that several passengers had complained of trouble on Russell line No. 40, Dundy said.

An officer from the plainclothes Bluebird bus detail rode the bus Wednesday and saw several students creating a disturbance, but the officer did not have enough backup

support to make arrests, Dundy said.

The Bluebird squad is a group of plainclothes officers who periodically ride buses to watch for troublesome passengers. The squad was formed Oct. 18 after the DOT complained that rowdism and holdups of passengers had made people afraid to ride city buses.

LIONEL LITTLE, deputy DOT director, said the department dispatched a phony bus

Thursday just ahead of the regular Russell bus, which normally picks up Farwell students at Seven Mile and Fenelon about 1:30 p.m.

Eight plainclothes officers were on the bus acting as regular passengers when about 70 Farwell students boarded.

The bus went westbound on Seven Mile for 10 to 12 blocks, Dundy said, while officers observed the students and isolated the 14 troublemakers.

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**from our readers**

# Crime Slashed 30% on City Buses

## New plainclothes police decoys arrest or ticket troublemakers

By JENNIFER HOLMES  
Free Press Staff Writer

Crime on city buses has dropped 30 percent since the October 1976 establishment of a 48-man unit of plainclothes decoy officers who blend in with passengers to thwart muggings and vandalism, Detroit police say.

Some crimes have been reduced as much as 75 percent, police statistics show. Coinciding with an overall decrease in major crimes citywide, assaults on Department of Transportation buses dropped from 145 in 1975 to 36 in 1977, the first full year the program was in operation.

The squad, called the Bluebirds, now makes three felony arrests and 18 misdemeanor arrests in an average week. Officers also write about 100 tickets a week for littering, eating and drinking aboard the buses, smoking, playing radios, and disorderly conduct.

Having subdued the most serious crimes, the Bluebirds (named after the bus which transports prisoners from Recorder's Court to Dehoco) say they are concentrating on making riding more pleasant on DOT's less civilized bus runs.

ACCORDING to Lt. Carl Watkins of the tactical services section, of which the Bluebirds are a part, the objective now is to "bring ridership back to the DOT" by eliminating behavior which is "physically and mentally annoying" to other passengers.

Serious crimes, Watkins said, dropped rapidly soon after Bluebirds were launched.

"Initially we intercepted more holdups because people didn't expect to find police in plain clothes on the buses," he said. "Now the word has gotten out that we're there."

POLICE OFFICER Pleze Gardner, who as a member of the department's tactical services section often works Bluebird detail, recalled that "guys really had to fight when they first started Bluebirds. These buses were like the Barbary Coast.

"It's kindergarten compared to what it used to be."

Gardner said he recently heard a passen-



Free Press Photo by BOB SCOTT

Police officers Pleze Gardner (top) and Tony Slaughter don't worry about blowing their cover while protecting bus riders.

ger tell his loudmouthed friend to "cool it, because the police might be here."

The doubting friend, Gardner said, announced in a loud voice, "Oh yeah? If there's any pigs on this bus, let 'em stand up and be counted!"

Three police promptly stood up and arrested him for disorderly conduct.

MAINTAINING order on the bus, however, can still present touchy situations, which is why Bluebirds are not permitted to

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## Crime down 30% on city-run buses

From Page 3A

Officer Tony Slaughter has had his shoulder dislocated by a drunk and been punched in the face by a 17-year-old girl who didn't like being told not to throw food on the floor.

"I had to handcuff her, pick her up and carry her off the bus," he said. "Then I had to admit to my sons how I got a black eye."

Bluebirds say juveniles are the worst troublemakers, usually when they're on their way home from school. Whole busloads of rambunc-

tious students have had to be hijacked by Bluebirds to police stations for mass arrests, Watkins said.

BLUEBIRDS rotate from one part of the city to another, but they say they don't worry about blowing their cover.

"We'll arrest a guy right in front of the people on the bus, and then get back on the same bus," said Slaughter. "They keep carrying on, and we keep taking them off. They don't seem to care."

Nevertheless, Bluebirds try to wear clothes that don't mark them as police officers.

"You don't put on your clothes in the morning," said Gardner. "You put on your costume. Like today — I got no socks on. Who's gonna believe a cop runs around with no socks?"

Many buses have big signs in the advertising space which say, "Bluebird is watching: For your safety plainclothes police are riding our buses." Watkins says this is effective.

"The people all look at each other wondering which one is the undercover officer, when in fact there is no policeman at all.

"It has cut down on the harassment, the name-calling, the shoving, which made people feel insecure," he said.