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CHQ Armonk, Extension 4515

To Tell the Good Guys From the Bad

To the Editor:

Once again, in The Times of Feb. 6, we read of a tragedy involving a plainclothes police officer. Too often, the populace does not know which of two individuals engaged in an altercation or in a shoot-out is the police officer and which the criminal. Sometimes two plainclothes officers may not recognize each other. A companion article notes that impostors of New York City police officers were involved in 1,386 complaints in 1978.

It is long overdue to have a convenient means of unambiguously identifying a police officer in a crowd, when the officer wishes to be identified. I believe that it would be convenient and practical for a plainclothes officer to wear a flag stowed under the collar, which could be triggered by a cord so that the flag would be displayed perhaps two feet above the officer's head on a flexible wand such as is used for making bicycles more visible on the street. A short-flash bright strobelight might be mounted with the flag, which would call attention to the officer from substantially greater distance than is possible under normal circumstances with individuals of ordinary height and without either flag or strobe.



Angus Lloyd

Such identification would also somewhat increase the difficulty of impersonating a police officer, and increase the risk of doing so.

Another approach might be preferable; would not something along this line be useful?

RICHARD L. GARWIN
Yorktown Heights, N.Y., Feb. 8, 1979

RICHARD L. GARWIN

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02/15/79 "To Tell the Good Guys from the Bad," LTR to the
Editor of The New York Times. (021579ENYT)

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