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Poor Choice for Parking Becomes an Expensive Mistake

By JIMMY STROUP

(Feb. 8, 2008) When Gene Franklin stopped his car in a Pasadena bus zone the afternoon of Jan. 25, he probably didn't think anyone would notice. Someone did.

Transit Services Bureau Deputy Jim Eggers pulled up to a silver Honda Civic stopped illegally in a bus zone on Colorado Boulevard. Eggers asked for Franklin's driver's license, intending to cite the driver for his illegal parking job.

When Franklin had no license and said the car belonged to a friend, Eggers became more interested in the driver. Franklin gave Eggers his name and recited his driver's license number.

After running Franklin's name and driver's license on his patrol car's computer, Eggers found that Franklin had an active \$50,000 warrant out for his arrest on a contempt of court violation.

Eggers placed Franklin under arrest and began searching the Honda, having established probable cause. It was during this search that Eggers reported finding a plastic bag filled with what turned out to be \$25,000 cash.

Franklin said the money belonged to him, according to Eggers. At first he told Eggers that the money was going to be used to buy a boat. Then Franklin said the money was to pay his attorney and his bondsman – and to make a *payment* on his boat.

More TSB deputies arrived on the scene for back-up and eventually the Glendale Police Department responded with a narcotics dog to search the car for drugs.

The drug dog hit on a scent in the center console – where the \$25,000 had been – and on the money itself. The money and the dog's behavior solidified deputies' suspicions that the situation was drug-related, Eggers reported.

According to Eggers, Franklin was now further charged under a California Health and Safety Code statute that makes it illegal to possess more than \$25,000, when that money appears to be drug-related.

TSB deputies confiscated the money and impounded the silver Honda for future forfeiture proceedings.

All this because Franklin chose to park his car in a bus zone.