

Wednesday, October 8, 1997

## Traffic stop results in 3-car crash



(Photos: At left, this Mercury was hit by a Sheriff's Office vehicle Tuesday. Police say a sheriff's office lieutenant was trying to make a routine traffic stop when the Mercury pulled in front of his car. At right, police say Lt. George McLain had activated his lights and sirens and was traveling the posted speed limit when he collided with another motorist Tuesday. Below right, McClain, center, talks on a cellular phone while a paramedic bandages his arms, which were injured when his air bag deployed. News Herald Photos: Vern Miller.)

### Driver of car turned out to be wrong man after all

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The News Herald

A Bay County Sheriff's Office unmarked squad car was involved in a three-car collision Tuesday during a routine traffic stop.

Heading westbound on 11th Street, BCSO Lt. George McLain, traveling in an unmarked patrol car, was pulling over a motorist about 11:25 a.m. Tuesday near Redwood Avenue, according to police. The vehicle he was pulling over resembled a car being sought in connection with a drive-by shooting last week, police said.

McLain had activated his squad car's siren and blue light and was traveling the posted 35 mph speed limit when a Mercury heading northbound on Redwood Avenue pulled in front of him, according to the Panama City Police Department.



"It was a routine traffic stop," PCPD Sgt. Randy Squire said. "The other woman apparently didn't hear the siren. The deputy hit her and pushed her into a city truck."

A city truck was stopped on the north side of 11th Street on Redwood Avenue when the Mercury collided with it.

"When he hit her, I was like, 'Oh God, don't hit me!' " city worker Michael Lombardi said.

A passenger in the Mercury, 84-year-old Annie Whitehurst, was treated in the emergency room at Bay Medical Center. She was listed in good condition Tuesday night. McLain was treated on the scene for air-bag burns. Lombardi sustained minor injuries.

Whitehurst was lifted on a stretcher into an ambulance. The passenger side of the Mercury was caved in, and one of its rear tires was broken off. The front of the unmarked squad car was smashed in, its blue light still flashing. The city truck's front tire dug into the ground.

"It's a little bit of T-bone action," Lombardi said. "The lady was coming across north and the deputy hit her. She was between the deputy and the Chevy Impala (wanted car)."

The man who was pulled over turned out not to be a suspect in last week's drive-by shooting, police said. The man said police had stopped his car previously because of its similarity to the wanted car.

"It's a car that looks like that but it wasn't who we were looking for," Squire said.

On Sept. 30, Jeremiah Eugene Beazley, 20, of Florida Avenue, allegedly fired 15 shots along the 900 block of Cone Avenue. Beazley allegedly was trying to kill a 20-year-old man but hit cars and houses along the block while pedestrians were present, police said. A \$550,000 bond has been set for Beazley's arrest.