

*Introducing a new feature to the pages of i.e.: "Tales from Behind the Badge." From time to time our very own Ombudsman, **Doug Cloyd**, will open a window into his crazy world from his 18 year career in law enforcement, patrolling the mean streets and babysitting the bad guys of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. You can't make this stuff up!*

## The Lawn Mower Man

I worked patrol in Loma Linda when I was stationed at the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department.

One evening I was dispatched to take a burglary report from a residence, early in my shift. I arrived at the location, interviewed the victim, aka the RP (Reporting Party), and wrote down the items that were pilfered: one flashlight, one lawn mower, one German Shepherd puppy, and 50 feet of rope. Nothing else seemed to be missing. I told the RP that the chance of us finding these items would probably be nil, thinking that some kids most likely took the items. As for the puppy, it probably just ran off when the door was left open. I told the RP he should call the pound in the morning. I gave him my business card and a file number from the report, then left to continue my patrol duties.

Not much happened in Loma Linda back then (although I'm sure things have changed by now), so when a call came through it was usually a welcome break from boredom. Later that same night I got a disturbing-the-peace call from a person who lived near the business district. By this time it was pretty late, so I figured it was going to be a noise curfew violation from some party. As I rolled up to the address in question, I noticed there was a lot of dust in the air. It was coming from a vacant lot between a couple of businesses. I rolled

down my window and heard what I thought was a lawn mower.

As I got closer, I saw a dim light moving around erratically through the dust cloud where the noise was coming from. I parked my patrol unit and started walking through the vacant lot cautiously to investigate the situation at hand.

After walking about 100 feet or so, I came across a middle-aged man in a robe and slippers, furiously mowing a freshly plowed lot - of dirt - with a power lawn mower. He was holding a flashlight in one hand and dragging a reluctant, very confused German Shepherd puppy who was tied to the handle of the mower with, yup, about 50' of rope. And he was serious about getting this "field" mowed. When I asked him what he was doing, he explained to me that his wife told him he needed to mow THIS field, NOW!

The puppy and all the other items were returned, and the RP decided not to press charges when I told him where I found his puppy, his lawn mower, his rope and his flashlight. As for the lawn mower man, he spent the night in the county hospital psyche ward. I never did find out if he actually had a wife.

Truth is truly stranger than fiction.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deputy D. Cloyd 