Deputy Impersonator Arrested and Booked by MCSO

Sheriff Paul Penzone Promises Zero Tolerance For These Scams

MCSO Special Investigations Detectives have charged 40-year-old David Heppler of the unincorporated Town of Waddell with two felony counts of impersonating a Peace Officer. The arrests were made March 30th after a search warrant was executed at Heppler’s residence following community tips that he had acted as a sworn deputy. Investigators found a large amount of badges, police clothing and hats (Sheriff, Police, Border Patrol, and City of Phoenix PD) patches, guns, bullet proof vests, tasers, radios, scanners, handcuffs, duty belts, uniforms, and other tactical items.

“This office has zero tolerance for this kind of behavior. Not only does it endanger the community, it’s offensive to the women and men in law enforcement who truly put their lives on the line to protect us all,” said Sheriff Paul Penzone in announcing the arrest.

MCSO Special Investigations became aware of Heppler through his social media activities on Facebook and Nextdoor Cortessa. Cortessa community leaders alerted detectives that Heppler had continually made posts referencing himself as being involved in Law Enforcement that could indicate to a reasonable civilian that he is a sworn peace officer.

Detectives found that Heppler’s profile pictures and wall pictures on his personal Facebook page were photos of MCSO Patrol vehicles, MCSO SWAT vehicles, and MCSO Helicopters etc. A large majority of the images he posted included his security badge showing in some form. He would detail all the arrests he was making clearly misleading people to believe he was law enforcement. The posts number in the hundreds, all misleading and inaccurate. Residents in the Cortessa community indicated to Detectives that David Heppler was the “Local Deputy Sheriff.”
Detectives learned of an incident that occurred on February 8th 2017 from a post that was made on the Cortessa Neighborhood Watch Group in which David and another resident involved in the block watch did their own investigation to recover a stolen cell phone.–The resident had found her cell phone for sale on Offer up. Heppler asked the resident if she could send him the link and he stated “I’m all over this,” and “That’s a block away from me,” and that they could “Set up a buy.”

David then sent her a message indicating that the suspects selling the phone responded to him and he was going to the residence with his badge to scare them, and he was not afraid of a confrontation.

Two juveniles age 13 and 15 were involved. They told MCSO Detectives that Heppler and another man “came out of nowhere like ninjas,” one wearing duty belt with a gun, flashlight and had a badge. Heppler then flashed his badge, identified himself as being undercover, and told the kids the phone was stolen and they needed to give it to him. The kids said the second “sheriff” just stood there while David made several threats of arrest, but never did. The kids said they were scared and would have done whatever Heppler asked because he had a gun and was very angry. Heppler also took photos of both juveniles. The second person was not charged as he did not participate in the confrontation.

Heppler also attempted to be placed on the ballot for the Cortessa HOA Board. His request read in part “I am interested in running for one of our open board positions. I would like to submit my name to the list of people hoping to secure a spot. I was a Maricopa County Sheriff’s Deputy Officer for nine years and currently work in the law consultation business.”

This statement was not only fictitious but it clearly indicated his intention to deceive others of his position of authority to gain favor. David Heppler has never been a Deputy Sheriff or a Detention Officer with MCSO. He was with the MCSO Posse for 1 year 9 months hired on January 31st 2001 and terminated on October 25th 2002 after he was arrested for impersonating a public servant posing as a reserve Deputy Sheriff. David Heppler was never a peace officer in the state of Arizona but owns Southwest Consulting and Protection that appears to be a security company. He also had security guard licenses that are now all expired.

“Our Posse members do important work for MCSO and for our community. Whenever someone who has been terminated from a Posse continues to act like he or she is part of one, they have committed a criminal act and undermined the good work of all who wear a badge,”
said Sheriff Penzone. “MCSO is committed to ensuring that all sworn officers and Posse members are held to the highest standards.”

David Heppler was interviewed after the search warrant was executed and admitted both to contacting the juveniles in the phone incident and threatening them with arrest. He admitted to wearing a badge during the contact but denied having a firearm. He further admitted to posting all of the online statements in regards to Law Enforcement and agreed that his statements would cause someone to think he was a Police Officer. Heppler is released on bond and his next court appearance is pending.

MCSO detectives are still investigating this case to determine if there are additional victims or witnesses to these crimes. If you are a victim or know of a victim please call MCSO at (602) 876-1011.