

'I'M NOT A HERO,' CARRIER INSISTS POLICE INVESTIGATING BOMBS IN PAPER BOXES

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Author: BILL DISESSA Free Press Staff Writer

Joel Winterhalter says he did nothing heroic by taking a pipe bomb from a Shelby Township newspaper coin-sales box and keeping it in his truck while he finished his route.

The bomb had been positioned beside a lighted cigarette in the box, and experts said it would only have been a matter of time before it exploded had it not been removed.

"It's not something I'd want to do again. I'm not trying to set myself up as some sort of a bomb expert. I just pulled the cigarette off the fuse," the Detroit Newspapers Inc. carrier said Thursday. "I'm not a hero. This is not a 'nothing can stop me, get the paper out' story."

Though authorities said **Winterhalter** should have called 911 instead of handling the pipe bomb, they acknowledged that someone could have been injured or killed if the bomb had gone off in the box. Earlier, a similar bomb damaged an adjacent paper rack.

Winterhalter, 31, of Detroit found the bomb about 2:45 a.m. in a box near an entrance to the Oak Hill townhouse and apartment complex on West Utica Road, just east of Ryan Road.

While delivering papers to boxes, he saw the damaged rack, then noticed the cigarette and bomb in the next one.

Even though he drove with the bomb on his dashboard for more than four hours before giving it to security officials at a Detroit Newspapers printing plant in Sterling Heights, he said he wasn't afraid.

"I was on the route longer than expected, but I didn't think it could explode unless it caught on fire," **Winterhalter** said. One explosives expert, however, said other things, like extreme vibrations, can set off a pipe bomb.

Colleagues teased him about the incident, and his girlfriend said she feared for his safety, he said.

"You do always have to be on edge when you're out there. Sometimes a person will run from a car with no headlights on at night, get right up to you, and say he wants a paper."

Shelby Township and state police and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms are investigating who placed the bombs in the boxes.

Investigators have no suspects in the case but are interviewing potential witnesses and have several leads, said Vera Fedorak, an ATF spokeswoman in the agency's Detroit field office.

She said investigators are uncertain whether the bombs are connected to the newspaper strike. No individuals or groups have claimed responsibility, she said.

Roger Kerson, a spokesman for six striking unions, said the unions frown on any violence.

"The main thing everyone needs to do about this is not jump to conclusions," he said. "We'll state as many times as we can that we do not endorse or condone violence in any way, shape or form."

Unions representing 2,500 workers went on strike July 13 against the Free Press, Detroit News and Detroit Newspapers, which handles advertising, business, production, distribution and sales of the papers.

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