

**MPR News | Minnesota Now The 'deeply troubling' trend of law enforcement impersonation**  
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NINA MOINI: When a shooter arrived at the homes of four lawmakers, investigators say he was dressed as a cop, identified himself as police, and had a vehicle that looked a lot like a police car. He then shot and killed Representative Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, and shot and injured Senator John Hoffman and his wife, Yvette. Many people trust that when law enforcement comes to their door, it's for their safety. But after this incident, some of that trust could slip. Joining us to look closer at this issue is one of the state's top law enforcement leaders, Minnesota BCA Superintendent Drew Evans. Thank you so much for your time this afternoon.

**DREW EVANS:** Yeah, thank you for having me, Nina.

**NINA MOINI:** This has been a very busy time for you. You've been leading a lot of the news conferences around this ongoing investigation and in the manhunt that preceded all of this. When this investigation unfolded, you first heard that this individual allegedly purchased gear to look like a law enforcement officer. What was your reaction to that?

**DREW EVANS:** Well, the reaction was is it's extremely troubling. Here we have an individual that was using and impersonating a police officer and using that trust that is in our law enforcement across the state when somebody calls 911, and they're using that as cover to commit an absolute evil act. And so he intentionally clearly planned to do that and use that trust that people would have in our law enforcement for that cover to commit these terrible crimes.

**NINA MOINI:** It's very disheartening for a lot of people. It's scary for people. And I just learned this when all of this unfolded. I didn't that in Minnesota, impersonating a police officer is a misdemeanor. It's a felony only if someone repeats the offense within five years. Do you think there need to be tougher penalties there?

**DREW EVANS:** Well, I think certainly this demonstrates really what can happen in these situations and what the danger is for an individual that's impersonating a police officer. Certainly that will be a discussion our legislature will have when it comes to this looking forward. But I can tell back from when I was a patrol officer myself, we would encounter people that were impersonating police officers. And the cornerstone of our system of policing in the United States is building trust with our communities. And we can't allow individuals to degrade or abuse that trust that's built in so many of our communities that could lead to such bad results.

So I certainly think this is something that needs to be examined as to how we can prevent not only terrible tragedies like this. But there's really no proper purpose for somebody impersonating a police officer. So we have to look at exactly how we treat those situations going forward.

**NINA MOINI:** And in the wake of these shootings, several law enforcement agencies really across the state that we saw were putting out PSAs, social media messages on how to make sure that if an officer comes to somebody's door or if they encounter an officer that it's actually an officer, things from ask for the badge number, or from behind the door, ask them, call 911 and confirm. Can you talk about some of those recommendations?

And then how much of that is really on the public? Because some people, as I'm sure you know, would be really afraid to challenge anyone who they perceived as law enforcement in any type of way. And they may have been taught all their life depending on their trust with law enforcement, just do what they say. Just do what they say. So what do you think is kind of a best practice moving forward, both on the part of individual citizens and then law enforcement as well?

**DREW EVANS:** Yeah, well, I think you can see here, that trust was there. And the Senator and Speaker Hortman answered the door, her husband. And the situation-- like so many of us would do across the state, I would've done the same thing in my own home. And I come from this profession and seeing that.

What I do think is we need to go going forward is it is hard to think through it as challenging law enforcement. But we as law enforcement also know that we need people to trust what we're doing. And so if you are uncomfortable with somebody at the door, do a couple things.

One, familiarize yourself with the law enforcement uniforms that are in the area that you are so you know what they should look like to begin with. Understand exactly when they're doing, ask some questions as to who they are and really understand that, especially if they're coming to your house unexpected and you're not expecting them to be there. And I want all Minnesotans to feel comfortable. If you don't know him, call the 911 center. You can call the non-emergency line, or 911 will get exactly to that dispatch center. That would be the individual that would know exactly where they are.

At this point in time, we in law enforcement know where our law enforcement officers are across the state if they're in that dispatch center. If it was somebody like a federal agency or one of our BCA agents that they may not they're out doing that, that BCA agent should be able to provide that person behind that door contact information that they can verify to know that that person's there. There's no good law enforcement officer in this state that would not be comfortable with that person verifying their identity in that process. And so everybody should feel comfortable doing that.

And that's not challenging law enforcement. That's ensuring that they're safe and they who's at their home or place of work as an individual that should be there. And that gives that comfort level with them so that law enforcement can then do their job.

**NINA MOINI:** I know you probably don't want to talk about a lot of specifics around the investigation, but law enforcement and authorities have said that when a New Hope police officer came upon the shooter that the officer as well thought that the suspect was a cop. So our law enforcement being told to look out for impersonators as well. Have any been spotted since this? Are there kind of copycat situations? What are you seeing?

**DREW EVANS:** Well, I can tell you, I've been a law enforcement officer a long time. And there's been impersonators as long as I've been in this profession. Certainly there's going to be in heightened scrutiny on identifying people that are engaged in that activity.

What I can say is that with that and as has been reported, that the New Hope officer believed that to be law enforcement, I think that's illustrative of maybe this is just a little bit too easy, that some of the things used to impersonate the officer are probably a little bit too commercially available at this point in time. And we have to have conversations about that and who should be able to be in possession of certain things like certain flashing lights, uniform apparel, et cetera. And so beyond just the policy of penalties looking at this, I think we also have to have conversations about whether or not people can be in possession of certain things if they are not licensed law enforcement in our state.

**NINA MOINI:** One of the things that you and I have talked about when you've joined us other times on the program is trying to get guns off the streets that are illegally on the streets or in the hands of individuals. And I understand from some of the records that the BCA recovered 49 guns from the suspect, in this case, his home, according to an unsealed search warrant that we obtained. Are you investigating or are any agencies investigating if those 49 guns were all legally purchased or where they might have come from?

**DREW EVANS:** Yeah, so we've been working through all that right now. Our partners at the ATF have been assisting us and the FBI and Brooklyn Park Police Department to trace all of the firearms that we're able to. So we're doing all that. We know where quite a few of them have come from, and we continue to follow up on others in this process. But as you know, he certainly had a large arsenal of weapons in his possession.

**NINA MOINI:** Yeah, and when someone has a family and has that much stuff with them, people will naturally wonder, what did the family know? There's allegations that the suspect was in touch with their family. And so if you're able to speak about it, or I guess whatever you're able to say, could anyone else face charges right now in connection with these shootings and killings?

**DREW EVANS:** Well, that's all part of the active investigation. And so we are working with our partners at the FBI, casting a wide net to determine if other people were involved in this, knew of this, and should be held accountable. We certainly will pursue everybody.

When something terrible like this happens, we need to ensure that anybody and everybody that could have prevented it are addressed in our investigative process. And so we're doing that right now. And we're looking at a wide variety of individuals that may have had contact with him to fully understand the motivations and who may have known something and the process going forward. So that'll be part of the active investigation.

**NINA MOINI:** Have you determined if the person charged here, Vance Boelter, visited any other lawmakers' homes not necessarily that night, but even maybe previously? Are there any others that you've discovered?

**DREW EVANS:** So certainly it's been reported, and we are working through that. I can't comment on the active aspects of the investigation. But what we have said is, as you noted, he visited two other homes or area of homes in both New Hope and Maple Grove. And so because of that, we certainly are looking broadly as to whether or not there was anything that happened before that or on that night in that process.

And so we know that there was a number of individuals that he was watching. And we've reported that he had information on other legislators and other individuals. And so we're following up on all of that to determine his whereabouts.

**NINA MOINI:** Yeah. Obviously, a lot of questions that people still have while the investigation continues. We really appreciate your time, Superintendent Evans, and joining us today. Thank you.

**DREW EVANS:** Of course. Thank you for having me.

**NINA MOINI:** That was BCA Superintendent Drew Evans.