

Taco-loving Memphis man now in trouble for impersonating an officer

Written by Marty Randall

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A 21-year-old man with a good appetite is waiting for his trial in January on a Level 6 felony count of impersonating a public servant.

Dalton James Rogers Barnett of Memphis has been charged with that felony as well as a misdemeanor of false informing. According to statements from witnesses, Barnett visited Taco Bell restaurants in Scottsburg and Madison and told staff members, at different times, that he was a Madison police officer, an undercover narcotics officer in Clark County and an emergency services technician. By making the alleged statements, he was apparently seeking either reduced-price or free food.

Deputy Josh Watterson was advised on October 11 of the purported scam by the Scottsburg staff and was told that Barnett was driving around with a badge and a BB gun strapped on his hip.

The officer found Barnett in the vicinity of the restaurant and stopped him in the parking lot. Deputy Watterson asked Barnett if he had a gun or a badge. Barnett reportedly told him no. Given verbal permission to search the man's vehicle, a BB pistol was found on the backseat.

When Barnett attempted to retrieve his identification, Deputy Watterson said he found a gold security officer badge in Barnett's possession.

Statements obtained from Scottsburg staff related that Barnett often wore the gun on his hip and told them he was a policeman or undercover detective and requested free or discounted food. When Watterson contacted the Madison store, he said he was told staff there heard Barnett identify himself as an officer.

Barnett now has an initial trial date of January 9. A cash bond of \$500 was filed for him on October 12, the same day he had his initial hearing in Circuit Court. While he waits for his trial, Barnett was ordered not to have a badge or gun in his possession.