

Harman Says He Was Worried

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About Police 'Planting' a Gun

By MICHAEL MILLER
Staff Writer

Easton Patrolman John R. Harman told city council yesterday he revealed his falsification of a report on the shooting death of Robert V. Strickland because of his concern over talk of planting a gun near where the victim fell.

Harman was one of four Easton policemen sent to Kennedy Gardens apartments

Sept. 23 to arrest Strickland, 25, a felony suspect. During the raid, Strickland fled through a rear window and was chased and slain by Officer William M. Crouse.

A report by Northampton County Dist. Atty. Charles Spaziani said Crouse fired twice at Strickland, the second time when the suspect turned toward the patrolman and reached toward his waist. Strickland was trying to climb

a railroad car in the Lehigh Valley Rail Road yards at the time. No weapon was found on or near his body.

Initially, Harman told police both he and Crouse fired their shotguns at the suspect. The next day, Harman and then Crouse revealed what actually had happened. They have been on suspension since Sept. 24, and have been charged with departmental violations in the incident. The charges

were filed by Easton Mayor Fred Ashton, serving as police department head.

City council is sitting as an administrative body in a Civil Service case involving municipal employes. Council member Carol Harman, wife of the accused officer, did not take part in the proceedings yesterday or Monday.

Harman and Crouse are accused of willfully making a false entry in a departmental record; knowingly and willfully being an accessory to a false entry.

In addition, Harman is also charged with neglecting to carry out a written or verbal order lawfully given and failure to comply with departmental regulations.

Harman's hearing ended yesterday afternoon, and Crouse's then was begun in private, at the latter's request. Council will issue its findings and any penalties at a meeting to be announced.

Harman yesterday told council he learned of a plot to plant a pistol at the shooting scene during a conversation with Sgt. John H. Daws outside the Easton Emergency Squad, following the slaying.

Daws was leader of the unit sent to Kennedy Gardens.

Harman said he saw Crouse and Daws talking outside the squad building. He said he approached Daws after Crouse left, and asked him what the two had been discussing.

Daws replied he would talk

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JOHN HARMAN
Second Thoughts