

# Caught in the computer's

By Larry D. Hatfield.

If the police traffic computer ever writes a book, its title surely must be: "Catch 22."

That unfortunate socio-literary fact was brought home yesterday to Robert Wayne Schaeffer who, because of a \$10 parking ticket belonging to somebody else, found himself threatened with jail, without a car, and possibly even without his new job.

Like the "Catch 22" bombardier, trapped in the Air Force by a self-perpetuating qualification, Schaeffer also seemed ensnared in an unending legal circle.

It was a scene repeated more and more often in the Bay Area as men make mistakes with the computers designed to keep track of arrest warrants.

Schaeffer, an unemployed 27 year old who lives at 731 Airport Blvd. in South San Francisco, was stopped by the California Highway Patrol on the Bay Bridge Friday night.

"The officer said I was going 65 in a 50 mile per hour zone, and I was," Schaeffer admitted.

He also did not have the registration or pink slip on the 1965 Plymouth Fury he

## Another traffic warrant case

had just purchased from a friend.

The inevitable warrant check was made by radio to determine whether Schaeffer ever had neglected to pay a parking fine or was wanted for any other crime.

After 45 minutes when, he says, he was not told what was going on, another CHP squad car pulled up.

"The officer got out, charged up and pushed me against the car and put the handcuffs on," Schaeffer said.

"He told me I was under arrest, and when I told him that he was supposed to tell me what for before putting the cuffs on, he said, 'Oh, so you're a smart ass? You know the law.'"

When he was put in the patrol car, Schaeffer told The Examiner, he was told the computer had spat out a \$10 parking warrant issued Sept. 30, 1971, by the South San Francisco police.

The warrant, he was told later by South City police, was issued against a man by the same name for a 1959 or 1960 Plymouth with license number LYE-537 or 357. The address was given as 711

Amador St., either in Richmond or Oakland.

Although he has the same name, Schaeffer didn't meet the other criteria. For one thing, he drove a Mustang in 1971. And he lived at 801 Linden Ave. and not on Amador. And that street is in South San Francisco, not in Oakland or Richmond.

The car was left behind and Schaeffer was taken to the San Francisco Hall of Justice where, rather than face a weekend in jail awaiting a court appearance tomorrow to challenge the warrant, he chose to pay the \$10.

He was released and was told his car had been towed to a garage. He was told it would cost him \$27.50 towing charge to get his car back. Furthermore, if he didn't get it back, he would be liable for storage charges.

And there is the Catch 22 hook. Schaeffer didn't have the money because he doesn't have a job. He is supposed to start a job tomorrow, but the job requires a car.

Without the job, he doesn't have the money. Without the money, he doesn't have the car. Without the car, he doesn't have the job.

Besides that, Schaeffer has to go to court tomorrow morning to try to get his \$10 back because he insists—and he says the South City police agree—that it wasn't his warrant.

It doesn't end there, either. San Francisco police said yesterday that although Schaeffer might have paid the \$10 Friday night, there is nothing to indicate the warrant was officially served on him or that "it has cleared the machine."

That means, said a police department source here, if he were stopped again, "he'd probably end up in the same spot." Records-keeping officials who presumably could track down the \$10 were off-duty yesterday.

Officials here said the warrant originally was sent from South City to Richmond but was returned to South City because the address there was phony.

As for the CHP, the watch commander there said he only had a "little card" indicating that Schaeffer had been stopped.

All of which means that no one seems to know exactly what happened, why it hap-

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pened or who the warrant really belongs to.

As for Schaeffer, he is awaiting his confrontation with computerized society in court tomorrow, insecure in his knowledge that in Joseph Heller's famous book, Catch 22, "Yossarian couldn't get out either."