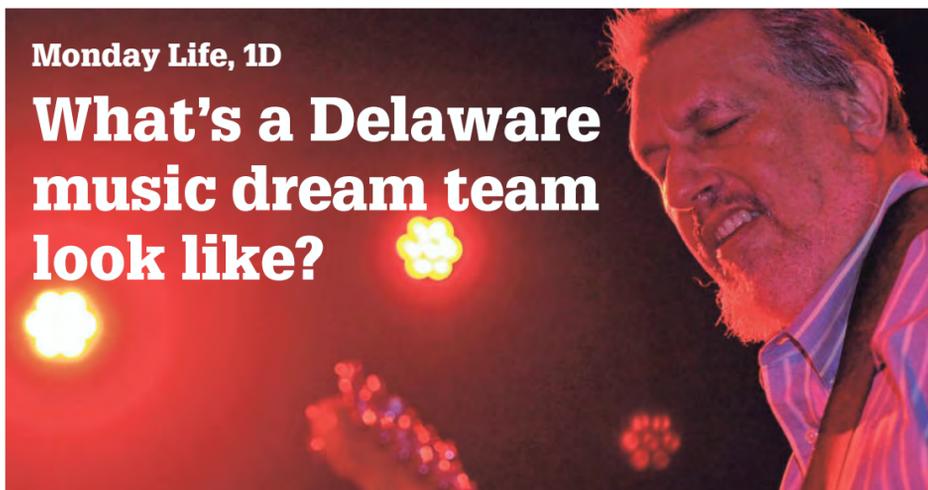


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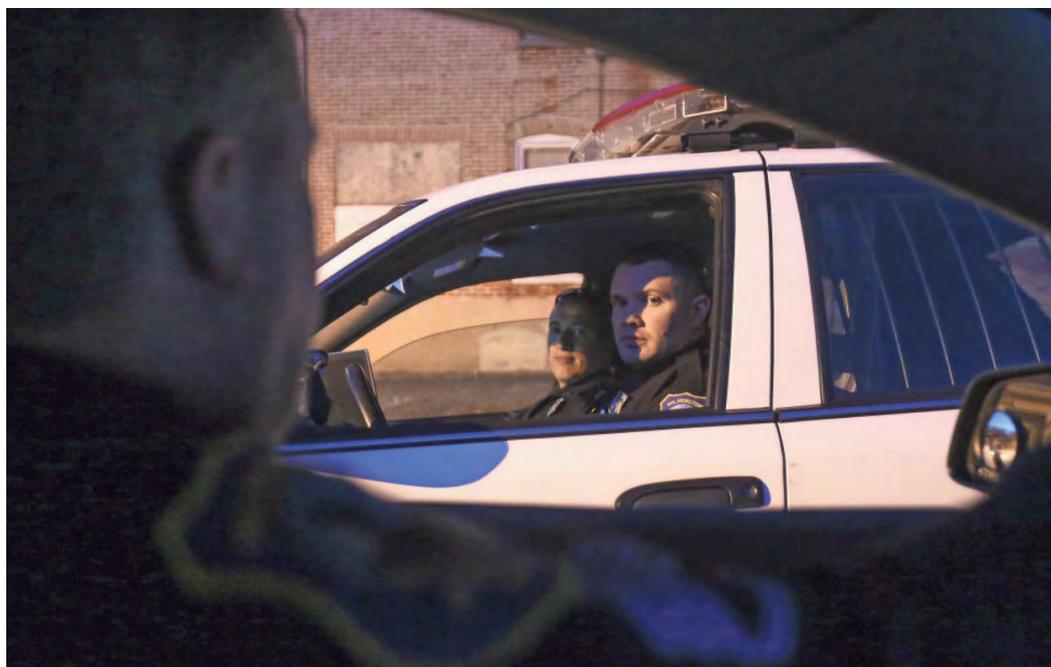
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Monday Life, 1D

What's a Delaware music dream team look like?

WILMINGTON POLICE



DANIEL SATO/THE NEWS JOURNAL

Senior corporal Joshua Wilkers (right) and senior corporal Daniel Vignolla check in with master sergeant William Schmid while out patrolling as part of DISRUPT in Wilmington Wednesday night.

DISRUPTING THE STATUS QUO

Wilmington police unit makes headway in toughest neighborhoods

BRITTANY HORN
THE NEWS JOURNAL

They aren't the traditional jump-out squads from Wilmington's past policing days, but officers with the department's DISRUPT unit use aggressive and proactive measures to pre-empt crime in some of the city's most troubled neighborhoods.

And the tactics are proving successful. Working in teams of two – and sometimes larger groups of patrol cars – the officers work to clear Wilmington's toughest street corners and sidewalks by disbanding loiterers and breaking up crowds that can quickly become violent. Through constant dialogue and communication with residents, officers with the unit hope to better meet community needs and show they are there to stay.

"A lot of your victims over the years are idle on the street," said Sgt. Bill Schmid, who oversees the DISRUPT unit. "They become crimes of opportunity." In the first two months of the year, Wilmington saw a 50 percent decrease in homicides compared to 2015, when eight people were gunned down in the first two months of the year. Fifty-one guns have been taken off the city's streets, a 70 percent increase from the same period last year.

The numbers are a drastic change from 2015 and come just two months into the department increasing the number of officers on the DISRUPT unit, which dispatches police to high-crime areas to address quality of life issues.

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"A lot of your victims over the years are idle on the street.

They become crimes of opportunity."

SGT. BILL SCHMID, WHO OVERSEES THE DISRUPT UNIT

LAW

Rules may change for warrants

Supreme Court could update digital searches

SARANAC HALE SPENCER
THE NEWS JOURNAL

Delaware police searching for evidence in the digital world are going to have to be more specific in their warrants, following a decision from the state Supreme Court last week.

When the state's high court reversed a child pornography conviction for Christopher Wheeler, a former Tower Hill headmaster, it also waded into new territory about the scope of search warrants for digital evidence.

Orin Kerr, a leading scholar on computer crime law, called it an "aggressive opinion" because of how the court interpreted the Constitutional requirements for a search warrant in the digital age.

The reason that Wheeler – who was sentenced to 50 years in prison following his conviction just over a year ago on 25 counts of dealing in child pornography – is getting ready to walk free in the next few weeks is because the warrants used to search his home were far too broad.

The state Supreme Court found that the warrants, which were supposed to be used to search for evidence of witness tampering, were worded almost identically to warrants used to search for child porn and they were not limited to any specific time frame.

Police had seized from Wheeler's home 19 pieces of digital or electronic evidence, including an iMac found in his piano room closet that hadn't been turned on since 2012. That is the device that had the child porn on it.

The problem that the court found was that there couldn't have been any evidence of witness tampering before 2013, since Wheeler hadn't been contacted by the witnesses he might have tampered with until July of that year. So, there was no reason to search a computer that hadn't been turned on since 2012.

"However, the state unsystematically sifted through Wheeler's digital universe, even though the iMac logically could not have contained material created or recorded during the relevant time period," the court said in its opinion, written by Justice Karen Valihura.

All five members of the Delaware Supreme Court heard the case, which is something they typically do only for complex cases or ones that they anticipate will interpret important points of law. Usually, the

See WARRANTS, Page 6A



JASON MINTO/THE NEWS JOURNAL

Chief Justice Strine listens to Thomas Foley in the Delaware Supreme Court during the appeal of Christopher Wheeler.

USA TODAY NATO STEPS UP EFFORTS ON MIGRANTS PAGE 1B

WEATHER

Wilmington
Details, XX

Today Tomorrow

58/43 Mostly sunny 67/44 Warmer



Mayoral candidates answer to you

Hear what the candidates have to say about the city's economy at the Wilmington Mayoral Debate Series event March 15 at The Grand Opera House in Wilmington. We'll bring the candidates. You bring the questions. To sign up for the free debate, visit tickets.delawareonline.com.

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