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PHONE CALLS PLAY ROLE IN PROBE OF CARDS STAR

Brent Whiting, The Arizona Republic

Arizona Cardinals star David Boston can thank the increasingly common use of cellphones for bringing Phoenix police to his door last week.

Cellphone tipsters saw a man driving erratically in an Ahwatukee Foothills neighborhood, called police and followed him home.

"He's going to hit somebody. He almost did," one of the callers told a dispatcher, according to a 911 tape released Tuesday by Phoenix police.

Officers then went to Boston's home, where they questioned the wide receiver for suspected drunken driving and later had him take a blood alcohol test.

Cellular phone calls from roving citizen crime-busters are leading to more "knock-and-talk" investigations, police and attorneys say.

"The use of cellphones is increasing, making the general public extra eyes and ears for the police," said Edward Loss, a Glendale defense attorney.

Richard Coffinger, a Glendale lawyer, said that, if Boston is charged with driving under the influence, the case may hinge on what statements, if any, he made after officers went to his home.

"If he (Boston) admitted being behind the wheel, then that relieves the prosecution of having to prove that aspect of the case," Coffinger said.

He estimated that about one in 20 DUI cases that he handles is generated by calls to police by cellphone tipsters. Neither Boston nor his agent, Mitch Frankel, of Boca Raton, Fla., could be reached for comment.

Boston "did poorly" on field sobriety tests, police said. They expect blood tests results in about two weeks.

Craig Penrod, a Tempe DUI lawyer, said that if he were defending the case, he would want to know if the two tipsters had a good look at the person driving the vehicle.

"There needs to be some verification of the reliability of the people making the calls," **Penrod** said. "Just identifying the car as belonging to Boston is not enough to put him behind the wheel."

Penrod added that Boston was under no legal obligation to talk with police, much less answer the door.

Sgt. Randy Force, a Phoenix police spokesman, agreed but said that some circumstances, such as hot pursuit, may allow officers to gain entry to a home.