

Can you tell the kids from the cutouts? Mike Wood (center, with wife Kathy and family) says an elderly relative once tried to strike up a conversation with one.



Body Doubles at Play

Mike Wood didn't create cutouts of his kids to slow down speeding drivers—but that's what's happening

Sheriff's Deputy Randy Wood works traffic duty day and night—never takes a break, never even blinks. Sure, some dismiss him as one-dimensional, but there's no denying he's cut out for his job. "Yeah, it's pretty weird," admits the real Deputy Wood, 31, of the life-size, startlingly realistic plastic cutout of him that stands sentry along the two-lane State Rt. 301 in West Salem, Ohio. "But my picture out there in a bunch of different places is going to do more good than I ever could in person."

Randy can thank his dad, Mike Wood, for cutting him down to size. Last summer Wood, 54, the owner of Mike's Sign Factory in West Salem, came up with an

idea to drum up business—he enlarged photos of his three stepchildren and attached them to durable, waterproof plastic sheets. Then he propped the color cutouts on his front lawn. Soon, Wood and his wife, Kathy, a part-time emergency-room nurse, noticed that drivers on State Rt. 301 were slowing down as they passed their house, thinking there were real children at play.

After CNN did a short piece on the cutouts and their impact on traffic, Wood received nearly 200 orders—from both regular folks and law enforcement agencies—for cutouts of his kids (by then he had added one of oldest son Randy, depicted pointing a radar gun) and others. "People have

not only slowed down a lot but many have literally stopped," says Tamra Turner of the hundreds of drivers a day who are discouraged from speeding by the cutout in front of the destination-wedding business she runs from her home in Navarre, Fla. "It's pretty funny and satisfying."

Wood is also tickled by his big brake. "I couldn't be more thrilled that it's turned into a way to make things safer for children," he says. And how do his own kids feel about being decoys? "For now, it hasn't affected them," says Wood, whose cutouts range from \$39 to \$109 and are so realistic they've even fooled friends. "A neighbor called and said, 'You might want to check on Katie,'" he says. "'We've been watching her, and we think she's fallen asleep standing up.'"

By Alex Tresniowski, with Anne Lang