



**Specialist Crime Directorate**  
**SCD7**  
**Serious & Organised Crime OCU**

**OPERATION GRAFTON**  
**BUSINESS NEWS**  
**Tel: 0208 246 9972**

Issue 3

Period **April 2004**

Foreword by Detective Inspector Paul E DOUGLAS

*Welcome to the third issue of our Operation GRAFTON bulletin for the industry. I am pleased to be able report that the overall number crimes committed this month continues to remain low when compared to that for the same period last year. However, since the last report there have been several incidents, which falls within the Operation GRAFTON remit that are now receiving our attention. In addition to mentioning these below, I have also once again included other crimes of interest, which are relevant to ongoing investigations. I would also like to take the opportunity to remind our partners that the Operation GRAFTON remit has now been changed with effect from 1st April 2004, in that the base figure for Grafton crimes has now been reduced to £25,000.*

*Details of the operations undertaken by the GRAFTON team will once again not include any details concerning the use of police tactics. However, if you have information about any of the crimes listed please do not hesitate to contact us on the above telephone number.*

## **CRIMES**

- On 29/03/2004, between 2.15am and 3.00am at a premises on the Lakeside Industrial Estate, Poyle, a number of suspects forced entry to the rear shutter doors of the premises and stole 40 DELL laptop computers valued at £50,000. There were also two further incidents at the same premises within the following two-week period. Details of these have been circulated to the industry.
- On 05/04/2004, suspects attended the same premises in a dark coloured motor vehicle. They were all dressed in dark clothing and were wearing balaclavas. The suspects then “jemmied” open the shutter doors of the warehouse and entered the premises. However, they were subsequently disturbed and left the premises empty handed.



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- On 06/04/2004, at approximately 0315hrs, suspects from a dark coloured motor vehicle entered the premises of a large freight company based on the Bath Road, Colnbrook via an open shutter door. The suspects then stole a number of boxes of Kenwood “walkie talkie” radios without being challenged. This incident again has a number of similarities with the incidents reported above. The same vehicle was also seen in close proximity to these premises during the early hours of 16/04/2004. **Of note is the fact that around the time of the initial offence an individual was attacked in his own vehicle when he spotted the occupants of the dark coloured vehicle and another vehicle acting suspiciously near to a block of domestic garages. The suspects “boxed his car in” using their vehicles and then proceeded to smash the windows in his vehicle with an iron bar. The victim subsequently emerged physically uninjured from his vehicle but was however considerably traumatised by the event.** Operation GRAFTON is now liaising with Thames Valley Police officers with regards to these matters.
- On 14/04/2004, £100,000 worth of Samsung digital cameras were stolen from the premises of another Lakeside industrial unit. The property (a new model) was obtained as a result of a driver presenting a false hand written collection note. The vehicle used in this crime had been stolen two hours earlier from outside of a residential address in West Drayton. The vehicle, a white Mercedes box van registration **N860HUB**, still remains outstanding at this time.
- On 07/04/2004, a loss adjuster informed Operation GRAFTON that £200,000 worth of Maxtor computer hard drives had been stolen from a warehouse premises on the Great South West Road in Hounslow. Once again a driver producing a falsified collection note had committed the offence.

*GRAFTON has repeatedly briefed the industry on this form of crime. Such information has also been included within the Grafton bulletin to the industry. Basic measures can be taken to prevent incidents such as this from happening. Options include taking thumb prints and photocopying ID’s.*

- W/e 23 April: two crimes occurred at warehouse premises in Slough. The first offence occurred during the early hours when suspects forced entry to a warehouse and stole a forklift that had been left in the yard with the keys in the ignition. This vehicle was then driven around to the neighbouring premises where it was used in a burglary at that location. The suspects forced an entry into this second premise and subsequently stole 85 mobile phones. It is however, believed that the individuals concerned were looking for a much larger load. The phones that should have been in the premise at the time of the offence had by chance been re-directed earlier that day to another warehouse. This property comprised of six pallets of mobile phones worth £380,000.
- On the following night the suspects returned to this second premises. On this occasion they rammed a Ford Fiesta motor vehicle a number of times into the shutter door in order to gain entry. Once again the subjects searched the premises and appeared to know what they were looking for. However, fortunately the property concerned had not been returned to the premises in the interim period and the suspects again left empty handed.



- A common feature in several of these crimes was the presence of a dark coloured Subaru motor vehicle with gold coloured wheels. This vehicle was also thought to have been used during three recent offences mentioned below. There are in addition, also a number of other non-GRAFTON offences, which this vehicle is suspected of being involved in. Any information regarding of this vehicle would be gratefully received at the Operation Grafton office 0208 246 9972.

### **OTHER CRIMES OF INTEREST**

- W/e 30 April – Burglary in Bracknell: occurred when the offender’s ram raided the gates and doors of the premises with a white Mercedes 308D box van. Three vehicles in total were used during the commission of the offence including a dark coloured Subaru motor vehicle, which was said to have contained 3 offenders wearing balaclavas. The suspects concerned stole 2500 “X Box” games called “HITMAN - CONTRACTS”. This game is contained within a lime green coloured case picturing a bald male holding two revolvers. The game was not officially available for retail sale until Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2004.
- On 22/04/04, a lorry driver was hi-jacked in Gloucestershire whilst driving a white Daf artic tractor unit WV02 AWX. The driver was carrying 22 pallets of assorted computer equipment. This offence occurred when the driver “pulled over” having been “flashed from behind” leaving his keys in the cab as he did so. An unknown male then repeatedly punched him in the face; bound his wrists and subsequently forced him into a waiting vehicle. The next thing the driver remembers is waking up, face down in mud in the middle of a field. He then managed to free his hands and wander to the roadside where a member of the public assisted him. The victim’s vehicle was subsequently found abandoned later that day in the Chipping Sodbury area, north of Bristol.
- On 22/04/04, a vehicle (believed to be identical to one stolen in the above hi-jacking) was seen parked in the yard of a haulage company in Banbury. The vehicle had driven in and sat up for a while before “hooking up” to a trailer 816CS3 carrying a number of plasma TV screens, which it then drove away with. The suspect concerned was described as being a white male with short dark hair, who was wearing dark clothing and a fluorescent bib.
- On 23/04/2004, at 1430hrs, four suspects entered a warehouse premises in Feltham armed with crowbars and hammers. Having threatened staff, they then stole a quantity of computer processors before making off in a silver Volvo estate part VRM W813. GRAFTON enquiries revealed that a vehicle of similar a description had previously come to the attention of Police earlier that morning.
- Overnight 25–26<sup>th</sup> April 2004, suspects gained access to a warehouse premises in Feltham by breaking through the party wall of an adjacent building, which had been vacant for 18 months. Entry to these premises had been gained by forcing a fire door in the rear wall. The suspects then crawled along one wall to avoid detection by alarm sensors. The hole however, remained undiscovered until 0700hrs on



26/04/2004. During their time in the depot the suspects stole 15 parcels (value unknown).

- In late March at the premises of a computer company in Luton, a Red Care alarm was cut and £150,000 worth of computer equipment stolen in the “follow up” burglary. As a result of a number of recent burglaries that have been committed in this manner Operation Grafton has advised all companies using this alarm system to consider purchasing GSM back up in order to enhance the security of their premises.
- As an example of the number of associated crimes, there were a number of other Red Care Alarm attacks, which took place during the last week of March. The first occurred on the 26/03/2004 at the premises of a company in Greenford that specialises in supplying retail outlets with the latest DVD film releases. The second was on 27/03/2004 at premises in NW10 and the third occurred at premises in Hatfield. Fortunately no “follow up” burglaries occurred at any of the last two locations.

## OPERATIONS

- A suspect was recently arrested by Operation Grafton officers following the execution of a search warrant at his home address. During the search a number of digital cameras, mobile phones and other items of computer equipment were recovered. The suspect subsequently admitted to stealing these items over a period of time from his employers warehouse in the Hounslow / Heathrow area. This was a fine example of excellent teamwork between the courier company concerned and Operation Grafton team.
- As a result of a joint operation between an “on airport” freight company, Operation Grafton and Heathrow Crime Squad officers, a lorry driver has been arrested and charged after he stole a large quantity of expensive motorcycle leathers “in transit”. All of the property has now been recovered.
- A previously mentioned a joint operation between HM Customs & Excise and Operation GRAFTON concerned a company that went into administration having been believed to have been involved in both MTIC fraud and cigarette smuggling. Twelve persons have now been arrested and charged by HMCE in relation to this investigation. During the course of this enquiry £500,000 of computer chips (reported stolen during an airport lorry hijack), 2 million cigarettes and £100,000 in cash were recovered.
- Research has continued into a suspect who was believed to be responsible for stealing a significant quantity of high value electrical equipment from his airport employers during freight transfer movements from Heathrow. This operation was passed to the Heathrow Crime Squad who, together with GRAFTON and Cumbrian officers, executed search warrants at a number of premises belonging to the suspect. The individual concerned has now been arrested and enquiries remain ongoing at this time.
- The Operation GRAFTON team have also been engaged in a number of other operations this month. Enquiries with regards to all of these continue to be ongoing



at this time.

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Operation GRAFTON has made a number of circulations to the industry this month appealing for assistance with crimes under investigation. If you have not received any circulations please liaise with the representative chairs of your various trade organisations. Circulations have included pictures of a suspect carrying out a deception at Plane Handling in 2003 and photographs of the Samsung cameras stolen during a recent burglary (above).
- You are also reminded of our concerns about a dark coloured Vauxhall Omega motor vehicle that tried to stop courier lorries on both the M1 and M25 (as mentioned in our last bulletin). I would however, now like to bring to your attention the actions of two silver BMW cars that were seen acting suspiciously on the M40 / M6 during the early hours of the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2004. These vehicles were thought by the drivers of vehicles carrying high value loads, to be shadowing them throughout their journey. The registrations given for these vehicles are **SA10** and **R923WDO**. Grafton however, has reason to believe that these are false. It should also be borne in mind that these vehicles may now be displaying other identities. If these vehicles or others are seen in similar circumstances drivers, in addition to being requested to comply with company policy are also asked please to ensure that relevant information is passed to the Operation Grafton office.
- Operation GRAFTON has been visited for three days this month by police officers from robbery squads in Norway, Denmark and Sweden. They were also accompanied by an official from the Norwegian Embassy. These countries are apparently considering setting up operations similar to that of Operation Grafton.
- In May 2004, Operation Grafton will also be visited by officers from the Dutch National Crime Squad who have responsibility for freight crime at Schipol Airport.
- The Grafton Intelligence Unit has also now developed links with police officers at Manchester, East Midlands, Stansted and Gatwick freight handling airports. The crime prevention side of this operation is also currently liaising with officers at Schipol Airport.

## OPERATION GRAFTON CRIME SUMMARY

Operation GRAFTON has now been in existence for one year. It is pleased to report that comparative first quarter figures for 2003/4 confirm that there has been a drop in crime of 78% for the first quarter of 2004. This percentage will however be affected in future by the recent agreement to lower the Grafton remit base value to £25,000 w.e.f. 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004.

This bulletin is the first report, which covers a single month period. I am very grateful to Bob White from SCD7 for enabling me to make this possible. If you have any views on the frequency of these reports or their content, can you please forward these to the Operation Grafton website so that we can adjust publication dates / content in order to meet the needs of the majority.



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May we also take this opportunity to thank you for all your support and hope that this initiative can continue to thrive as a result of your involvement. If you have any information which may further aid our investigations into any of the above matters or wish to bring any matter to our attention please do contact us on:-

Tel: - 0208 246 9972/3

Email: - [operation.grafton@met.police.uk](mailto:operation.grafton@met.police.uk)

Alternatively you can call Crime Stoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. All calls will be treated in the strictest confidence.

**Paul E DOUGLAS**  
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**OPERATION GRAFTON**



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