



Specialist Crime Directorate
SCD7
Serious & Organised Crime OCU

OPERATION GRAFTON
BUSINESS NEWS
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Issue **10**

Period **December 2004**

Foreword by Detective Inspector Paul E DOUGLAS

Welcome to the tenth issue of our Operation GRAFTON bulletin for the industry. As mentioned previously, all MPS documentation is written in order to comply with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act, 2000. Accordingly, this Bulletin reflects the terms being applied corporately within the MPS, which are required in order to adhere to this legislation. Once again I have annotated this issue as having no restriction on publication under this Act.

For reference, I would also like to take this opportunity to inform our partners of the NEW Operation GRAFTON terms of reference. These are: -

- *Any allegation where the value of property stolen, or attempted to be stolen, is in excess of **£10,000** and where*
- *There is a connection with Heathrow Airport*

The £10,000 base figure is effective for crimes occurring post 1st January 2005.

Information highlighted in this bulletin will once again not disclose any details of Operation Grafton tactics; however if you have information about any of the crimes listed please do not hesitate to contact us on the above telephone number.

Details of all previous Operation Grafton bulletins for the industry can now be found at www.aimss.info.



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CRIMES

- At 10:35am on the 9th December 2004, a lorry carrying £30,000+ of electrical equipment was hijacked in Staines (on the Hounslow / Surrey border). Surrey Police are now dealing with this incident and we await an update of the details.
- Grafton was also informed this month of an incident that occurred on the 1st-2nd November. This involved a lorry, which parked at a service station in Leicester after having left Heathrow. The offence occurred when the suspects cut through the curtain sides of the vehicle and stole blank DVD's and undiluted perfume worth in excess of £30,000. The Grafton team are liaising with Oakham CID with regards to this matter.
- 13th December saw three pallets of Barcardi (£39,000) stolen from the back of a lorry (in which the driver was sleeping) whilst it was parked on the Poyle industrial Estate near Heathrow. Unfortunately the driver did not hear the incident taking place.
- On Wednesday 15th December 2004, at 16:50hrs, in Staines Road, Sunbury, the driver of an international Courier delivery vehicle was moving slowly in traffic when he was hijacked by two males who got into the cab of his vehicle. He was then forced into the foot well of the vehicle, which was driven a short distance into Nursery Lane. The victim said that he was aware of a blue van being in the vicinity during the time of the assault and a small maroon car being present at the final destination. The vehicle was hijacked as it left the trading estate on which a computer technology premise is located and it is thought that the hijackers were anticipating that the vehicle concerned was carrying computer chips. Although this was not the case, £25,000 worth of assorted property was taken on this occasion. This included two thermal printers and three bright red, child size Harley Davidson motorbikes.
- On Thursday 16th December 2004, at 1540hrs a driver working for the same international Courier Company was exiting a pick up from Samsung Electrical, which is located behind PC World on the A4 at Brentford. As he approached the barrier an old blue van stopped in front of him. A male then got out of the passenger side of the van and got into the Courier vehicle where he attacked the driver and held what was believed to be a firearm to his head. A second suspect then got into the vehicle and it was subsequently driven into Convent Gardens (off Windmill Lane) W5. One box of property was stolen. (Value not yet ascertained). It appears that in both cases the suspects may have followed the Courier vehicles to their respective collection venues in order to carry out the relevant offences.
- Operation Grafton was informed this week of the theft of £25,000 worth of Maxdor hard drives from a Heathrow warehouse. The offence apparently took place at some time between the 11 – 16/12/04. The loss was however, initially treated as a UTL (Unable To Locate) and it is thought that it may be linked to the loss of two other pallet loads of the same, which have yet to be reported stolen. A second theft of Maxdor hard drives took place at the same premises on 23/12/04. Although the exact value of the goods has yet to be ascertained, it is known that this will fall within the Operation Grafton remit.



CRIMES OF INTEREST

- Following the relocation of a number of companies from Heathrow to Glasgow, the first recent Grafton style offence has been committed in the Glasgow Airport vicinity. This involved the loss of £30,000 worth of Intel computer chips whilst in transit. The goods concerned had moved from Japan to Amsterdam and then to two separate locations in Glasgow where the thefts were discovered. DS Fraser Murray from the Strathclyde Police intelligence cell visited Operation Grafton in order to discuss these matters.
- On Saturday 18th December 2004, another lorry hijack occurred in Paris during which 1000 phones were stolen by four suspects dressed as French Police Officers. This is the fourth such incident with previous events occurring in the same area circa 01/09/04, 15/10/04 and 26/11/04.
- On 16/12/04, £150,000 worth of MP3/4 players was stolen from an industrial unit in Andover, Hants. This offence occurred after a security guard was tied up and assaulted. A stolen Ford Iveco lorry was also used during the commission of this offence. Shortly before and after the offence was committed a silver VW Golf VRM RG04KNC was seen acting suspiciously in the area. It is however, not known at this stage whether this vehicle is connected to this enquiry.
- On Wednesday 15th December 2004, following a Red Care Alarm cut £1/2 million pounds worth of computer chips were stolen from an industrial unit at Staples Corner.
- On Sunday the 12th December 2004, a Feltham premises was broken into by 2 men using an angle grinder to cut a hole in the front roller shutter. Once inside the suspects cut a padlock off a high value consignment cage from which they removed 8 laptops and 2 hard drives. The thieves used a white long wheelbase Sprinter van during this offence and made good their escape before the Police arrived. CCTV footage inside the depot shows that 2 males were involved in the theft, however both had disguised their identities. One was White, 6'-6'3 of large heavy build. The other was about 5'10 of light to medium build. The first male was wearing a yellow high-visibility vest whilst the other was wearing an orange high-visibility vest.
- On Saturday 11/12/2004, two suspects were seen on CCTV to enter a warehouse premises located on the Lakeside Industrial Estate in Colnbrook. The suspects had been seen earlier that day using a small white van, which was described as being a Peugeot with silver tinted windows. No VRM was recorded, however, two suspects (said to be of a similar description to the occupants of the van) were also reported to have visited the same premises on 05/12/04, when they walked into the premises and asked staff present if they had any metal banding. On that occasion the suspects were using a white Vauxhall Calibra VRM L889DPB. A small pallet "pull along" was stolen during the offence.
- On Friday 10th December 2004, ten suspects forced entry into an industrial unit in Ealing where they assaulted a member of staff with a baseball bat before stealing a quantity of lap tops and plasma screens together valued at £1/2 million.



OPERATIONS

- **Op BREMBO** - On 28th December 2004, in Aylesbury, Bucks – as a result of an Operation Grafton initiative, officers from the Metropolitan Police Central Task Force and Thames Valley Police were involved in an armed operation, which resulted in the arrest of six persons whilst they were in the process of burgling a warehouse and stealing £147,000 worth of computer equipment. As a result five men were charged with burglary and aggravated taking of a motor vehicle. All of the property was successfully recovered and the suspects remanded in custody when they appeared at court.

MISCELLANEOUS

- A warning was received this month from TAPA regarding the international shortage of computer hard drives. This message has been disseminated to Grafton partners through last month's Bulletin to the industry.
- Grafton staff located a local warehouse containing what was believed to be large quantities of smuggled alcohol. This information was passed to HMCE and in excess of £100, 000 worth of tinned beer recovered.
- Following information received by Operation Grafton, a joint operation was organised with officers from a Scotland Yard enquiry team. As a result two people were arrested and a quantity of stolen property recovered.
- In addition, the Grafton team has been able to work with one of its industry partners and HMCE in order to prevent 102 Tons of mobile phones being left in an "on airport" freight shed over the festive period.
- Reminder - The Operation Grafton terms of reference have altered from 1st January 2005, in that the minimum threshold figure for crimes, which fall within the Grafton remit has been lowered from £25,000 to £10,000 with effect from this date.

OPERATION GRAFTON CRIME SUMMARY

- Operation Grafton was responsible for initiating operations which led to the arrests of 80 individuals during 2004, with in excess of £100 million worth of losses either being recovered or frustrated. A number of suspects have now been convicted as matters begin to be heard in court and individual custodial sentences between 2 and 18 years have been handed out to those concerned (this includes a 7.5 year sentence for an individual who was identified as working as an inside agent for a criminal gang). Financial enquiries are also now being conducted with regards to seizing prisoner assets (houses etc.) under new powers given by the government.



- 40 crimes were committed during 2004, which fell within the Operation Grafton remit. 17 of these were above the original £50,000 threshold. This compares with 83 in 2003 of which 57 were above the £50,000 threshold. Crimes above £50k in 2004 when compared to 2003 were reduced by 70%. The losses for crimes set at this limit were also reduced by 84% (these figures exclude the £90 million Swissport robbery for which a number of individuals are currently awaiting trial).
- If you require further information about any of the items contained within this issue please contact DI Paul Douglas on the number below or at the email address given. In addition, if you have information about the any of the above crimes or any other Grafton offences please contact us at: -

Tel: - 0208 246 9972/3

Email: - 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.

Thank you for your continued support.

Paul E DOUGLAS
Detective Inspector
OPERATION GRAFTON

PS. For those of you trying to contact me on my mobile phone – I am currently waiting for a replacement to be issued.



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