



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

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Author:	Detective Inspector Paul E DOUGLAS
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Issue **17**

Period **July 2005**

**Foreword by Detective Inspector Paul E DOUGLAS**

*Welcome to the seventeenth 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.*

*Just to remind you that the Operation GRAFTON terms of reference 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://www.aimss.info).

## CRIMES

- On 17/06/2005, at approximately 0530 hrs, five vans carrying mobile phones arrived at a warehouse premises in Hayes, Middlesex. On arrival the vehicles split whilst waiting for the premises to open. At this point suspects dressed in boiler suits and wearing balaclavas using a black Audi Estate and silver Vauxhall Astra attacked one of the vans concerned. The suspects used the butt of a handgun to smash the victim's vehicle window before pulling him from the cab and driving it away. The vehicle was subsequently recovered locally with £280,000 worth of phones missing.
- On 26/07/2005, shortly after leaving a warehouse premises in Southall a vehicle carrying £90,000 worth of mobile phones was attacked by a group of five or six white males as it stopped at a set of traffic lights. The suspects using both a black BMW and a silver BMW jumped out and smashed the driver's window. The driver was then bundled into his foot well before being abandoned with the vehicle in Hithermoor Road, Stanwell.
- On 31/07/2005, at approximately 1730 hrs a lorry laden with £300,000 worth of mobile phones left premises located close to that of the one above in Southall. After travelling a couple of miles the vehicle was forced to stop in Church Road, Hounslow by suspects using a blue BMW, a blue van, a white van and a white van with green writing on. The vehicle was then driven into Harris Close, Hounslow (adjacent to the A4) where five or six males unloaded it. During this time the victim was bundled into the boot of a BMW, which was later recovered with him still locked inside.
- On 07/08/2005 at approximately 1730 hrs, a courier liveried vehicle being driven by a sub contracted driver, carrying £4 million worth of computer chips was forced to stop by a dark Audi or BMW with what was believed to be a blue light on top shortly after it left the company warehouse in Hayes, Middlesex. The offence occurred as the lorry approached a roundabout with its security escort vehicle. During the offence the driver was pulled from his cab after the window was smashed. The escort vehicle was also chased off by the suspects who attempted to ram it on several occasions. Thanks to the actions of the security team police were soon in attendance and the vehicle was quickly recovered in Shepiston Lane, West Drayton (adjacent to the M4) with only a fraction of the load removed. The suspects had however decamped Prior to police arrival. **A REWARD OF £50,000 HAS NOW BEEN OFFERED FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE ARREST AND CONVICTION OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS OFFENCE! If you have any information, which may assist Operation Grafton with this matter, please contact us on the details below.**

## **CRIMES OF INTEREST & CRIME ENQUIRIES**

- Please be aware that following a recent theft in transit at Heathrow one or more individuals in the south / south east of England is/are using now stolen COUTTS credit cards to purchase DIY and gardening materials. These companies being specifically targeted as they have yet to adopt chip and pin security. Significant amounts have been spent on these cards since the theft took place.
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- There was also an allegation this month concerning the theft of 113 X 42" Plasma Screen televisions from a Heathrow warehouse by means of a collection note deception.
- In addition Operation Grafton received information from members of the Carrier Intelligence Group with regards to their concerns about West Africans individuals who appeared to be arranging parcel deliveries in suspicious circumstances. Further enquiries revealed that the suspects concerned were purchasing products via the use of stolen credit cards or stolen credit card information. They would then arrange courier delivery to an unattended address. On arrival the courier driver would receive no answer from the occupants of the premises concerned. The driver would then be in the process of returning to their vehicle when a suspect would run after them apologising for not answering the door and giving various reasons for not having done so. This suspect would then identify himself and sign for the parcel. As a result of concerns raised following a number of these incidents, a joint operation was put together with officers from Kentish Town. This resulted in the arrest of one suspect as he took possession of a parcel in these circumstances and a second who was thought to be responsible for organising a number of these offences. Two persons are now currently on police bail as a result of this initiative and we are grateful to all concerned for their participation in this operation. Cumulative losses were estimated to be in the region of £125, 000.
- Operation Grafton has been informed of a robbery / abduction, which took place in Glasgow at 1030am on 23/08/2005. The offence occurred when a courier vehicle being driven by a subcontracted company driver stopped at the Erskine House, Bishopton roundabout behind a white box van (possibly a fiat Fiorino). As he stopped a male got out of the suspect vehicle and gained entry to the victims vehicle via the unlocked passenger door. He then threatened the victim with a knife and forced him to drive to a lay by at Arkestone cemetery. The victim was then forced into the back a van where a male suspect sat with him. After a short period he was driven from this area into Glasgow before eventually being released in the Cathcart area. Computer processors worth £170,000 were stolen during this incident together with other items of computer related equipment.

## **OPERATIONS**

- Operation Grafton is currently engaged in a number of on going operations.

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Officers from Operation Grafton were seconded to Operation Theseus following the recent London suicide bombings. The officers concerned worked as members of the Central Casualty Bureau enquiry team.
- Operation Grafton is sad to report that one of its staff retired this month and another has taken a career break. We are however pleased to report that a further three officers have now joined the team.

## CRIME PREVENTION

- Operation Grafton crime prevention officers acting under the auspices of the Airfreight Industry Minimum Security Standards for cargo (AIMSS) have now certified 95 premises as meeting the standards required. If you require more information about this scheme please visit the [www.aimss.info](http://www.aimss.info) website where you can also obtain a self-assessment pack on line without cost.
- Diversion fraud has not gone away. Please can you ensure that staff who are asked to divert loads are fully aware of the problem and that all calls to divert are double-checked. We advise the instructions given by mobile phones and mobile phone fax are not accepted. Further details about this crime can be found in previous Grafton bulletins. If you require further information or are able to assist with enquiries into these offences please contact us on the details below.
- Please also remember for those that are DFT listed, AIMSS accredited (or both) that it is a requirement to keep dock doors shut when they are not in use. We also propose this practice other industry members as a cost effective way of reducing crime.
- Operation Grafton has received a number of reports from those concerned with the container shipping industry that drivers are stealing containers from ports by turning up with list of pin numbers which are used to facilitate collection. The suspects are either taking a chance on what is in the container they steal or are acting on specific information. Please be suspicious of drivers who have multiple pin numbers.
- We are also grateful to our insurance partners for highlighting a new trend with regards to theft from containers. Apparently high quality padlocks are being disabled by suspects who freeze them with a cold liquid / gas before shattering them with a hammer.

- I am also grateful to Bow Wave for the following: -

Is Your 45ft Container Legal?

Recent items in the press about 45ft containers soon to be made illegal on Europe's roads are causing some confusion amongst those who own, operate, finance and insure such equipment.

To understand the situation, first it is necessary to know that there are two types of 45ft container, those with conventional end frames and corner castings and those with chamfered or angled corner posts and special Euro corner castings. The latter type of container is not under threat.

In 1996, a new EU directive 96/53 ruled that conventional 45ft maritime containers, be they 8ft wide deep sea containers or 2.5m wide European intermodal containers - often known as pallet-wide containers, could no longer be moved on EU roads. The industry lobbied hard for some dispensation, arguing that 45ft containers exceeded the maximum dimensions laid down in legislation by only a few centimetres. However, all that was achieved were grandfather rights permitting existing 45ft containers to be used on EU roads for a period of ten years. It is this period, which ends at the end of 2006 that is causing all of the consternation.

Officially, standard 45ft maritime containers built since 1996 have always been illegal in the EU but so far, there have been few if any prosecutions. Many in the industry suspect that there will be no prosecutions after 2006 either, but as the insurance industry will no doubt point out, running illegally is a risky business and could be very expensive were a vehicle to be involved, say, in a road accident.

At least one major deep-sea shipping line has built some 45ft containers with chamfered corner posts and Euro castings so as to ensure that these units will be legal on EU roads. It is not clear whether many other lines will follow suit. Presumably not until the police start stopping them.

One thing is certain though; after 2006, it will be much easier for the police to determine whether a 45ft container is legal or illegal. At present, they have to check a tiny plate to see when the container was manufactured. In future, they will only have to note whether the container has conventional corner castings or the distinctive Euro castings.

*(Grafton will not be involved in enforcing this legislation but knowing about it may be of use).*

## **OPERATION GRAFTON SUMMARY**

- 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](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.

Thank you for your continued support.

**Paul E DOUGLAS**  
**Detective Inspector**  
**OPERATION GRAFTON**