



Specialist Crime Directorate
SCD7
Serious & Organised Crime OCU

OPERATION GRAFTON
BUSINESS NEWS
Tel: 0208 246 9972

Protective Marking:	Not Protected
Publication Scheme:	Yes
Title:	OPERATION GRAFTON BULLETIN
Purpose:	For information & distribution to Group Members
Relevant to:	Operation GRAFTON Policing
Summary:	Summary of Operation Grafton activities in August 2004
Author:	Detective Inspector Paul E DOUGLAS
Creating Branch/OCU:	Serious Crime Directorate SCD 10 (8)
Date:	12 ^d October 2004
Review Date	12 th October 2005

Issue **7**

Period **September 2004**

Foreword by Detective Inspector Paul E DOUGLAS

Welcome to the seventh 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.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind our partners of the Operation GRAFTON terms of reference from 1st April 2004. These are: -

- Any allegation where the value of property stolen, or attempted to be stolen, is in excess of £25,000 and where*
- There is a connection with Heathrow Airport*

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.



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

Working for a safer London

CRIMES

- **Diversion** - On 7th September 2004, suspects using one of the current diversion theft methods (making numerous telephone calls to various members within victim companies) acquired £140,000 worth of cigarettes from an “on airport” company at Heathrow by diverting them to a warehouse, which was once again located in the Canning Town area.

NB. During recent months, Operation Grafton has repeatedly circulated details of the methods used in these offences to the industry. We now estimate that approximately £4.2 million worth of goods have been stolen via this type of crime across the South East of England during the last three-month period. There have been in excess of 40 offences reported since March 2004. Whilst the majority of these fall outside of the Operation Grafton remit, it is important that we re emphasise the nature of these crimes within this bulletin.

- **Diversion** – On 7th September 2004, suspects diverted £35,000 worth of “French Connection UK” clothing from a freight company in Hounslow to FCUK in Bow. On arrival at the suspects venue the driver was approached by a white male who asked him if he was carrying the goods they were expecting. The driver asked the male who he was and the suspect replied that he was from “French Connection (FC)”. A smartly dressed male then approached the vehicle from the direction of the FC yard and told the driver that they would bring a vehicle around from the FC yard in order to “off load” his trailer. The driver was then directed further along the road so that the transfer could take place. At this point a “scruffy” third suspect dressed in an orange reflective jacket approached the victim’s vehicle stating that he was from an agency working for FC and that he would be helping to move the goods. A white 16 tonne ERF, white cab, curtain-bodied lorry (part VRM R131....) was then driven from the direction of the FC yard and joined the suspects. At this point one of the suspects got into the cab of the victim’s vehicle and directed him onto an old factory site. The victim’s vehicle with one suspect in was then followed to the venue by the two other suspects who were travelling in a dark coloured Vauxhall Vectra. On reaching the old factory site the vehicles were positioned “back to back” and “cross loading” commenced.

Whilst the cross loading was taking place FC telephoned the originating company in Hounslow to ask what had happened to the goods. Enquiries between the companies then identified that the goods were in the process of being stolen and the transport company (based in Slough) called Police via 999. This call however went to Thames Valley Police, who in turn called the Metropolitan Police in whose area the theft was taking place. Unfortunately by the time a police response was despatched the vehicle had gone. The suspects in this case apparently drove off with half of the load after they overheard the victim driver’s telephone conversations with his company.

The good news is that the crime prevention strategy seems to be paying off, with more offences now being detected by potential victims before property is actually stolen. We have also been told that the thieves are becoming increasingly frustrated when challenged by staff on the telephone and respond with verbal abuse when questioned.



- On 13th September 2004, a freight van driver driving leaving the HM Customs facility at Heathrow was driving (empty) along the A30, Feltham towards Hatton Cross when he was forced to stop by a Ford Fiesta motor vehicle, which pulled in front of him. The victim was then approached by two males armed with handguns who entered the vehicle and forced him into the rear. The victim states that he was then driven to an unknown location where two boxes containing an unknown commodity were placed in to the back of the vehicle with him. He was subsequently driven round for a further 3 hours before the vehicle stopped in Stanwell Moor Road, Surrey where he was taken out whilst the boxes were placed in to a waiting BMW displaying a 'D' sticker on the rear. The van was then locked and the assailants left in the BMW taking the van keys with them.

CRIMES OF INTEREST

- On 6th July 2004, a national courier company driver was robbed of 2,100 HP LCD monitors whilst waiting to deliver to a premise in Northampton. Four men dressed in ski masks armed with a gun forced entry to the cab, forcibly removed the driver and bundled him into a waiting car. The lorry was subsequently driven on to Newton-le-Willows and abandoned minus the load. The victim was later found safe and well at a location in Staffordshire. Four persons have now been arrested in Merseyside in relation to this matter.

Northamptonshire police state that the area where this offence occurred is now a regular target for teams of Merseyside criminals who send out scout cars looking for targets. As an example, on the night of this incident another curtain sided lorry was "slashed" by suspects who were thought to be the same criminals looking for another high value load. .

- On 1st September 2004, £480,000 worth of colour TV's were stolen from a lorry driver in Dover after he was apparently gassed in his cab. Grafton is aware of previous similar offences in Europe where "Damp Start" has been sprayed into lorry cabs in order to render the driver unconscious. Often this substance has been sprayed into vehicle "air intakes" whilst the driver is parked for an overnight stop.

OPERATIONS

- The Grafton team has continued to be engaged in a number of enquiries this month.
- Two individuals were arrested this month by Hillingdon officers supported by Operation Grafton staff whilst conducting enquiries at a domestic premise in Hayes. During the subsequent search of their premises a number of items of stolen property were recovered.



MISCELLANEOUS

- Operation Grafton has been informed about a silver Vauxhall Vectra registration number LT53SDY, which was used this month by persons posing as police officers using a blue light, to stop a vehicle in Virginia Water. This vehicle is currently reported as being stolen from Hayes, Middlesex. It has also been used during two thefts in Surrey and thirty-one auto crime offences across the Thames Valley Police area. The suspects are in addition believed to be in possession of a silver Ford Sierra. Please forward any information regarding previous sightings to Operation Grafton. Sightings requiring an immediate response should be dealt with via the 999 systems.
- Grafton officers were also required to deal with an incident outside their premises this month, which involved a violent individual who was concerned in a road traffic collision. The subject was arrested as he tried to flee the scene in the stolen vehicle he was driving. During the arrest a Grafton officer was assaulted and received a minor injuries.
- TAPA's European analysis for August / September continues to highlight the M6 corridor in the UK as being a problem for high value freight related crime.
- EUROWATCH also reports a significant increase of robberies in the Paris area by suspects dressed as Police officers. There have been 48 attacks since the beginning of 2003.
- An analyst has now joined the Operation Grafton team. He is already fully employed!
- Operation Grafton is currently liaising with Dutch Police regarding offences circa Schipol.
- An officer from Operation Grafton attended the first National Aviation Crime Prevention Conference, which was held at Stansted Airport this month.
- Metropolitan police Assistant Commissioner Tarique Ghaffur launched the Airfreight Industry Minimum Security Standards (AIMSS) for cargo this month. Details of this, including how to become accredited member free of charge can be found at <http://www.aimss.info/>.

OPERATION GRAFTON CRIME SUMMARY

- At the end of 2004, Q3, Operation Grafton crimes (taken with a £50,000 base loss figure) have been reduced by 70% when compared to the first three quarters of 2003. However, when adjusted to include the revised base figure of £25,000 (introduced on 1st April 2004), this still results in an overall crime reduction rate of 55%. This figure also now includes criminal attempt offences where no actual property has been stolen
- Operation Grafton also welcomes the AICES group into its partnership.



- 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



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

Working for a safer London