



CITY OF BUENA PARK

Police Department

Gary Hicken, Chief of Police

June 2, 2004

Frederick P. Horn
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Orange
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Dear Judge Horn:

RE: Response to Grand Jury Identity Theft Findings

The Orange County Grand Jury produced a report entitled "Identity Theft: What Are Local Law Enforcement and Prosecutors Doing to Combat the Problem?" In the Grand Jury report, the Buena Park Police Department was specifically requested, pursuant to Penal Code 933.05(f), to respond to three listed findings (findings 3-5). Below are the findings and our recommended responses to those findings for your review and comments.

FINDING

- 3. "The Orange County District Attorney, the Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department and the city police departments in Orange County take steps to form and actively participate in a countywide Regional Identity Theft Task Force comprised of representatives of each of these agencies. The task force should seek the cooperation and participation of the United States Postal Inspector, the United States Secret Service, the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service and the United States Federal Trade Commission. (Finding 3)*

RESPONSE

The Buena Park Police Department has two full time fraud detectives that investigate all identity theft related crimes reported to our jurisdiction. One Sergeant supervising these two fraud detectives, first reviews the crime reports and makes the determination as to whether the cases need to be investigated any further. If the cases can be further investigated and suspect(s) can be identified and/or likely to be prosecuted, the Sergeant assigns these crime reports to the detectives for further follow-up. These detectives are highly trained

6650 Beach Boulevard, P.O. Box 5009, Buena Park, California, 90622-5009

(714) 562-3901 Fax (714) 523-2911

in specific fraud cases, such as identify theft, and commonly utilize existing resources available to them. These resources stem from their ongoing membership with the International Association of Financial Crimes Investigators, which is a network of both public and private fraud related units both throughout California and the United States, along with federal agencies, commonly the U.S. Postal Inspectors and the U.S. Secret Service.

The forming of a task force would not be a benefit to this department or the citizens it serves, as sufficient resources and cooperation with outside resources and agencies already exist. Our investigators attend ongoing training regarding new types of identity theft crimes, and attend monthly meetings with professional fraud investigator associations both in this county and regionally for the southern California area. In Addition, our detectives assigned Identity Theft Crimes are used for other fraud investigations that occur here in Buena Park, and detectives assigned to a task force are generally not available for other fraud related crimes that occur on a local level. This is a difficult time with limited financial resources and a time where our personnel are already limited.

FINDING

4. *“Orange County city police departments and the Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department work cooperatively to develop standardized public information materials, possibly modeled after excellent pamphlets that now exist, for use by all departments (Finding 4)”.*

RESPONSE

The Buena Park Police Department for many years has provided Identity Theft Pamphlets that are made available to the public and given to all victims of identity theft from both our front counter personnel and officers in the field who generate the reports. This pamphlet is combined with a reference guide of other available resources to assist citizens in identity theft awareness, education, and prevention information. Also, this pamphlet will be added as an additional resource on our department' internet web site in the next 30 days, located at www.bppd.com.

FINDING

5. *“Orange County city police departments and the Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department adopt a standardized identity-theft crime-reporting form, possibly modeled after forms now in use by several police departments. (finding 5)”*

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RESPONSE

The Buena Park Police Department utilizes a non-specific detailed crime report form, which is used for all fraud related crimes. Only trained staff completes the report form during a one-on-one meeting with the reporting party or identity theft victim. This style of report form is more than sufficient to properly document crimes involving identity theft, and can be made available to any agency that would like to review it. Therefore, a specific form for identity theft is not needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Hicken". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

GARY HICKEN
Chief of Police

Attachment

**City of Buena Park
Police Department**

**Brochure with Website information is available to view at the
Orange County Public Law Library
515 North Flower
Santa Ana, CA 92703
(Building 32, Civic Center Plaza)**