



CITY OF GARDEN GROVE, CALIFORNIA

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POLICE DEPARTMENT

A NATIONALLY
ACCREDITED LAW
ENFORCEMENT
AGENCY

June 18, 2004

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

RE: Response to Grand Jury Identity Theft Findings and Recommendations

Dear Judge Horn,

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 Garden Grove Police Department, as well as other county law enforcement agencies, was specifically requested, pursuant to Penal Code 933.05 (a) & (b), to respond to three findings (findings 3-5) and three recommendations (recommendations 3-5.) Below are the findings and recommendations and our responses to them for your review and comments.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Finding #3 "Identity theft Sub-Task Forces are in place in 5 major population centers in California and are functioning to facilitate better communication, coordination and cooperation among federal, state and local law enforcement and public record-keeping agencies involved in prevention, investigation and prosecution of identity theft. Orange County does not have an Identity Theft Task Force or Sub Task Force".

Agree with Finding - Orange County does not have an identity theft task force. Severe budget constraints countywide and manpower issues do not allow police agencies and the District Attorney's Office to commit officers, investigators and prosecutors to an Orange County task force on a full time basis.

Finding #4 "The Orange County District Attorney's Office, Orange County city police agencies and the Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department provide some form of public information and resource materials outlining how one can prevent identity theft as well as corrective steps to take where identity theft has occurred".

Agree with Finding - Many county police agencies, the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the District Attorney's Office have produced informative booklets on what to do if your identity is stolen as well as prevention of identity theft by safeguarding personal information. Officers regularly provide these materials to victims when they report incidents of identity theft.

Finding #5 "Eight city police agencies in Orange County have developed specialized identity-theft crime reporting forms that incorporate standardized terms and information formats. These forms can help identity-theft victims repair damaged credit history more quickly".

Agree with finding - Many of the county's city police departments have specialized reporting forms that deal with identity-theft. The forms standardize the information obtained and help identity-theft victims report the crime.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #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)"

Recommendation not implemented - The Garden Grove Police Department currently has one detective assigned to investigate identity-theft related crimes reported to our jurisdiction. The assigned detective makes a determination about jurisdictional and other relevant issues upon initial review of the reports. Once a determination has been made that a crime has been committed, resources from the federal government (including the United States Postal Inspector, Secret Service, Immigration and Naturalization Service and Federal Trade Commission), are available to provide local assistance or assume jurisdiction for the investigation.

Even though forming a task force could be beneficial, there are sufficient resources available and cooperation exists between law enforcement agencies informally. There are Investigator Associations that facilitate monthly meetings attended by law enforcement agencies from the local and federal level and the private sector such as banks and credit card companies. These associations facilitate networking between members, support the opportunity to discuss pending investigations and crime trends, and provide training. Our detective regularly attends the monthly meetings of the Orange County Financial Crimes Investigator's Association (OCFCIA) and the Southern California Fraud Investigator's Association.

Severe financial and manpower constraints would prevent the Garden Grove Police Department from assigning a detective to a task force. Without some source of funding to pay salary and overtime the detective would have to come from one of our existing detective positions. This would critically impact our Detective Unit. In addition, our existing resources assigned to investigate identity-thefts at the Garden Grove Police Department can be used for other investigations as needed. Typically, officers that would be assigned to a task force would be limited to task force activities and unavailable for other investigative departmental needs.

Recommendation #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)".*

Recommendation not implemented - The Garden Grove Police Department has a printed pamphlet available to the public that relates to identity-theft crimes. The brochure contains specific information on how to report identity-theft, what to do if you are a victim, a sample "courtesy notice" to creditors, how to prevent identity-theft, credit bureaus and other resources available.

Although a generic brochure developed on countywide basis may have some benefits, we believe our public information meets the requirements advocated by the Grand Jury.

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Recommendation #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)"

Recommendation not implemented - The Garden Grove Police Department already has a specific identity-theft crime-reporting form and believes it meets the necessary requirements for reporting that type of crime. Our personnel assist identity-theft victims in completing the form.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph M. Polisar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Joseph M. Polisar
Chief of Police

**City of Garden Grove
Police Department**

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