



CITY OF ORANGE

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May 15, 2004

2003-2004 Orange County Grand Jury
C/O B. Fred Beams, Chair
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Orange Police Department
Andy Romero, Chief of Police
1107 N. Batavia St.
Orange, Ca 92868

Dear Fred Beams,

Considering the rapid growth of identity theft, we are pleased that the 2003-2004 Orange County Grand Jury chose to research the matter and share their findings with local law enforcement agencies. Our goal, like that of the Grand Jury, is to identify and implement methods that will enhance our efficiency and effectiveness in this area. We have reviewed the report and have compiled the following response to the findings and recommendations, 3-5.

FINDINGS

3. *Regional Identity Theft Task Force:*

We believe that a task force would be the best means of promoting cooperation and coordination among law enforcement agencies to address identity theft cases involving multiple jurisdictions. A main advantage of task forces is the pooling of resources and expertise results in more thorough investigations and better continuity from inception of the investigations through prosecution. It also improves interagency relationships resulting in the sharing of investigative leads, bridging of jurisdictional boundaries, and avoiding duplication of efforts.

4. ***Public Information and Resource Material:***

We have done a good job of educating the public with brochures and public service announcements that describe how to curtail identity theft. The tips are helpful, but don't guarantee that personal information will be adequately protected. Consumers cannot completely control how those in the business community dispose of or use their personal information. Consumers cannot be expected to search their local store to ensure the application with their Social Security and credit card number is destroyed. The business community is our first line of defense, and they need to be educated. We must provide them with specific information that stresses the importance of properly safeguarding personal information.

5. ***Standardized Identity Theft Crime Reports:***

Law enforcement agencies (local police) should take a police report in the jurisdiction where the victim lives **even if the fraud takes place in another jurisdiction**. The report should then be forwarded to the appropriate jurisdiction for investigation. A standardized and comprehensive identity theft report would enhance law enforcements ability to successfully investigate these cases.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. ***Regional Identity Theft Task Force:***

We are committed to working with our partners in the public and private sectors and will continue to forge a comprehensive approach to meeting this challenge. However, our staffing level shortages and current budget crisis shows no signs of improvement in the near future. We can commit to a yearly evaluation of staffing levels and assess the feasibility of future participation in an identity theft task force.

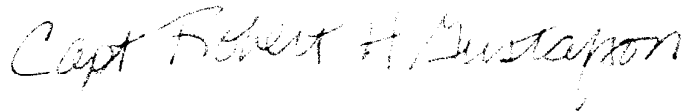
4. ***Public Information and Resource Material:***

We are pleased with our efforts to educate the public. We have produced a comprehensive identity theft public service announcement, distributed thousands of brochures, and provided identity theft presentations to numerous community groups. We continue to educate the public using a variety of methods, including the Internet, brochures, lectures, and the media. Additionally, law enforcement should collaborate with their local chamber of commerce and the Better Business Bureau to educate businesses about "best practice" guidelines on protecting personal information.

5. Standardized Identity Theft Crime Reports:

If a quality identity theft crime report could be agreed upon, we would gladly participate in the standardization of this form.

It was our pleasure to assist the 2003-2004 Orange County Grand Jury with information that will lay the foundation for coordinated effort to improve the investigation, reporting, and the prevention of identity theft in our community. If we can be of any further assistance, please contact my office.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Capt Robert H. Bustappon". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name of the signatory.

Andy Romero, Chief of Police