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IDENTITY THEFT: WHAT ARE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PROSECUTORS DOING TO COMBAT THE PROBLEMS?

The following is the requested response to the Orange County Grand Jury's report on identity theft for 2003-2004. In the findings section of the report the Grand Jury asked that several local city police agencies respond to the findings listed sections 3, 4, and 5. The following is the response from the Placentia Police Department.

3. Identity Theft Sub-Task Forces are in place in five 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.

Penal Code Section 933.05(a)(1)

Collectively Orange County Law Enforcement should explore the funding methods that may be available to support the presence of a task force within the County. With proper funding the burden placed upon the individual agencies will be lessened and the agencies will be more inclined to participate. Something similar to the Auto Theft Task Force OCATT should be looked at.

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.

Penal Code Section 933.05 (a)(1)

Currently we have no flyer or pamphlet information and now knowing that there may several vary viable existing forms we are prepared to accept one of the better and commonly agreed upon forms.

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.

Penal Code Section 933.05(a)(1)

We currently do have a reporting form for particular crime but as may be the case would openly explore or work to come to a common agreement on a form that would

be utilized by other local law enforcement within the county to develop uniformity amongst all of the agencies.

The following are responses to the recommendations section of the report in which the Grand Jury again asked for responses to sections 3, 4 and 5 of the report. The following responses are for the Placentia Police Department.

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 the 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)

Penal Code Section 933.05(b)(2)

We are in agreement that while a task force is necessary there will need to be a way to acquire appropriate funding in order to gain a broader spectrum of agencies.

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)

Penal Code Section 933.05 (b)(2)

Again this is perhaps accomplished through a review committee and involves looking at the existing forms and not recreating one but rather making some simple modifications.

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)

Penal Code Section (b)(2)

As with the above pamphlet and flyer information the same review process could take place. Each step to this process would then be approved through the Orange County Chief's Association resulting in overall support and uniformity within the County itself.

If you should have any further questions please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ward L. Smith, LT". The signature is written in a cursive style with a distinct loop at the end of the last name.

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