

HERMAN GOLDSTEIN EXCELLENCE IN PROBLEM SOLVING
AWARD SUBMISSION

INTRODUCTION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE WAS THE RESULT OF A DRASTIC INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF AUTOMOBILES BEING STOLEN BY YOUNG OFFENDERS IN THE CITY OF CALGARY. THE AUTO THEFT UNIT OF THE ORGANIZED CRIME CONTROL DIVISION WAS NOT ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY DEAL WITH THIS SEGMENT OF AUTO THEFT DUE TO MANPOWER CONSTRAINTS AND AN ALREADY OVERBURDENED CASE LOAD.

THE AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE LOOKED AT WAYS' OF DEALING WITH AUTO THEFTS THAT WOULD NOT ONLY INTERDICT THE THEFT OF AUTOMOBILES BY YOUNG OFFENDERS, BUT WOULD ALSO INCREASE MEDIA, JUDICIAL, AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF WHAT WAS CONSIDERED A MAJOR PROBLEM BY THE CALGARY POLICE SERVICE.

THE FOLLOWING SUBMISSION DEALS WITH THE PLANS, INITIATIVES, AND CONCEPTS'. DEVELOPED BY A DEDICATED GROUP OF OFFICERS TO DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM.

WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM

THE PROBLEM WAS THE DRASTIC INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF AUTOMOBILES STOLEN BY YOUNG PERSONS IN THE CITY. SOME PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS BY THE CRIME ANALYSIS UNIT OF THE POLICE SERVICE INDICATED THAT 50% OF VEHICLES WERE STOLEN BY YOUNG OFFENDERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF "JOYRIDING".

THE AUTO THEFT UNIT OF THE POLICE SERVICE WAS SET UP TO HANDLE "PROFESSIONAL" CAR THIEVES, AND NOT FOR DEALING WITH THIS TYPE OF OFFENCE. AS WELL UNIFORM RESPONSE TO THIS PROBLEM HAD BEEN REACTIVE IN NATURE. THAT IS TO SAY THE RECOVERY OF STOLEN VEHICLES AND WHEN THE INFORMATION WAS AVAILABLE, THE CHARGING OF PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE THEFTS.

IT WAS APPARENT THAT A UNIT DEDICATED TO THIS PARTICULAR PROBLEM WOULD BE NECESSARY TO PROPERLY INTERDICT AND REDUCE THIS TYPE OF CRIME.

FOR WHOM WAS IT A PROBLEM/AND WHO WAS AFFECTED?

AN INCREASING NUMBER OF CLAIMS, FOR THEFT OF AND DAMAGE TO AUTOMOBILES, WHICH IN TURN INCREASED INSURANCE COSTS TO THEIR CLIENTS.

JUDICIAL SYSTEM - FACED WITH AN INCREASING NUMBER OF YOUNG PERSONS BEING BROUGHT BEFORE THE COURTS FOR STEALING AUTOMOBILES.

THE PROBLEM WAS INCREASED WHEN THESE SAME COURTS DID LITTLE MORE THAN SLAP THE HAND OF THOSE CHARGED WITH STEALING VEHICLES.

POLICE SERVICE - FACED WITH AN INCREASED CALL LOAD DUE TO THE THEFT OF VEHICLES. AS WELL AS AN INCREASED NUMBER OF HIGH SPEED CHASES INVOLVING THESE STOLEN VEHICLES.

HOW WAS IT HANDLED IN THE PAST?

PREVIOUSLY THIS PROBLEM WAS REACTED TO ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS. A TASK FORCE HAD OPERATED FOR A VERY SHORT PERIOD IN 1992, HOWEVER WAS ABANDONED BECAUSE OF MAN POWER REQUIREMENTS ELSEWHERE. THE POLICE, JUDICIARY, AND INSURANCE COMPANIES HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY WORKED IN CONCERT TO ATTACK THE PROBLEM OF AUTO THEFT BY YOUNG OFFENDERS.

WHAT INFORMATION WAS COLLECTED ABOUT THE PROBLEM?

THE CRIMINAL ANALYSIS UNIT WAS RELIED UPON FOR STATISTICAL DATA, WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY USED FOR THE START UP OF THE TASK FORCE. THIS INFORMATION COUPLED WITH THE PREVIOUS INTELLIGENCE REGARDING KNOWN CAR THIEVES, BY THOSE MEMBERS ASSIGNED TO WORK IN THE TASK FORCE GAVE US A STARTING POINT.

FROM THIS STARTING POINT MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE EMBARKED ON A QUEST TO FIND OUT WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE AND WHY. SOME VERY INTERESTING INFORMATION WAS GAINED, WHICH CHANGED THE FOCUS OF THE

TASK FORCE :

WHO - IT WAS DETERMINED THAT THE MAJORITY OF AUTOMOBILES STOLEN BY YOUNG PERSONS, WERE IN FACT BEING STOLEN BY THOSE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 - 21 YEARS OF AGE.

WHAT - THE AUTOMOBILES STOLEN VARIED IN MAKE AND MODEL, BUT IF A CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL STOLE MUSTANGS, THEN THAT WAS THE ONLY TYPE OF VEHICLE THEY WOULD STEAL. THIS WAS ALSO TRUE OF GROUPS WHO STOLE AUTOMOBILES. THEY ALL HAD FAVOURITES.

WHEN - JUST AS INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS WERE PARTICULAR ABOUT WHAT THEY STOLE THEY WERE ALSO PARTICULAR ABOUT WHEN THEY STOLE AUTOMOBILES AS WELL.

WHERE - THE AUTOMOBILES WERE STOLEN ALL OVER THE CITY, BUT IN MOST CASES WERE DROPPED WITHIN A VERY FEW BLOCKS OF WHERE THE CULPRIT(S) LIVED.

WHY.- ANALYSIS OF THE ABOVE FACTORS AND THE INTERVIEWING OF "KNOWN" CAR THIEVES BY MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT THE MAJORITY OF VEHICLES WERE NOT BEING STOLEN BY YOUNG OFFENDERS FOR JOY RIDING, BUT WERE IN FACT STOLEN BY YOUNG PERSONS (18-21 YRS) FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMITTING OTHER CRIMES. THESE CRIMES INCLUDED ROBBERIES, BREAK AND ENTERS, SMASH AND GRABS. AS WELL THEY WERE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF GOADING POLICE OFFICERS INTO

HIGH SPEED CHASES.

THIS INFORMATION RESULTED IN A NUMBER OF PROBLEM SOLVING INITIATIVES BEING DEVELOPED BY THE TASK FORCE TO DEAL WITH AUTOMOBILES BEING STOLEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMITTING OTHER CRIMES.

WHAT WAS THE GOAL OF THE PROBLEM SOLVING EFFORT?

INTERDICTION OF YOUNG PERSONS STEALING AUTOMOBILES FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMITTING OTHER CRIMES WAS THE GOAL OF OUR PROBLEM SOLVING EFFORTS. PLANS WERE DEVELOPED TO MEET THIS GOAL.

WHAT STRATEGIES WERE DEVELOPED TO REACH THE GOAL?

A NUMBER OF STRATEGIES WERE DEVELOPED TO COMBAT THE PROBLEM OF AUTO THEFT BY YOUNG PERSONS. SOME OF THE PLANS INCLUDED, A TASK FORCE OPERATION PLAN, YOUNG OFFENDER BLITZ, AND MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS PLAN. AS WELL A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES WERE DEVELOPED. THESE INCLUDED; BAIT VEHICLES, CRIMINAL PROFILING, NEWSLETTER, AND VERTICAL PROSECUTION. THESE STRATEGIES ARE DISCUSSED AT LENGTH IN THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS OF THIS SUBMISSION.

WHAT AGENCIES ASSISTED THE POLICE SERVICE IN ACHIEVING THE GOAL?

THIS PROJECT WAS ASSISTED THROUGH THE COOPERATION OF THE COMMUNITY, THE MEDIA, THE CROWN PROSECUTORS OFFICE, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CALGARY POLICE SERVICE. AS WELL, THE INSURANCE CRIME PREVENTION BUREAU, AND THE AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE COMPANIES OF ALBERTA "IWATCH" COMMITTEE, WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN PROVIDING EQUIPMENT NECESSARY FOR THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF THE AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE.

WAS THE GOAL ACCOMPLISHED?

THE SUCCESS OF THE AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE WAS REALIZED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

O A **26% DECREASE** IN THE NUMBER OF AUTOMOBILES STOLEN IN THE CITY OF CALGARY IN A COMPARISON OF 1993 VS 1994

O A DROP IN THE NUMBER OF BREAK INS AND ROBBERIES, SUPPORTING THE THEORY THAT VEHICLES WERE BEING STOLEN TO COMMIT OTHER CRIMES AS OPPOSED TO JOY RIDING.

O THE RECOVERY OF OVER **\$750,000.00 IN STOLEN VEHICLES**

O THE RECOVERY OF OVER **\$300,000.00 IN OTHER STOLEN PROPERTY**

O **120 PEOPLE CHARGED WITH 368 CRIMINAL CODE OFFENCES.** THESE CHARGES INCLUDED: POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY, THEFT, BREAK AND ENTER, ROBBERY, POSSESSION OF A NARCOTIC FOR THE

FOR THE PURPOSE OF TRAFFICKING.

O AN **INCREASE IN SENTENCING** AS A DETERRENT TO THOSE
COMMITTING THE CRIME OF AUTO THEFT.

THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS HAD A VERY POSITIVE AFFECT ON THE POLICE
SERVICE AS WELL AS THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.



OFFICE of the CHIEF of POLICE
CALGARY, CANADA

1995 July 14

Mr. John Lusardi
The Police Executive Research Forum
1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 930
Washington, D.C. 20037
U.S.A.

Dear Sirs:

Please accept this letter and the attached report as our submission to the Police Executive Research Forum third annual Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem-Solving Award.

The problem described and dealt with in this report was a problem of epidemic proportion in the city of Calgary. Not only were we inundated with car thefts but many of the vehicles being stolen were utilized in high speed pursuits which imposed extreme danger to the citizens as well as the police officers. Very often, these pursuits were discontinued due to the high degree of danger.

The development and implementation of this plan demonstrates the benefit of using the problem-solving approach to deal with a problem of this kind. Through a number of successful tactics, the problem has been reduced significantly, as has the danger level resulting from high speed pursuits. This problem-solving initiative is one which can be readily adapted by other police agencies with similar problems.

One of the unique aspects of this problem-solving plan was the excellent cooperation and involvement of the media and the judiciary in our problem-solving solution.

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Having personally witnessed the obvious effectiveness in reducing this crime problem, I strongly support this submission on behalf of the Calgary Police Service for your consideration of this prestigious award.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.A. Bechthold". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

R.A. Bechthold
CHIEF OF POLICE

/blm

Attachment

cc: Staff Sergeant P. Laventure, Priority Crimes Unit (#711)