



THE CITY OF
SAN DIEGO

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OFFICE OF
JERRY SANDERS
CHIEF OF POLICE

95-67

July 17, 1995

Mr. John Lusardi
Police Executive Research Forum
1120 Connecticut Ave.. NW, Suite 930
Washington DC, 20037


Dear John,

Between October, 1993 and December, 1994, there were 67 reported cases of burglaries to U.S. Postal Service delivery trucks. The crimes occurred during the monthly delivery of federal subsidy checks such as Social Security and welfare payments. The total monetary loss was estimated at \$400,000.00 dollars.

Officer Henry Lobei began a project to solve the problem. His project involved a partnership between the Postal Service, the San Diego Police Department, The U.S. Attorney's office and a business called Pronet, which installs tracking devices in bundles of bait money used in combating bank robberies.

The group responsible for the crime spree was believed to be funneling the stolen checks to the L.A. area where they would attempt to cash them. Officers used the electronic tracking devices inside several "baited" pieces of mail. When the suspects broke into the Postal vehicles and took the baited envelopes, the tracking devices activated and led officers to them. The crime ring was broken and the Postal Service subsequently increased its vehicle security measures. This was a very successful project and I am pleased to recommend him for the annual Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem Solving Award.

Sincerely,


Jerry Sanders
Chief of Police



DIVERSITY
BRINGS US ALL TOGETHER

NAME: Henry J. Lobel #2683
POSITION: San Diego Police Officer (POII)
Assigned to Eastern Division
DATE OF HIRE: April 30, 1979

BACKGROUND :

I have been a police officer for approximately sixteen (16) years. During that time I have been assigned to various field assignments such as the Prostitution Detail, the STAR Program and am currently a Field Evidence Technician.

I started the Postal "POP" project in December, 1994, and completed it in May, 1995, with the help of the Postal Service and various other agencies with the final results being several arrests and a savings of over \$400,000.00 to the U.S. Government and taxpayers.

Officer Officer Henry J. LOBEL #2683
Beat City Heights Area (310's)
Project Type 459 Series to U.S. Postal Trucks
Problem address City Heights Area
Date project opened 12-06-94 closed: 05-02-95
Hours worked on project (estimate) 100 hours

Problem Description (SCANNING): Prevention/detection and apprehension of suspects involved in burglaries to parked postal trucks on the first of each month resulting in the loss of thousands of dollars.

ANALYSIS:

Between 10-93 and 12-94 it has been reported by the Postal Service that 67 cases involving postal truck burglaries resulting in a loss in excess of \$400,00.00.

Each of the above listed cases were reported on or near the first of each month. The areas effected by the burglaries were City Heights, Normal Heights and Logan Heights.

RESPONSE:

With the co-operation with the Postal Inspectors Office and the U.S. Attorney's office the project has been recognized and the problem identified.

U.S. POSTAL TRUCK BURGLARIES

PROBLEM:

On the first of the month, between the hours of 0900 and 1600, a number of U.S. Postal mail trucks have been burglarized to gain access to welfare/government checks. Once the trucks have been broken into, the checks have been taken to a central point for distribution and fraudulently cashed. The mail trucks that are broken into are left parked, unattended and easy targets for the street wise criminals.

SOLUTION:

With the reduction of these problems in mind, the installation of the tracking device using the "PRONET" system will be essential in the detection and apprehension of the criminals involved in the complex and organized crime. With the use of the "PRONET" system installed into several postal trucks and with the use of the detection devices installed in several police vehicles, the criminals would be able to be detected and taken into custody. The above listed plan would utilize the NPT groups from Eastern Division.-

Because of the shortage of field personnel, the utilization of the NPT units will eliminate the lack of protection for the city during this operation. It has been determined by the Postal Inspector that the highest burglary potential is the first day of the month between the hours of 0900-1600.

PERSONNEL:

2 Sergeants

14 Officers

EQUIPMENT:

PRONET System

3 PRONET vehicles

6 two-man marked police vehicles

Other personnel and equipment will be supplied by the U.S. Postal Service.

TACTICAL ACTION PLAN

DATE: FEBRUARY 1, 1995

PROBLEM:

The problem has been that on the first of each month, several U.S. Postal trucks have been burglarized and a large number of welfare/government checks have been taken. The checks have then been forged and cashed. The average loss per truck has been between \$10-\$40 thousand dollars. It has been estimated that \$600,000 worth of checks is being stolen and cashed each month as a result of the Postal truck burglaries. The time of the burglaries has been between 0900-1600 hours on the first of each month.

PLAN:

We have been in the process of informing and utilizing the NPT units from the target areas and in constant communication with two U.S. Postal Inspectors. The plan will be to have several PRONET systems installed in several postal trucks. Once the truck is burglarized, the PRONET device will be activated. All of the police vehicles that are equipped with the PRONET detection system will be alerted of the activation and the plan will be implemented. With the use of the PRONET system, identification and apprehension will be eminent.

We expect to have all of the selected Postal trucks installed with the PRONET systems and all personnel involved in this plan to be ready for execution beginning in March and to last until May of 1995. We have been advised by the Postal Inspectors, who are directly dealing with the PRONET company, that the cost of the PRONET system will be covered by the U.S. Postal Service in the amount of \$6,000.00 for use during the above listed time period.

Plan A

Plan A will consist of use of the NPT Team from Eastern Division. Four (4) PRONET systems will be installed, in four (4) U.S. Postal jeeps. These jeeps are assigned to the City Heights area and will be in operation between the hours of 0900-1600 on the first of each month for a three month period, beginning in March and ending in May, 1995.

The PRONET system will be installed in the rear of the Postal vehicle attached to a mail container (plastic tray). The PRONET sensor unit will be concealed in a "dummy" pack of welfare/treasury checks and placed in the above mentioned "tray". The tray will be located next to the window on the right side of the vehicle, in plain view. When the suspect breaks the vehicle window and grabs the "dummy pack" off the "tray", the PRONET system will be activated.

At the time of activation, all Police PRONET detection systems will be activated. Our primary target area will be City Heights, but other areas in the city may also show activation. Patrol vehicles and NPT units will respond to the area of activation and act accordingly. If another PRONET system is activated at the same time as the first PRONET, units will be directed by the field supervisor where to respond. In the event that a 211 bank PRONET is activated during this operation, the response will be the same and the same procedure will apply. Because the PRONET system cannot identify the activation being a bank robbery or the Postal vehicle operation, all activations will be handled the same until the suspect is taken into custody and the crime identified. all San Diego Police patrol units equipped with PRONET detection devices will be notified of this operation prior to the first of each month. Radio Dispatch will also be briefed in detail about the operation. Once it has been established that the suspect in custody is part of the mail burglaries, the Postal Inspectors will be contacted and the operation turned over to them.

Equipment for this operation will include the officers issued 800 MHz radios, three two-officer marked PRONET equipped vehicles and three two-officer marked police vehicles. A U.S. Postal Radio will be supplied by the Postal Service and given to the NPT field supervisor to be used to coordinate/inform police/Postal personnel involved in the operation.

A.B.L.E. (S.D.P.D. helicopter) has also been notified of the operation and available if requested.

Communication/information between police and Postal personnel will be vital in the operation and will be coordinated between both agencies' supervisors.

Plan B

In the event that the PRONET system is not used, the NPT units, along with Postal personnel, will heavily saturate the target areas using various surveillance techniques. Several unmarked and marked police vehicles will be utilized by the team to ensure safety in the event of a foot/vehicle pursuit.

Communication between the Postal personnel and police will be coordinated by the NPT field supervisor. A Postal radio will be given to the supervisor to ensure that all personnel are kept informed and updated during the entire time of the operation. If or when a suspect is taken into custody, the Postal inspector will be contacted and the operation turned over to them.

Plan B equipment will be the same as Plan A, but without the PRONET system.

TACTICS, TOOLS AND RESOURCES

TACTICS:

APPREHENSION

CHANNELING

SURVEILLANCE

STAKEOUT

SUPPRESSION

SATURATION PATROL

PROFILE INTERVIEW PATROL

TOOLS:

BICYCLES

MARKED POLICE VEHICLE

PRONET DETECTION DEVICES

RESOURCES:

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

NPT UNITS

CRIME PREVENTION

CRIME ANALYSIS

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT UNIT

NEWS MEDIA

PRONET CORPORATION

ASSESSMENT/IMPACT:

As a result of the above listed project being implemented, the use of the "Pronet" system as resulted in a savings of over \$400,000.00, six suspects in custody for a series of burglaries in San Diego and Los Angeles areas. These suspects were identified as the "ring leaders" in a major organized crime spree.

RESOURCES USED:

S.D.P.D. "New Technology" (Bob Davis), U.S. Postal Inspectors (Tom Hofius, Richard Tanel). U.S. Assistant Attorney (Alberto Arevalo), S.D.P.D. Crime Analysis, and U.S. Postal Service Crime Analysis and the S.D.P.D. Eastern Division Neighborhood Policing Team (Sgt. A. Groza).

COMMENTS:

As a result of the above listed project the Postal Service has implemented a program to install a metal screen and shatter proof glass in all of their vehicles. It is also being discussed by the government to have welfare/government checks deposited into direct account to be used by the recipient.

REASONS FOR CLOSURE IF PROBLEM NOT SOLVED:	Problem Solved
Officer: Henry J. Lobe! #2683	Date: 05-02-95
Reviewed by Supervisor	Date:
Comments:	