



LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

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02-24

April 29, 2002

Mr. Chuck Wexler
Executive Director
Police Executive Research Forum
1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 930
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Wexler:

HERMAN GOLDSTEIN AWARD NOMINATIONS

i would like to present for your consideration the attached nominations for the 2002 Herman Goldstein Award. Both of these programs have greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department, and i am grateful to the Police Executive Research Forum for sponsoring this opportunity to have them recognized.

If you or your staff require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Lieutenant James Lopez, Office of the Assistant Sheriff, at (323) 526-5065.

Sincerely,

LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

LARRY L. WALDIE
ASSISTANT SHERIFF

A Tradition of Service

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT
COMPTON SHERIFF'S STATION**

STREET PROSTITUTION- VIABLE SOLUTIONS TO SOLVING THE PROBLEM

The problem:

Street prostitution along a major thoroughfare- Long Beach Boulevard in the City of Compton.

Analysis:

Deputy personnel developed a better understanding of chronic problems affecting the city and concluded that street prostitution along Long Beach Boulevard had been affecting the city for approximately 20 years. They concluded that an aggressive multi-pronged approach to enforcement could severely reduce the prostitution activity. Past conversations with the past local law enforcement agency (Compton Police Department) which had jurisdiction in the area up until September 2000, local residents, community and business leaders lead us to believe the aforementioned approach was necessary.

Response:

This multi pronged approach included:

1. Targeting "johns"- persons willing to pay prostitutes for sexual activities
2. Prostitution Sweeps
3. Warning and Identifying known prostitutes, using local statutes
4. Imposing court probation sanctions similar to ones used in "gang injunctions"
5. Targeting motels known to allow prostitution/narcotics activity via abatement measures

Assessment

The Compton Sheriff's Station used its Community Safety Surveys and various meeting with citizens/business groups coupled with early month crimes statistics to develop and implement its strategy. After the strategy was effectively implemented, Deputy personnel and the above mentioned groups noted a significant reduction in prostitution and other criminal offenses in the area. To date over 300 arrests in an 18 month span were made.

Judge's/District Attorney's comments

This project is notable for several reasons. Prostitution along Long Beach Boulevard has been plaguing the City of Compton for 20 plus years. Given the nature and criminal activity occurring in the City one would reason that victimless crimes would not be a high priority. However, when

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addressing the needs of the community the Sheriff's Department found this ranked among one of the highest priorities particularly among the adjoining businesses on Long Beach Boulevard. The personnel involved devoted countless hours establishing a rapport with the community and its many elements while developing the multi pronged approach used. This is particularly noteworthy because the Sheriff's Department has only been policing the affected area for 18 months. The method of reducing this long standing problem was very creative and used a variety of agencies to make it successful.

Scanning

The City of Compton is located in Los Angeles County and has a population of approximately 111,000 people with a square mile radius of 12.5 miles. The area around Long Beach Boulevard is primarily Hispanic and African American which is consistent with the rest of the city. Long Beach Boulevard is a major route stretching through several cities in Los Angeles County. Housing in the area ranging from Section 8 apartments to low income residential neighborhoods. The affected area on Long Beach Boulevard is primarily made up of liquor stores, gas stations, motels, small restaurants and family owned stores. What is unique about the motels in the area and surrounding area on Long Beach Boulevard is they are owned by the same family. Due to the Sheriff's Department taking over police services from a disbanded police department there were no previous crime statistics we could use in developing our multi pronged approach. To the best of our knowledge the area has a long history of robberies, narcotic activity, thefts, prostitution, gang and other street crime. The other affected criminal activity areas were also targeted in our initial assessment of the area.

The Station has used a variety of "Community Policing/Problem Solving" techniques, including regular community meeting and periodic crime/safety surveys in or around the affected area. Initially when conducting the crime surveys deputies believed the prostitution problem would not rank very high as a community concern considering other known concerns (i.e gangs, homicides, other violent crimes). Surprisingly enough the prostitution problem ranked as high as the other noted concerns. The business community cited very valid concerns about prostitution being among the longest rooted problems in the area. Because of the input received deputies felt this concern was one of the highest quality of life concerns in the area and needed to be reduced immediately.

The Stations Special Assignment team (referred to in many circles as a Community Policing Team) gathered all the necessary information to solidify their point to supervisors.

Analysis

The Compton Sheriff's Station conducted an analysis of various parts of the crime circle and utilized information from law enforcement governmental and social agencies. Assigned project Deputies conducted interviews of :

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1. Major Crimes Bureau - the Sheriff's Department unit which is tasked with assisting stations with prostitution activity
2. Local courts for sentencing guidance/prosecution
3. Social service agencies - for ideas on alternate sentencing and A.L.D.S, drug awareness classes
4. Known prostitutes in other areas
5. Community groups (i.e block watches, community, businesses)

The initial analysis also included a review of the most active areas for prostitution identified via observation and complaint information.

Major Crimes Bureau

It is important to note that the Major Crimes Bureau is a county wide asset which targets prostitution as one of its many functions but is not solely dedicated to Compton Station. There are approximately 5 investigators assigned to the Vice Team. During an initial training session involved personnel learned the following information about street prostitution activity:

- most live in the area where they work
- usually engage in narcotic activity or are addicted
- work to support their habit
- have had prior arrests for other charges, the most likely include narcotic offenses, assault, grand and petty theft
- have children
- know most of the other prostitutes in the area
- most customers did not live in the area

Techniques of setting up john stings, prostitution sweeps and field identification programs were discussed during this initial training session. The trainers re-iterated their support for our Community Policing Project.

Community Input

As stated above various components of the community were solicited for input. All persons in the area reported they were aware of the prostitution problem but very few had attempted to network with the prior law enforcement agency to combat the problem. There seemed to be a perception on the communities part that this was a minor problem compared to other problems in the area. All business

in the area reported they have been affected by the problem sometime in the past. Several shop owners have seen prostitutes assaulted or other criminal activity associated with their lifestyle. One local pastor on Long Beach Boulevard stated his church has been on Long Beach Boulevard for 20 plus years. He reported seeing solicitation activity in front of his church many times. Many community members advised us prostitution activity occurred virtually all the time. This can be attributed to the fact Long Beach Boulevard is a high traffic route and spans through

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several cities in Los Angeles County.

Various solutions were obtained from many community meetings and door to door surveys. The most popular and viable solutions included:

- Make more arrests on the customers “johns”
- Make more arrests on the prostitutes
- Have the court offer more social services to help the offenders
- Have the court offer stiffer penalties
- Have the courts impose sanctions on the hotels that harbor prostitution activity
- Enforce loitering laws on nearby liquor stores
- More narcotic enforcement on area drug houses

Court Input

The District Attorney's office was consulted during this initial planning phase. Various meetings were held to discuss this concern. Input received from their office was this issue had not been raised by the previous law enforcement agency. When told about the concerns of the community and how this issue has been longstanding the Assistant Branch Head and Head filing District Attorney agreed to assist us in our efforts.

The District Attorney suggested the following

- impose stay away orders (stay off of Long Beach Bl in Compton) on convicted prostitutes and johns
- make H.I.V. and drug education classes mandatory as part of probation sanctions if not jailed
- writing a joint letter to motels known to harbor prostitution and narcotic activity advising them of civil abatement procedures

During the discussions we found that a majority of offenders did very little jail time for prostitution offenses. Past court sanctions usually only included probation and or community service. The District Attorney's office pledged its support toward our efforts. They conferred with the judges and even assisted us in gathering information on proposed education classes.

Social Service agencies

With the assistance of the District Attorney's and probation office information was obtained from various agencies to possibly conduct educational classes. We found that the city of Compton had resources we could use. It was beneficial for all involved because most agencies were operating under grants which included collaboration with law enforcement agencies. A lot of the agencies polled were already working in some capacity with court referrals. Deputies concluded with the courts blessing this part of the assessment would be the easiest to implement.

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Deputies observations

During a three month observation period deputies noticed the following trends which they believed contributed to prostitution in the area:

- the local liquor stores were very high traffic areas
- most of what they believed to be prostitutes frequented these liquor stores
- there were local known drug houses near the affected prostitution area
- there was definitely a prostitution problem on Long Beach Boulevard in the neighboring areas (Lynwood to the north and Long Beach to the south)
- the heaviest concentration of prostitution occurred near the south end of Long Beach Boulevard in Compton
- prostitutes were observed during all days/hours but seemed to be heaviest on Friday and Saturday evening particularly around mid and end of month periods

Routine patrol arrests were made on Long Beach Boulevard but not in conjunction with the developed abatement plan. Other neighboring police agencies which patrolled Long Beach Boulevard were contacted regarding any prostitution enforcement efforts they were using. The agencies polled did little or nothing at a station level to combat the prostitution problem other than routine patrol. Coincidentally Major Crimes Bureau has done "john stings" in Century Station's area which borders Compton to the north. It was concluded during this period that aggressive prostitution enforcement would deter other criminal activity.

Response

The Deputies assigned to this project used this analysis as well as obtained reports from other agencies which have been successful in combating prostitution problems (i.e Oceanside P.D, San Diego P.D and San Francisco P.D). It was decided to use the 5 step multi pronged approach listed below:

1. John Stings
2. Periodic prostitution sweeps
3. Aggressive Field Identification Program of known prostitutes
4. Alternate sentencing
5. Targeting motels via abatement measures that prostitutes frequent

John Stings

From November 2000 to April 2002, 12 "john stings" were conducted in the highest concentration area of prostitute activity. In this operation female deputies act as decoys in order to arrest people for solicitation. These operations have proved very successful and have produced 271 arrests. In our initial suggestions from concerned citizens they wanted an aggressive enforcement strategy targeting customers. This operation was received well by

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prosecutors but met with resistance from defense attorneys (in most cases public defenders). The Public Defenders office felt we were entrapping their clients based on their mode of dress. It was found that these stings were a significant deterrent to this type of activity. Based on the success of these stings the station plans to continue conducting these operations. The lead deputy on this project has developed an expertise in conducting these operations commensurate with that of detectives from Major Crimes Bureau.

Prostitution Sweeps/Field Identification Program

In the same period stated above Special Assignment Team deputies started identifying persons they believed to be prostitutes. As part of this identification program the "prostitutes" pictures were taken. They signed an advisement form which in essence warned them that subsequent contacts for suspected prostitution activity would result in arrest. Approximately 50 prostitutes have signed this advisement form, many of which have been re-contacted again and arrested. Many of the contacts resulted in citations or arrests for other offenses, most notably alcohol/narcotic offenses, warrants and probation offenses.

Midway through this project, selected patrol personnel from various shifts were given training by assigned project deputies and Major Crimes Bureau personnel on our efforts. More importantly as part of their regular duties they were to assist with the field identification and or arrests of prostitutes. This program proved successful as it helped to incorporate the rest of the station into dealing with the aforementioned problem. Periodically, Major Crimes Bureau also assisted in this endeavor.

Overall arrests for "john stings" and prostitution sweeps resulted in over 400 arrests.

Alternate Sentencing

The District Attorney's office developed alternative sentencing for both sides of the crime circle. The Court imposed stay away orders on prostitutes arrested on Long Beach Boulevard as part of their probation. Sanctions also included mandatory narcotic, H.I.V., and narcotic classes as part of their rehabilitation efforts. Although the amount of jail time did not seem to increase the Probation Department noted a significant rise in education referrals.

"Johns" received probation sanctions as well as mandatory community service, H.I.V and in some cases drug education classes. Prior to this effort for a first time "john" offender" the court had a tendency to reduce the charge to a lesser offense. This trend has seemed to show a reverse as most first time offenders are not given this opportunity. In one case a judge gave a first time offender 60 days jail time, which in years past has been unheard of.

Abatement Measures

A project deputy specifically trained in abatement measures was tasked with contacting local

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motels where prostitutes frequent. The intent was to provide guidance on how to combat loitering by the prostitutes. Initially, the suggestions were warmly received but as time went on and personnel changes occurred the suggestions were not employed.

Assessment

Continuing Efforts

The tactics used during this project will continue to be used however, a number of measures will be taken in the future to prevent the problem from escalating. These measures include:

- stronger abatement measures, possibly enforcing civil codes dealing with criminal activities at the known prostitute motels. During this effort we dealt with hotel managers but never contacted the actual owners. As a starter The District Attorneys's office suggested writing a letter warning them about possible court sanctions if the activity continued.
- stronger community education program, possibly posting billboards in the area and writing a monthly article in the local newspaper about our efforts.

Our initial theory of prostitution enforcement would reduce other criminal activity was validated by a crime analysis done a few days prior to writing this article. According to the analysis ,areas such as burglaries, robberies, thefts and assaults were looked at. What was found was except for the summer months in which virtually every area in the station experienced higher than normal crime rates, the rate of incidents in and around our project area were minimal. **(SEE FIGURES - Attached Pages)**

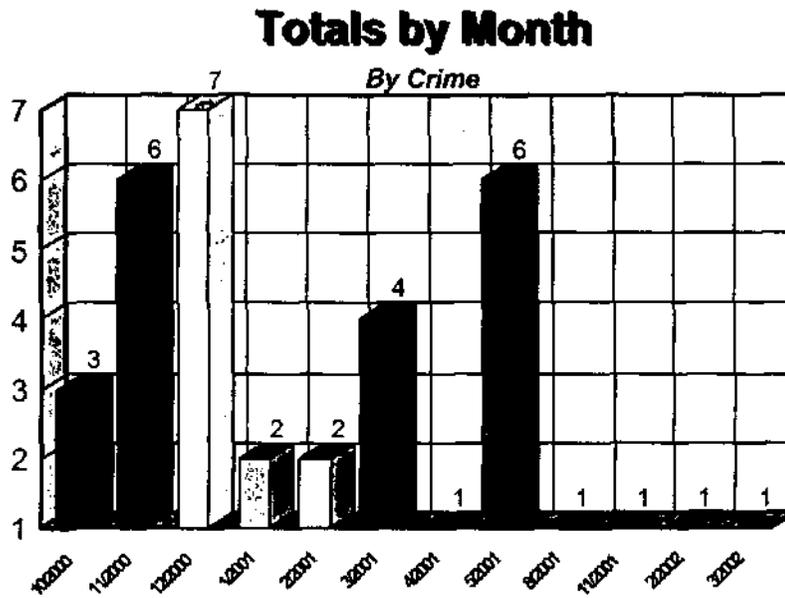
The station has received numerous letters of thanks and support during this project phase. As a result the level of prostitution has dramatically been reduced on Long Beach Boulevard. Even though we were successful in reducing our prostitution rate we feel displacement may occur. The neighboring areas admitted similar problems but had not adopted an aggressive multi pronged enforcement strategy. We will continue our outreach efforts to other affected areas on Long Beach Boulevard.

Reference List

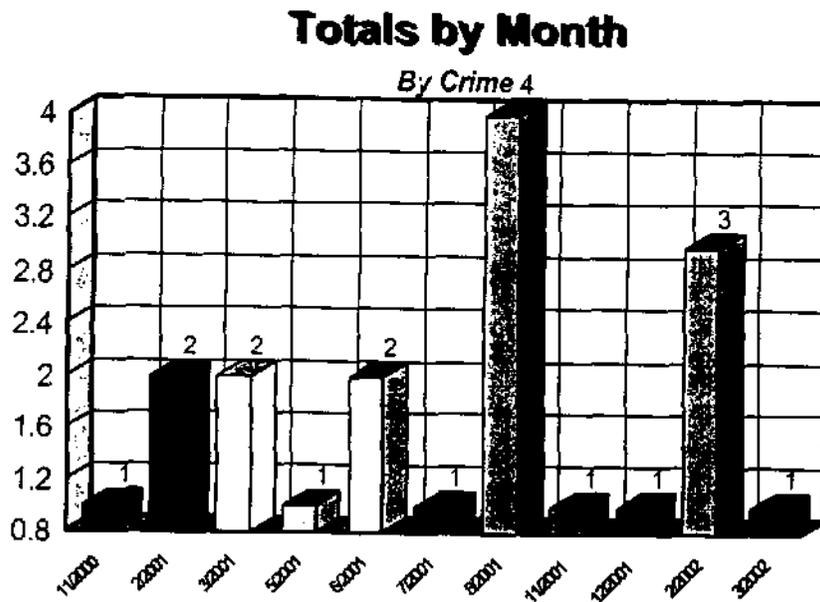
1. Community Policing for Supervisor's and Manager's- L.A. County Sheriff's Department
2. Practical Skills for Community Policing- L.A. County Sheriff's Department
2. Criminal Abatement Workshop- L.A. County Sheriff's Department

For additional information about the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Compton Station's activities, contact Lieutenant Shaun Mathers (sjmath@lasd.org), Sergeant Vincent Plair (veplair@lasd.org), Sergeant Patrick Davoren (fpsdavore@lasd.org), or Deputy Carondolet Jenkins (cdjenkin@lasd.org), 301 S. Willowbrook Avenue, Compton CA. 90220. Fax (310)763-9318.

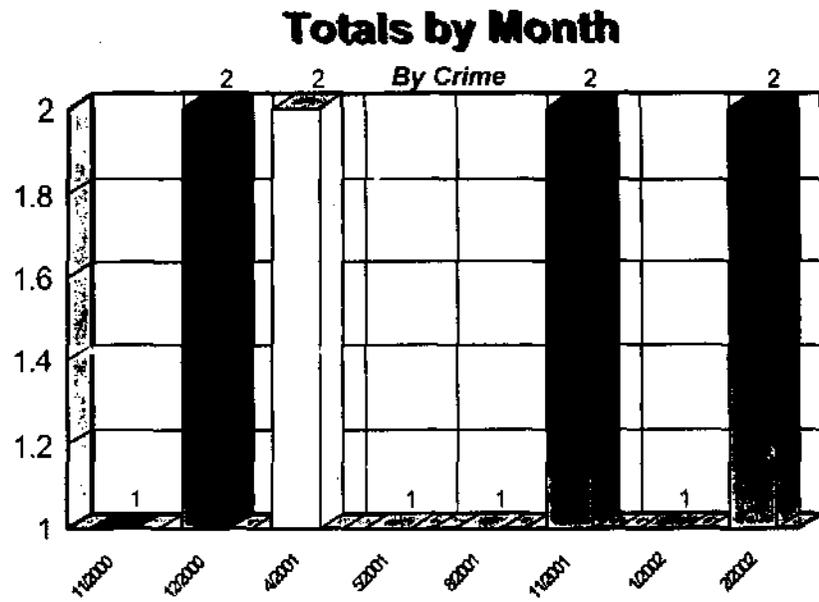
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Theft from Vehicles

