



Environmental Criminology Research Inc.

NEWS RELEASE

Award by International Association of Chiefs of Police recognizes use of innovative Canadian crime-fighting technology



The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has awarded the prestigious Choicepoint Award for Excellence in Criminal Investigation to the Irvine, California Police Department, in part for their effective use of an innovative Canadian-developed crime-fighting technology called geographic profiling. The ChoicePoint Excellence in Criminal Investigation Award recognizes the use of exceptional innovation and outstanding achievement by law enforcement in conducting investigations. This is the first time the honor has been awarded to a municipal police department.

The Irvine Police Department was recognized by the world's largest organization of police executives for its investigation of the so-called "Chair Burglar", who is believed to be responsible for as many as 500 residential burglaries and more than \$2.5 million in stolen property over the past 20 years. Police arrested and charged Ray Lopez in November 2005. Comparing statistics six months before and after the arrest, residential burglaries in Irvine dropped almost 40%.

"This award not only recognizes the expert use of technology in crime-solving, but how simple strong police work, coupled with the latest crime-fighting technology, is a one-two punch that can have a significant effect on crime on a neighborhood level," said Maggard. "The hard work of our crime analysts complimented our detectives' dogged investigation and led to this arrest. I am extremely proud of our IPD team."

The successful investigation began with geographic profiling, an advanced crime analysis technique originally developed by Dr. Kim Rossmo at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada. Using Rigel geographic profiling software from Vancouver-based Environmental Criminology Research Inc. (ECRI), the Irvine team pinpointed the likely base of operations of the Chair Burglar in their city. Combining this information with crime forecasting to predict when the offender would strike next, investigators were able to identify a suspicious rental vehicle in the target neighbourhood, leading them to Ray Lopez. Global positioning satellite (GPS) technology was used to track vehicles rented by Lopez and tie him to further burglaries, while new DNA testing techniques working with microscopic amounts of genetic material allowed investigators to connect him to past burglaries in their series.



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In praising the Irvine PD for their work, Dr. Rossmo commented “Over two million burglaries are reported to the police every year in the United States, leading to a total annual loss of \$3.5 billion. These figures do not include indirect costs or police investigative time. The use of these advanced techniques for property crimes only marginally increase costs, and studies have shown this is more than offset by the reduction in investigative labor.”

Ian Laverty, the President of ECRI, says that the company’s geographic profiling software is already widely used in Canada for both violent crime and property crime investigation. The RCMP provide geographic profiling services nationally, and the Ontario Provincial Police provide a similar service in Ontario. In addition many municipal police departments in Canada have trained their crime analysts to use geographic profiling for property crime investigation. “Technology alone doesn’t solve crimes”, Mr. Laverty said, “but it can give police investigators a big advantage in many cases.”

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