

Operation Guardian

Abstract:

In the security industry Merseyside had become known as 'high risk' for 'cash in transit' robberies. Losses amounted to hundreds of thousands of pounds. The security industry was becoming concerned. The problem was discussed at the British Security Industry Association (BSIA) meeting, which represented security companies throughout the country. On Merseyside favoured victims were Royal Mail Cashco and Securicor. Nationally between January and August 1998 there had been 302 attacks. Cashco were the complainant in 21% of cases. In Merseyside attacks against Cashco had increased to 34% by August, 1998.

Reflecting a national problem a gap had emerged between the targets focused upon by the National Crime Squad, the Force Major Crime Unit (MCU) and the volume crime dealt with at Area level. 'Cash in transit' robberies moved into this lacuna.

But Merseyside Police was becoming more business orientated in their assessment of demands upon the Service. The Force had a Vision 'to be able to show that we are making Merseyside safer by continuously improving our efficiency and effectiveness as a police force to give quality as a public service'. The escalating 'cash in transit' robberies did not enhance this Vision. Local press and media reports merely increased the public fear of crime.

As a Force Merseyside is committed to a Problem Solving (PS) approach, tackling the underlying causes of recurring incidents. A systematic response was required. It came in November, 1998 when, albeit not for the first time, the Force created a Robbery Team. However, on this occasion it was a holistic police response. A problem solving approach was adopted meaning officers were to concentrate on all 'cash in transit' offences. In doing so the Team were able to develop a systematic analysis of all such offences and respond to Area problems. Through this rigorous approach was born Operation Guardian.

Initially set up for three months Operation Guardian was so successful it lasted for six. Its impact upon the Force was to enhance the prospect of 'a safer Merseyside'. Problem identification was Scanned and Analysed from computer data by a dedicated analyst. With dramatic results an effective Response was achieved through a partnership approach between police and the commercial sector. On Assessment incidents began to decline. Detection's increased. The Robbery Team made forty-four criteria offence arrests during this initiative resulting in the recovery of stolen property to the approximate value of £286,000.

Description of project:

Merseyside Police consists of four Districts and eleven Areas each headed by an Area Commander. Within each Area Incident Management Units (IMU) are the central structures for the operation of problem solving. An IMU consists of an Incident Unit and Intelligence Unit. The Incident Unit deals with all non-urgent telephone calls whilst the Intelligence Unit seeks to develop information into intelligence packages and identify local 'hot spots' to patrol officers. Area Intelligence Units began to identify an increase of 'cash in transit' robberies with a distinctive modus operandi (MO). Security companies were anxious for the police to respond.

Traditionally there had been an increase of such offences in the lead up to Christmas and into the New Year. With substantially more cash in circulation in every location the risks became greater whilst security company employees became more vulnerable. Repeat offences had already been reported in a number of Areas.

Concern had previously been voiced by a number of senior officers that there appeared to be little scanning at a Force level. In Areas the Tasking & Co-ordinating Group is a crucial component of the PS process. It provides the link between the identification of problems, the prioritisation of those problems and the implementation of appropriate solutions. The Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) had to take a more active role in scanning Force problems in order to address cross boarder crime. This was beyond the resource capability of Area Tasking & Co-ordinating Groups.

In October, 1998 this type of robbery was discussed at the Area Commanders Operations Conference. Following deliberation Operation Guardian was the result; a Force Strategy designed to provide a corporate response. (Appendix A).

Operation Guardian was a Strategy document which focused on the problems of 'cash in transit' robberies. The aim was to provide a coordinated response from each Area. It increased awareness of the problem throughout the Force. Introduction of the Force Robbery Team meant individuals could be targeted and the issue of travelling criminals could be addressed.

Scanning:

Once identified it was now necessary to ensure a framework existed to secure continual involvement in scanning and identifying future problems. Each Area and the FIB appointed an intelligence officer as a dedicated Operation Guardian co ordinator. They held an Operation Guardian co ordinators weekly meeting. The Robbery Team's intelligence officer also attended to brief and update the meeting. A dedicated analyst was also present having been appointed to assist in scanning, comparative case analysis and other analytical techniques.' In effect Operation Guardian began to focus the attention of officers, who albeit somewhat unwittingly at first, had commenced the scanning process.

The very nature of the crimes meant it was not suddenly going to go away. The potential gains with limited risks were now too great for the problem to stop. It was becoming so easy for two or three males to threaten a lone security guard. In an instant the cash collector was faced with a critical assessment decision. Succumb to the demands of the criminal or risk personal injury.

Scanning revealed a common trend was for the 'armed' criminal not to use firearms but sledgehammers. They could be purchased at any DIY premises. The sledgehammer had a twofold purpose. Threaten the guard, then having stolen the cash place the case on its side and hit the same spots. Unlike any other part of the country the criminal on Merseyside had found a way. In the design of the cash case. Having stolen the money the sledgehammer would be discarded at the scene. The nature of the problem was such that within icon--the incident was over, offenders escaping before the police had time to respond.

The ease at which hundreds of thousands of pounds were being stolen made this problem prioritise itself over others. As local publicity did not portray a safer Merseyside action was necessary. The aims of Operation Guardian were therefore to identify, arrest and prosecute to conviction key controlling and participating criminals to achieve and sustain a safe Merseyside and thereby stem the flow of fear and violence.

Analysis:

Operation Guardian coordinators examined the police crime and incident data to identify any characteristics. Area detectives attending 'cash in transit' incidents were encouraged to provide a more detailed robbery E-mail to FIB especially in respect of vehicles used, words spoken, weapons used and exit routes. Copies of all criteria offence witness statements and E-mails were forwarded to the Operation Guardian analyst who had created a crime database to identify any characteristics. The Robbery Team's intelligence Officer developed a line of 99. munication with the unity managers of Royal Mail Cashco and Securicor. Both companies had their own information database. The extra sources of information assisted the dedicated analyst in crime cluster analysis, identifying a group of crimes with similar characteristics.

A problem solving approach concentrated the mind on other methods of analysing information. Although similar in some respects to crime cluster analysis comparative case analysis goes further in aiming to identify whether these offences were committed by the same offender or group of offenders. This type of analysis can be used to identify possible suspects Of a series by linking the output from crime recording systems or command and control systems with intelligence data relating to MO and personal descriptions of known criminals. Too often in the past the form of analysis done by the police was determined by the form of data held on existing IT systems.

The Operation Guardian analyst used comparative case analysis following the arrest of an individual in December, 1998. Two other offenders escaped. Detailed analysis led to the identification of eight other males who had the ability to commit 'cash in transit' robberies. Over the following three months five of those males were arrested for this type of offence.

Mapinfo was also used to analyse similarities in where stolen vehicles were being abandoned. In the majority of incidents it was established the vehicle was abandoned within a quarter of a mile from the scene. Following a quick 'get away' transfer was made to a second vehicle. This analysis meant a more rapid police response was required, not solely at ground level but by the District Control Centre utilising the immediate deployment of the Force helicopter.

The most effective framework to help Operation Guardian personnel focus on the key elements of incidents and so define underlying problems was the Paabler Analysis Triangle (PAT). Following extensive Force wide training staff were encouraged to break incidents down into three constituent elements: features of location, features of offender / source of problem and features of caller / victim. Having identified 'cash in transit' incidents to be included in the analysis it was then necessary to establish what it was about the place, the victim and the offender or source of the problem that caused the problem to arise how and when it did. Operation Guardian detectives visited the scene of offences to familiarise themselves with the location and then update other Team members and the dedicated analyst.

Analysis of the place revealed offences occurred when security vehicles delivered to but never within 10m from premises. Another feature of the location was incidents happened in an area without designated service delivery bays. Quite often the problem was the vehicle could not get close enough to the premises. This meant the guard had slightly further to walk.

Features of the offender and source of the problem revealed new sledgehammers were always used. Use of a sledgehammer portrayed their level of sophistication. It was therefore not surprising offenders were generally described as aged between seventeen years and twenty-three years old.

Features of the victim revealed a lone security guard, unarmed, minimal body protection wearing only a protective helmet who had a limited period of time to deposit the cash case from vehicle to premises before a tracking device was activated. They were repeatedly attacked on that critical path between vehicle and delivery to premises.

By using PAT the police could establish common features of those deliveries which potentially faced a higher risk. Communicating the analysis to Royal Mail Cashco and Securicor meant they could then conduct their own risk assessments.

Scanning and analysis was beginning to transform the description of the problem and its constituent elements into an increasingly accurate assessment of the situation Force wide. This helped in the formulation of responses.

Response:

Merseyside: Police listened to customers and committed enormous opportunity costs to the problem. In Areas crime prevention officers identified local vulnerable premises. Patrol officers were tasked to visit those premises at regular intervals during the course of the day. High visibility policing enhanced public confidence and reassurance. The Force committed a Detective Inspector, two Detective Sergeants and fourteen Detective Constables to the Robbery Team. But a police orientated response was not the sole answer. A successful response did not just mean detection and charging of offenders. Equally important was to ensure responses reflected the earlier work in scanning and analysis. This meant community and inter-agency co-operation to promote crime reduction. Sub post offices were the main customer of Cashco. On a daily basis patrol officers visited those premises. Staff were encouraged to report anything suspicious. Throughout Merseyside the Force was providing a co-ordinated response in each Area.

Police personnel were encouraged to think of problem solving in terms of tackling one or more sides of the PAT. Analysis of the location had already revealed vulnerability. With police support the businesses, affected contracted a private firm named, Professional Witnesses Ltd. This firm provided assistance and backup to the security staff on those routes the company and police had identified as vulnerable in their risk assessments. Employees of Professional Witness Ltd were ex police and military service personnel familiar with reconnaissance work and in the recording of information. In a separate vehicle they would follow the security guards on high-risk deliveries. They had radio communication with the driver of the security vehicle and direct access to District Control Centres using a recognisable codeword to improve any police response. Prior to 'the drop' they would conduct a scene examination and instruct the security guard accordingly. The recording or photographing of any suspicious activity was forwarded to the Robbery Team's intelligence officer for further research.

Another response involved Operation Guardian co ordinators and Robbery Team detectives concentrating on features of the offenders. This was the case in early December following the arrest of an individual for robbery, using a sledgehammer, on a 'cash in transit' delivery to a supermarket. A travelling criminal from one Area of the Force was committing cross boarder crime in another. Although two accomplices escaped this arrest directed the response of the Robbery Team towards others. Using PAT known features about the accomplices age and MO were matched. Analysis of associates was ongoing when another offence, involving three offenders, occurred (Appendix B) less than three miles from the earlier incident. A video was recovered. The Robbery Team identified one of the offenders. He was an associate of the previously arrested male. Detailed analysis can drive a PS response. It resulted in three males subsequently being arrested and charged.

Other responses included concentrating on lines of enquiry to establish where the sledgehammers were coming from. Although this proved useful in establishing additional sources of information it was not as productive as first anticipated.

Long term it was recognised improvements had to be made to the cash case. Cashco were concerned at the ease with which the cases were being forced open. A private company was contracted to carry out research. The aim was to re-design all cases Royal Mail intended to use on routes in Merseyside determined to be vulnerable by their own risk assessment. In December, 1998 in liaison with the Robbery Team research commenced. The difficulty was matching the health and safety of the individual carrying the money with an improved design. After six months this research continues.

Planning in the response of the problem became more proactive. A structure was now in place to deal with the analysis of incoming information from community, agency or police sources. Response to the problem became a revolving process showing SARA as a framework to support a PS approach. It meant the Robbery Team were continuously updated and could exercise ownership of any response inside the Force. Details of criteria offence criminals coming to the attention of other Forces were passed to the Teams intelligence officer via the FIB.

Operation Guardian and the Robbery Team's response were beginning to raise its profile amongst personnel in Merseyside and neighbouring Forces. In December, 1998 the Assistant Chief Constable, Area Operations Mr Hogan Howe visited the Team. Continued success resulted in the Deputy Chief Constable Mr Acres visiting the Team in February 1999. Such visits showed ACPO's commitment to the adoption of problem solving policing in Merseyside.

Recognition for the response of Merseyside Police towards the problem could be seen in neighbouring Forces. Three Robbery Team targets were arrested in Morecambe, Lancashire for an offence identical in detail to those in Merseyside. All three were associates of those arrested in the previous two incidents. They had been identified as suspects from comparative case analysis. In another incident two other Robbery Team targets were arrested for armed robbery in Preston, Lancashire. In Merseyside the fear of crime was being transferred from victim to offender.

Assessment:

Over a five month period assessment of Operation Guardian was continuous. Area coordinators met weekly to discuss local activity.

In the overall assessment it was always unrealistic for any success criteria to mean elimination of the 'cash in transit' problem. Police performance was measured against performance indicators, which show this problem solving initiative led to a reduction of incidents and saw detections increase. The number of all robbery offences dropped to one hundred and eighty nine in February, 1999 reversing a trend of two hundred and forty two within two months. At the same time the number of Force wide detections increased from forty-nine to sixty three. (Appendix C). Force statistics reflect the concerted effort by all eleven Areas and the Robbery Team. Forty-four criteria offence arrests were made by the Robbery Team. Seventeen individuals were charged and a total of eighteen released on police bail to await forensic results. Recovery of stolen property was made to the approximate value of £280,000.

Evaluation can also be measured in terms of the fact six firearms were recovered contributing to a safer Merseyside. Also from the receipt of letters of appreciation confirming customer satisfaction in the quality of service received.

Police performance was achieved through a partnership approach in particular with the business community. Assessment of this initiative shows how customers benefited. A reduction of incidents meant businesses saved expenditure by reducing staff absenteeism through sickness and insurance costs on losses from cash stolen.

Of paramount importance in this assessment has been the role of the analyst. Devoting sufficient time to analysing as opposed to entering data or trawling data for other officers meant detailed scanning and analysis led to an effective response. (Appendix D & E). The security industry was clearly impressed with the value of analytical assessment. Cash companies in the North West region now fund their own part time analyst.

A Detective Superintendent was involved in the evaluation of Operation Guardian. The initiative was open to assessment by senior officers at a formal presentation before all Area Commanders at the Operations Conference in March, 1999.

Assessment highlighted the gap analysis identified between demands in Area and those placed on the MCU. To ensure a PS approach is maintained towards cross border clusters of related incidents Merseyside Police will introduce an Integrated Serious Crime Unit. This new Unit will be driven by FIB scanning Force crime related problems. Effectiveness of the Unit will be reviewed in twelve months.

Conclusion:

Operation Guardian proved to be an invaluable learning curve for Merseyside Police in the adoption of problem solving. This was in despite of the fact the SARA and PAT models were not even mentioned in the Strategy document or in the Force Robbery Teams Operational Order. Early confusion remained amongst officers equating SARA in particular, with a form to be filled in. But by focusing on specific recurring problems, seeking to identify underlying causes in a structured manner officers found themselves inadvertently stumbling across SARA as a model or framework to support the adoption of PS.

An independent Initial **Evaluation** of the Problem Solving Approach in Merseyside Police was released in May, 1999. It stated 'the extent to which PS is embedded into officer's routine ways of working is still less clear'. Operation Guardian will promote understanding of the problem solving policing model; "it is not rocket science". (Tilley Police Review).

The same evaluation report also stated 'PS does seem to be starting to have an impact on crime and incident types that the public of Merseyside is beginning to perceive a better quality of service from their police Force'. Operation Guardian was only the beginning.

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in April, 1998 Paul Heslop was Project Manager with responsibility for introduction of North Wirral IMU, which commenced three months later in July. The successful implementation resulted in the officer being invited by the Force Problem Solving Team to run a workshop at the 1 & 1 National UK Problem Solving Conference in Leicestershire in October, 1998. In November the officer commenced attachment at the Force Robbery Team using the SARA and PAT models in an operational environment. Having recently returned to North Wirral Area the officer is now involved in a problem solving approach towards those involved in drug misuse.

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What is Operation Guardian?

A force strategy which focuses on the problem of Robberies against :

Identified vulnerable commercial premises
Cash In Transit vehicles

Introduction

Statistically it has been identified that there is an increase in offences of this nature on the lead into Christmas and the period into the New Year, there is substantially more cash in circulation both at Commercial - Premises and Cash In Transit throughout the whole of the Merseyside Area.

Aims of Operation Guardian:

- o Prevent *offences of such* robberies
- Identify and apprehend those persons responsible or involved in those offences
- ® Detect robbery offences
- Send out messages of reassurance
Transfer the fear of crime from the victim to the offender
- U Initiate a *partnership approach* to this problem

Statement of Intent

To Provide Through Intelligence Led Policing And A Partnership Approach A Strategy To Combat Offences Of Robbery In The Merseyside Area.

Methodology

- Each area must appoint an Operation Guardian Co ordinator
- Each Area must nominate a dedicated Operation Guardian Intelligence Officer
- FIB to appoint a dedicated Operation Guardian Co ordinator
- Dedicated Analyst should be identified
- OSU appoint a dedicated Operation Guardian Co ordinator
- Media Officer should be identified at area level
- Areas must identify premises considered vulnerable - high volume cash handling commercial premises
- U Identify an Operation Guardian Co ordinator to take on a district responsibility - contact security heads of cash carrying companies, obtain specific intelligence on cash movements for their district pass that information to Area Operation Guardian Co ordinators within their district.

How we will Communicate as a Force :

- Operation Guardian weekly meeting to be introduced
- Message of the Day on Force Intelligence System
- Operation Guardian Intelligence Group on Force Intelligence System
- Operation Guardian Analysts updates and bulletins
- Operation Guardian Area Co ordinators briefing reports intelligence updates
- Operation Guardian FIB Coordinator - Force updates

Who will attend Operation Guardian Meetings :

- Identified Operations Manager to sit as chair - Rota Basis
- Operation Guardian Area Co ordinators
- Operation Guardian OSU Co ordinator
- Operation Guardian FIB Co ordinator
- Operation Guardian Analyst
- invited Security Heads - cash carrying companies
- Representative MCU
- Nominated Minute Taker

Purpose of this Meeting:

- Communicate Area problems and successes
- Identify the level of the problem
- Identify those Areas experiencing most robberies
- Analyst to identify MO Patterns - Cross Border Issues - definite suspects - suspect vehicles
- Partners inform meeting of new initiatives - sponsorship potential - rewards Or incentives
- -Appraisal of any successful crime prevention methods
- Be Task Specific :
 - *Effective deployment of OSU*
 - *Effective use of force helicopter*
 - *Effective roadchecks*
 - *Effective use of TSS*
 - *Identify suspects or suspect teams - formulate a plan*
 - *Address other identified issues*
 - *EffectA/e use of sponsorship*
 - *Effectiye use of TSU technical equpn?ent*
 - *Effective tasking of informants*

How this meeting *he* communicated 10 area level

- Circulation of Minutes
- Operation Guardian Area Co ordinator attend shift briefings
- Operation Guardian Co ordinator appraise Area Operations Manager
- Operation Guardian Co ordinator appraise Area Crime Manager

Roles and Responsibilities within Areas :

Operation Guardian Area Co-ordinator - a key player pivotal to the success of this operation, it is essential the right person is identified with the necessary skills to meet what is anticipated to be a demanding challenge, this person will :

- be a point of contact for all those working with us on Operation Guardian
- *be a point of contact and source of intelligence and information for ALL operational personnel and support staff*
- be pivotal in the communication network at Area level and force level
- be responsible for introducing a system of visits to vulnerable premises and monitoring of cash movements within the Area
- be responsible for identifying any shoralis
- be responsible for providing management information on Area performance
- be responsible for ensuring nominated media officer makes effective use of media

Operational Personnel - in this I include Uniform Patrols, CID, Crime Teams, Community Teams, Traffic Wardens and Special Patrols. These *officers* will *have the* following Area responsibilities :

- sporadic visits to identified vulnerable premises
- a* regular *security* checks *on* identified vulnerable premises
- o* high visibility patrols *at strategic times and* locations
- o* provide support stall *at Area or Force level as* required
- o* effective informant tasking
- pro active use of positive intelligence
- covert observations as intelligence dictates
- o* thorough *investigation into* robbery *offences*
- o* overt short follows on Cash in Transit as directed

Incident Management Unit - in this I include Intelligence Officers, Field Intelligence Officers, Crime Prevention Officers and Call Handlers, *in their various* roles *they will have the* following responsibilities :

- identify robbery suspects both historic and current
- o* produce detailed and accurate target packages where current *intelligence* dictates
- identify hotspot locations based on current intelligence
- n* collate and disseminate Operation Guardian intelligence
- make effective use of Force Intelligence System - Operation Guardian category and message of the day
- Q* work closely with Operation Guardian Co ordinator
- task in force units

Incident Management Unit contd...

- identify any needs for crime prevention advice and address those requirements
- prioritise and progress Crimestopper intelligence
- prioritise and progress other Operation Guardian intelligence
- effectively use media at local level and wider
- provide our partners with Operation Guardian posters and leaflets communicating our strategy in part
- give a presentation to invited partners on Operation Guardian and effective, Crime prevention methods

Measuring Effectiveness :

In order to evaluate how successful Operation Guardian has been certain measurements have to be made, those measurements can then be compared with historic data if available, Since as a force strategy this operation is being introduced for the first time, I would suggest the following measurements be made to enable future comparison

- number of Operation Guardian robbery offences by area
- number of Operation Guardian robbery offences detected by area
- number of visits to vulnerable premises by area
- number of cash movements monitored by area
- identify level of customer satisfaction by area - area survey
- identify satisfaction levels of our partners - direct feedback
- number of Operation Guardian intelligence submissions
- o *identify a level of public reassurance - media survey*
- identify impact Operation Guardian has had on criminal fraternity - informant feedback

It will be against this information that this and future operations can be deemed to be successful or not, such data will allow us to identify those aspects of the operation where we have performed best or as the case may be not performed as well as we-would have hoped Thus affording us the opportunity to identify where we must improve. -

PLACE A CLASSIFIED AD PHONE 047 7801

Police in search for bank robbers

Police are appealing for witnesses to a daring daylight bank robbery which netted thieves £20,000 in Moreton last week.

Three raiders forced a 57-year-old security guard to hand over a cash box he was delivering to the Lloyds Bank in Moreton at 3.15pm on Friday (January 8). The guard was not injured in the incident.

The robbers then smashed the box open with a sledgehammer and fled with the cash to where a car, a red Vauxhall Cavalier registration H671 TET, stolen from Arrowe Park Hospital the day before, was parked near the Plough Public House.

The stolen Cavalier was then driven away at speed along Sandbrook Lane, Moreton to Tenby Drive, where it was recovered by police.

But the thieves were seen to transfer the cash into another stolen car, a silver Cavalier, registration J606 WPU, which has yet to be located by detectives.

Two of the raiders are described as being of mixed race, aged 18-20. One was described as being 5ft 6-7ins tall thin faced, clean shaven and wearing a blue tracksuit with orange stripes on the sleeves.

The second robber was 5ft 8ins, with stubble and very thin. There was no description of the third raider.

Anyone who witnessed the robbery or has any information which could help police is asked to call them on 777 6582 or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

WEDDING | Couple honeymoon in the Maldives



Pamela Anne Collins, youngest daughter of the late James and Dorothy Collins has married Colin Millar, the only son of Raymond and Dorothy Millar.

The service took place at Trinity with Jalm Grove United Reformed and Methodist Church, Oxton.

The reception was held at Thornton Hall Country Hotel, Thornton Hough, and followed by a honeymoon in the Maldives.

Photo: Paul Wilkinson

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DESIGNER WAREHOUSE

JANUARY SALE

PRICES SLASHED ON

MASS JANU CAR SALE

CHOOSE FROM 2

Option 1
1 YEAR

on selected

Option 2
2

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HANDWEAVING

SAVE

WINCH
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Flow Rug

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FLORA
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SAVE

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NEW
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Choice

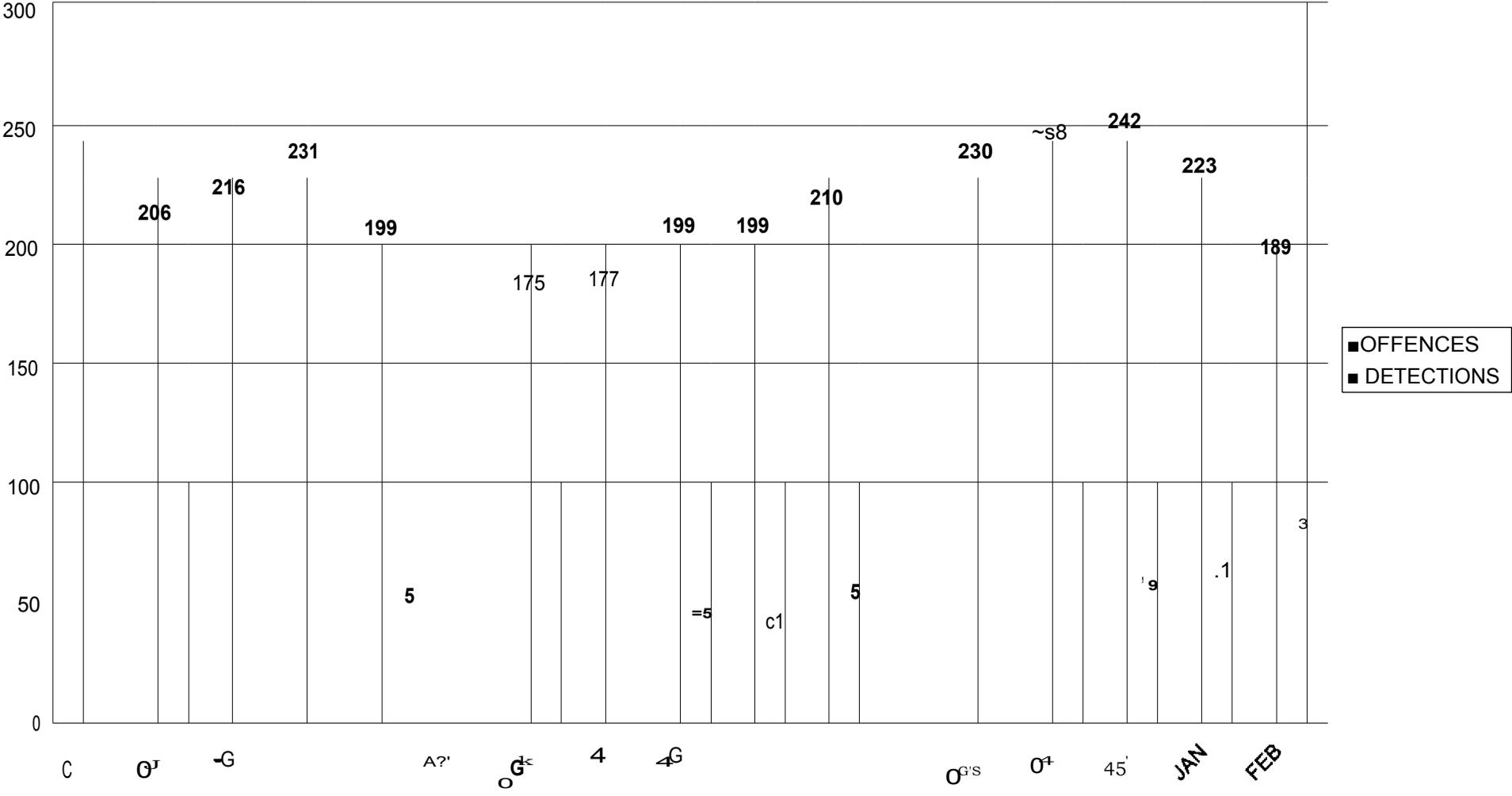
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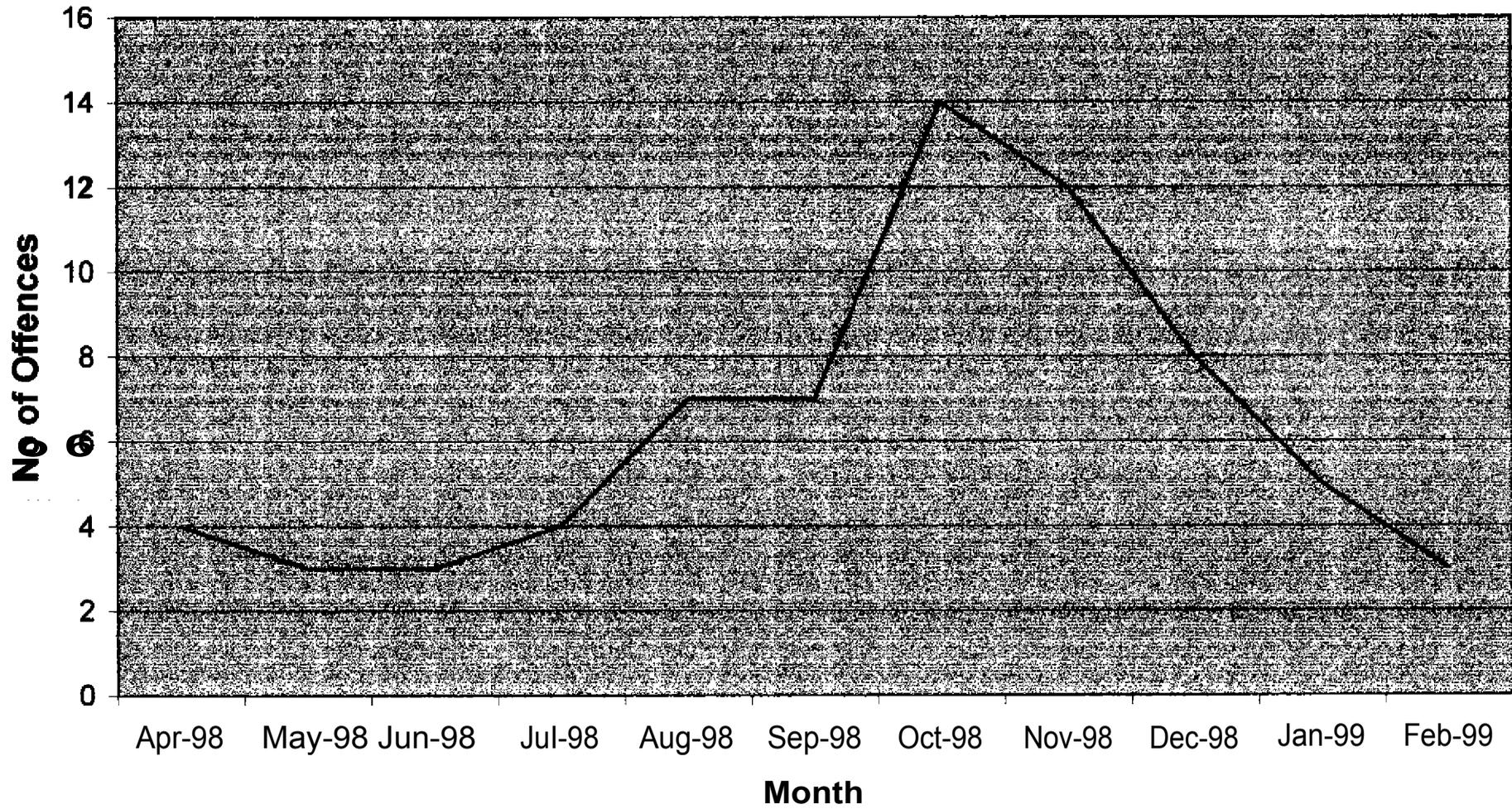
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FORCE ROBBERY OFFENCES AND DETECTION RATES



Total Cash in Transit Robberies April 98 - Feb 99



Total Cash in Transit Robberies April 98 - Feb 99

