



**CONCLUDED
PROBLEM REPORT
PS-1**

Problem ID: 16

Reporting Division : NORTH

District:

Neighbourhood: PARKDALE (SCHOOL)

Address: 11648-87 STREET

Reg	Rank	Last Name	First Name
1110	CST	SMYTH	JIM

Key Description : STINK BOMBS IN SCHOOLS

Problem Description:

Stink bombs sold at local novelty shops were reportedly being discharged in schools and other public places. They have a strong sulphur smell that can last for several hours. The assistant principal at Parkdale School reported that they were being discharged in her school at a rate of about 5-6 times a week, but sometimes, several times in one day. She further indicated that she had tried, without success, to deal with the vendor, San Francisco Gifts. She further indicated that this problem was widespread throughout the school system.

Problem solving strategies and results :

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During the week of 1993 December 13-17, Lois McBeth, the assistant principal of Parkdale School notified Cst Smyth of the problem as stated above.

Cst. Smyth attempted to contact persons in authority at San Francisco Gifts. The head office is not listed in the phone directory. Managers of the retail stores were extremely protective of head office and refused to give any information about it or their superiors. The manager of the Londonderry store agreed to pass on a message to her supervisor who would contact Cst. Smyth.

It should be noted that San Francisco Gifts is a very liberal type of store which sells many products which may be offensive to a large part of the population. This probably explains the reason why they are so protective of the head office.

As Cst. Smyth had not heard back from a store representative by 1994 January 5, he again contacted the manager of the Londonderry store. He was assured that the message had been passed on and that another message would be passed on immediately. Within an hour Cst. Smyth received a call from the district supervisor, who would only identify herself as Gail. Gail indicated that she had not returned his call because she felt it would be of no use as this was an old problem which had been dealt with before and she did not wish to rehash it. She further indicated the stink bombs were a big seller and they would not remove them from the shelves. Cst. Smyth tried to appeal to her on the basis of social responsibility and their need to be good corporate citizens. She made it clear that good corporate citizenship was not a concern here and that making money was. She reiterated the stink bombs are a big seller and a big money maker and that was the bottom line. Cst. Smyth then requested information about her superiors, in particular, officers of the company. She would not provide an address or phone number but suggested that Cst. Smyth write a letter to any one of the stores for the attention of Bob Dawson, the vice president. The letter would be forwarded to him.

Through other investigative means Cst. Smyth determined that the head office was located at 9762 - 54 Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, and the phone number to be 436-6675 and the fax number is 436-3155. Cst Smyth was unable to make contact at the phone number. It was later discovered that this was a Parked Line used for special purposes such as call forward when desired. He then faxed a message to the company requesting that they make contact with him.

While waiting several hours for a return call, Cst. Smyth contacted S/Sgt. Logar of the Legal Advisors Office to discuss possible legal options, such as being party to a mischief. S/Sgt Logar quickly pointed out Section 178 C.C. which prohibits the use or possession of stink bombs.

As a reply to the fax had not been received from San Francisco Gifts, Cst. Smyth obtained a "secret number" 438-4412 from a person who wished to remain anonymous. Through this phone number Cst. Smyth was able to contact Bob Dawson. Cst. Smyth again tried to appeal to him on the basis of social responsibility and good corporate citizenship, however, it quickly became obvious that these were of no concern to the company. After this effort failed Cst. Smyth then advised Mr. Dawson that these items were prohibited under Section 178 C.C. and that if the company did not remove these items from their stores they could face criminal prosecution. Mr. Dawson was somewhat disbelieving, indicating their lawyers had advised them that they were legal. He further indicated that they had the

contents analyzed and cleared by Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Cst. Smyth then faxed a copy of Section 178 C.C. to Mr. Dawson and suggested that he discuss the matter with his lawyers. The following day, Mr. Dawson contacted Cst. Smyth and advised that they were removing the product from all of their stores. A month later, Cst. Smyth arranged to have the matter brought up at a meeting of the school resource officers. It was determined that not all of the schools had been having a problem, however, those that did, had noticed a marked decline in the number of incidents. Mrs. McBeth indicated there had been no further incidents in her school since about mid-January. Some of the S.R.O.'s reported that there were still a few incidents, it was decided to issue a media release identifying the problem and the legal aspects, to both the general public and any other vendors of the product. It was further hoped that such media attention would identify offending vendors who continue to sell the stink bombs.