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OCSD Crime Analysis Detail works to predict, and stop, crime

Sgt. Chad Baker of OCSD's Crime Analysis Detail with the team, from left: Mackenzie Carl, Genoveva Gomez, Chad Baker, Elizabeth Quintana, and Annie Son. Photo by Steven Georges/Behind the Badge OC

By Jessica Peralta

[February 21st, 2018](#)

It started with two robberies.

Once the Orange County Sheriff's Department's Crime Analysis Detail determined a relationship between those two, it was time to expand the search.

Had other agencies experienced robberies? The answer was yes.

"We were able to start working that together as a collective group," said OCSD Sgt. Chad Baker, who oversees the team of five full-time crime analysts for the agency. "We were able to work that with all the resources that we had in the sheriff's department."

Ultimately a string of nine robberies at retail locations, mostly in South Orange County, were linked together.

"Over the course of those robberies, there wasn't ever a time we weren't out on the field attempting to mitigate additional robberies," Baker said.

Sgt. Chad Baker of OCSD's Crime Analysis Detail.
Photo by Steven Georges/Behind the Badge OC

The OCSD arrested Matthew Scott Rendon, 36, of Mission Viejo on Jan. 2 on suspicion of the robberies that took place from Nov. 29 through Dec. 30, 2017.

The Orange County District Attorney's Office charged Rendon on Jan. 4 with nine felony counts of second-degree robbery and one count of attempted second-degree robbery.

It's one of many success stories in an unending stream of cases that members of the Crime Analysis Detail pore through week after week in search of crime trends. With an estimated 11,000 crime events handled annually by the sheriff's department, the work never ceases.

Every week, the crime analysts read through homicide, assault, robbery, and burglary reports to spot new trends.

For example: Is the crime taking place in commercial areas or residential neighborhoods? Is it happening when residents are home or not?

"Then we start to develop relationships that connect those events," Baker said.

Once a trend is detected, the data is used to try to determine a location where future criminal activity may occur.

"We'll look at that and then we'll make some recommendations," he said, adding that it is then up to each city's Chief of Police Services in the OCSD coverage area to determine the next step.

Sgt. Chad Baker, of OCSD's Crime Analysis Detail, talks about the work his department does.
Photo by Steven Georges/Behind the Badge OC

That may include increased patrol in an area or another type of preventive measure – including utilizing an investigation or surveillance unit, or even helicopters/air support or traffic enforcement.

"We have been successful with that in the past in several of the communities," Baker said.

Each of OCSD's contract cities and unincorporated areas receive crime analysis reports each week.

The five crime analysts on the team each have crime and intelligence certifications from a college in the UC or Cal State system. They received 400 hours of practicum and participated in an internship with a law enforcement agency. They also received a certification through the California Department of Justice.

In addition to the predictive policing aimed at stopping detected crime trends, crime analysts also provide tactical support to individual investigations, helping investigators identify and locate potential suspects through data analysis.

"It's a continuous cycle that resets every week," he said.

Baker said the work requires crime analysts to have a specific set of skills.

"The individual has to be a critical thinker," he said, adding that a crime analyst should be able to remove any biases from the process.

The job also requires a level of technical proficiency and adaptability to using different and new resources when required.

"We have to be really efficient, professional and synchronized," he said.

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