

Get SF Weekly Newsletters For Email Newsletters you can trust.



join Sign in

SF WEEKLY

News

[NEWS HOME](#) | [THE SNITCH](#) | [CHEM TALES](#) | [ARCHIVE SEARCH](#)


TOP

E



Chem Tales: Is Donald Trump Good on Cannabis?

By Alex



Fox News

By Tom



Crime Doesn't Pay, Even for Shrimp Boy

By

[NEWS » FEATURE](#)
[Like 3](#)
[Tweet](#)
[G+](#)
[Save](#)

All Tomorrow's Crimes: The Future of Policing Looks a Lot Like Good Branding

By Darwin Bond-Graham and Ali Winston
Wednesday, Oct 30 2013

[Comments ↴](#)

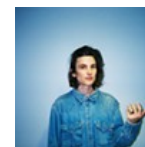
Page 3 of 6

The UCLA researchers eventually joined up with Malinowski and the LAPD to put their military-oriented research into practice in a domestic policing context. Foothill Division, a sprawling LAPD patrol sector in the northeast San Fernando Valley that, at 46 square

POPULAR STORIES

[Most Popular Stories](#)
[Stories You Missed](#)


UK Rockers Foals Look Forward to Taking a Much-Needed Break



With *Is the Is Are*, DIIV Frontman Zachary Cole Smith Finally Sees The Light at the End of the Tunnel

miles, is about as big as San Francisco, was chosen as the site of a pilot program in 2012. Malinowski was partnered with Capt. Jorge Rodriguez, who worked every patrol division of the LAPD and on several task forces. During the predictive policing pilot program, Rodriguez says Foothill Division led all patrol divisions in crime reductions for every week of 2012.

"Every morning, we get a report from PredPol for which 20 boxes are going to be where crime is most likely to happen," says Rodriguez.

Maps are distributed to the three daily patrol shifts, and information about crime that happens on a particular day is included in the predictions that go to the next shift. Patrol officers are assigned to sit in computer-generated boxes produced by predictive policing software from geographic analyses of six years' worth of crime data.

"If your resources are diminished, then you want to focus on those boxes with the highest rate of crime," says Rodriguez.

Along with the printouts given to each patrol team, Foothill Division deploys four officers to patrol the areas where crime is occurring in clusters. This team either operates as a uniformed deployment or in plainclothes, depending on how they are being used on that particular day. Enforcement is not the only part of Foothill Division's predictive policing strategy — Rodriguez keeps a steady line of communication with his community liaison officers on what residents are telling the department about crime in areas highlighted by crime predictions. "There's something that's been sparking that trend in that particular

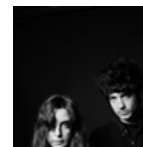


AP PHOTO/DAMIAN DOVARGANES

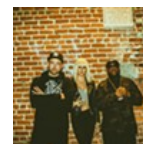
Jeff Brantingham demonstrating predictive policing at an LAPD command post in 2012.



Predpol



Beach House Makes Dream-Pop That is Perfect For Twilight



Big Grams Gets the Formula Right



Chicago Indie-Rockers Whitney Are Finding That it Pays to be Sincere

SLIDESHOWS



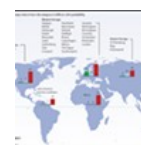
clipping at Brava Theater Sept. 11



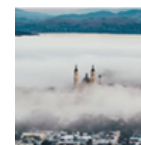
Tame Impala at The Greek Theatre, September 3

[More Slideshows »](#)

THE SNITCH



S.F. Seen As Perfect Host City For Summer Olympics — in 2008



Filmmaker's Time-Lapse Video Shows Stunning SF Fog

area over the past six or seven years," Rodriguez explains. Speaking with residents, he says, gives police the context that pure statistics and computer modeling cannot provide.

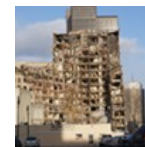
After discontinuing its use of predictive policing methods at the beginning of 2013 to evaluate the program, LAPD restarted its use of predictive policing in March and expanded beyond Foothill to two other patrol divisions. The current focus is for burglaries of all categories and car theft, which are the most persistent problems in Foothill.

PredPol has played up its role in the LAPD's deployment of predictive policing methods in order to expand to other departments in the U.S. and abroad. Advertising "scientifically proven field results" on its website, PredPol says its technology was responsible for a 13 percent drop in crime over the first four months it was used by L.A. cops in the Foothill Division. The company claims the rest of the city experienced a 0.4 percent increase in crime over the same period.

But it isn't clear exactly whose software LAPD has been using. PredPol's name does not appear anywhere in L.A.'s predictive policing records, though LAPD personnel say they are using PredPol's software, and Malinowski's contact information has appeared in PredPol's sales literature distributed to other cities. In response to a public records request for contracts between L.A. and PredPol, the LAPD says no such agreements exist.

Regardless of whatever combination of programs LAPD is using, no one knows if predictive policing is even working in Los Angeles. Crime rates across the city have been dropping for a decade, but the predictive methods are so new, and used in so few jurisdictions, that there's not enough data to run a scientific analysis. No analyst independent of the police, or their contractors, has rigorously tested predictive policing.

In 2010, a few years into LAPD's experimentation with predictive policing and collaboration with the team at UCLA, George Mohler's post-doc ended. Mohler had been an instrumental member of Brantingham's lab, and on much of the Army and Air Force-



**Millennial Problems: Most
Pokemon-Obsessed City Is
NOT S.F.**

[More »](#)

funded research used to predict crime. He ended up with a position in the math and computer science department at the University of Santa Clara. It was in Silicon Valley that Mohler made contact with Ryan Coonerty, Caleb Baskin, and Zach Friend. Together, they turned the UCLA research into a start-up.

Friend at the time was working as a crime analyst and public relations officer for the Santa Cruz Police Department. Coonerty, the former mayor of Santa Cruz (his father, Neal, was also mayor, and is currently a county supervisor), and Baskin, a Santa Cruz attorney from a prominent local family, pounced on the idea of predictive policing as a potential business. They enlisted an influential friend, Donnie Fowler.

Fowler, a San Francisco resident originally from Columbia, S.C., is a staunch Democrat who worked in low-level positions in the Clinton White House, and briefly for the Federal Communications Commission. He worked on the campaigns of Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Wesley Clark, John Kerry, and, most recently, Barack Obama. Fowler runs a lobbying group called Dogpatch Strategies, whose clients include Facebook and Stanford University. Fowler comes from a political family; his father, Donald Fowler, was national chairman of the Democratic National Committee from 1995 to 1997.

Mohler pulled his former UCLA advisor Brantingham back into the mix, and together they incorporated PredPol in January 2012. The new company quickly raised \$1.3 million from angel investors and recruited members of Silicon Valley's elite. One of PredPol's advisers is Andreas Wigand, the former chief scientist at Amazon, and head of the Social Data Lab at Stanford University. Another PredPol advisor is Harsh Patel, formerly of In-Q-Tel, the CIA's venture capital firm.

On June 4, 2012, Wigand hosted a dinner to "showcase PredPol" and raise funds, according to an article in *Forbes* magazine. In addition to Wigand, PredPol boasts of the support of the former chief information officer of Autodesk, a former vice president at Plantronics, and a former eBay vice president. Fowler claimed in an e-mail to SFPD's Merritt that retired Gen. Wesley Clark is an adviser.

Tags: Feature, Featured Stories, Donnie Fowler, San Francisco Police Department, Los Angeles Police Department, Susan Merritt

About The Authors



Darwin Bond-Graham



Ali Winston

Email

Print

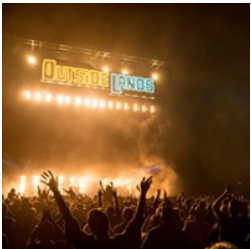
Write to Editor



We Recommend



Fox News



Outside Lands 2016



With *Is the Is Are*,
DIIV Frontman
Zachary Cole Smith
Finally Sees The
Light at the End of
the Tunnel



UK Rockers Foals
Look Forward to
Taking a Much-
Needed Break

COMMENTS

Subscribe to this thread: By Email With RSS

☐ Subscribe to this thread

Post Comment