



**ORGANIZED CRIME AGENCY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**  
*Dedicated to the Disruption and Suppression of Organized Crime in British Columbia*

# Annual Report 2001



## Table of Contents

<b>Message from The Chair of the Board of Governance</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Chief Officer's Overview</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Mandate</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Vision</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Operations Overview</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Enforcement Achievements .....	9
Enforcement Partnerships .....	17
<b>Crime Statistics</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Evidence of Disruption and Suppression .....	20
<b>Operational Support Services</b> .....	<b>22</b>
Open Sources Section .....	22
Criminal Intelligence Analysis .....	22
Technical Services .....	26
Legal Services .....	27
<b>Administration</b> .....	<b>28</b>
Financial Management .....	28
Human Resources .....	29
<b>Concluding Comments</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>Memorial to Brent Barbour</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>OCABC Contact Information</b> .....	<b>35</b>



## Message from The Chair of the Board of Governance

This Annual Report covering the operations of the Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia describes a year of complete success.

In just over one year of full field operations, this Agency has become nationally and internationally recognized as a trend setter in organized crime investigations, primarily due to:

- its development of local, provincial, national and international partnerships;
- its intelligence driven and aggressive enforcement approach; and
- its substantial seizures of crime proceeds.

Of course, the success of any such organization is dependent on highly skilled and motivated law enforcement officers backed up by an equally committed group of civilians, possessing a set of specialized professional skills. This, combined with the outstanding leadership of the Chief and Deputy Chief Officers, is indeed the real strength of this Agency.

The report highlights some high profile cases which have brought various organized crime figures to justice in the past year. Fraudulent transactions in the hundreds of millions of dollars have been impeded. Large scale drug distribution systems have been cut off. Organized crime proceeds and other assets have been seized. Without question, homicides and other violent crimes have been prevented.

Notwithstanding the success of the Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia in this past year, much more could have been accomplished given sufficient resources. One shudders to consider the impact on British Columbians, and other Canadians, had these crimes gone undetected. Yet victimization in our province is still far too high. Consider for example that credit card crime in British Columbia is 35% higher than the national average. Other high level criminal conduct includes money laundering, immigrant smuggling, internet crime, illegal gambling, pornography and various crimes of violence. Without question, most of this victimization is rooted in organized crime and it is, therefore, vital that the Agency's critical resource issue be addressed immediately.



On behalf of the Governance Board of the Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia, I congratulate the dedicated people who have brought about this success.

**Douglas Richardson, Chair**  
**Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia Governance Board**



## Chief Officer's Overview



**David Douglas**  
Chief Officer

This has been a very successful and rewarding year for the Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia (O.C.A.B.C.). During our first full year of operations, we have faced many challenges. In overcoming those challenges, we have established an organization built on integrity, honesty, responsibility, accountability and professionalism. We have shown, through our aggressive enforcement program, that we are committed to our vision and mandate to disrupt and suppress organized criminal activity throughout British Columbia.

Over the past year, O.C.A.B.C. has been aggressive in identifying, developing and maintaining partnerships with various local, provincial, national and international law enforcement agencies, provincial and federal government regulatory agencies as well as the corporate sector. These partnerships have afforded us the opportunity to mount a well planned, integrated enforcement program.

At the core of our aggressive enforcement program, lies our strategic targeting process. Over the past year, O.C.A.B.C. has aggressively recruited and internally trained a group of highly skilled and motivated analysts who allow the agency to utilize the strategic targeting process to identify key organized crime individuals and groups for enforcement action. Intelligence led investigations allow us to complete surgical strikes at the heart of organized crime.

Our project specific enforcement model utilizes a multi-disciplinary approach in the investigation and prosecution of organized crime. It allows us the flexibility to allocate our human and fiscal resources to our operational priorities in partnership with a number of enforcement and regulatory agencies.

Key to our strategy of suppressing organized crime is our ability to effectively seize the assets of those involved in organized criminal activity. Our Proceeds of Crime Unit plays an integral part of that enforcement equation by building in a proceeds of crime component into every one of our enforcement initiatives.



To raise the level of awareness of the impact of organized crime on all British Columbians, the Agency has developed a number of internal and external communication strategies, such as the development of our web site, the implementation of a comprehensive media relations strategy and reaching out to the community through public presentations to carry our message.

Our human resources are our most valuable commodity. Since the inception of O.C.A.B.C., we have been committed to a human resource strategy of hiring "the brightest and the best". This has afforded the Agency the opportunity to build a highly skilled and motivated enforcement team which is augmented by an equally committed group of support and administrative personnel.

Funding for the Agency in its first year matched the contribution given to our predecessor, the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit (C.L.E.U.). Recommendations flowing from the Report of the Organized Crime Independent Review Committee (the "Owen Report") indicated that further funding would be contingent on the operational effectiveness of O.C.A.B.C. in its first year of operations. O.C.A.B.C. has exceeded all operational expectations and certainly has reached the accountability benchmark, both operationally and fiscally, as referred to in the Owen Report.

In the near future, we will be approaching the new Solicitor General to obtain his commitment in the fight against organized crime by ensuring that the required levels of funding are in place so that this Agency can continue to counter organized criminal activity within British Columbia.

I look forward to this second year of operations and our continuing efforts in the disruption and suppression of organized crime which affects us all.

**David H. Douglas**  
**Chief Officer**



## Mandate

To facilitate the disruption and suppression of organized crime which affects British Columbians.

## Vision

The Agency is an aggressive, professional, and respected team combating organized crime, in partnership with other organizations, through the bold and innovative application of ethical and progressive law enforcement techniques.



British Columbia

Organized Crime Agency



## Operations Overview

The Agency became fully operational in early 2000, and over the past year has developed numerous projects and initiatives in conjunction with our many partner law enforcement agencies.

Among others, O.C.A.B.C. has worked closely with various Sections and Detachments of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.), Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (C.C.R.A.), Vancouver Police Department, United States Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.), United States Customs and the United States Attorney General's Office.

An aggressive approach to enforcement has had a disruptive effect within several criminal organizations, including Asian Organized Crime Groups (A.O.C.) and Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (O.M.G.). An expanded focus outside the lower mainland has seen Agency input and operational successes in the interior of the province. Assistance has been rendered to police agencies in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Quebec.

O.C.A.B.C. has developed enhanced skills in the field of rural surveillance as well as witness protection operations, which have enhanced the high level of expertise brought to the Agency by secondments from various municipal police departments, as well as the R.C.M.P.

Technical support services have not been neglected and the Agency is a leader in the field of "high tech" investigations.

Some examples of recent investigations are summarized in the sections that follow.



## ***Enforcement Achievements***

### **Asian Organized Crime (A.O.C.)**

Since the extent of Asian-Based Organized Crime (A.O.C.) poses a serious national threat, the fight against A.O.C. is one of O.C.A.B.C.'s two biggest enforcement priorities.

Asian-based organized crime is well established in Canada, particularly in British Columbia. High-tech crime including counterfeit credit cards and counterfeit cigarette manufacturing, characterizes the emerging A.O.C. trends. There is also increasing evidence that Asian groups are extensively involved in the illicit drug trade, producing locally grown marijuana ("B.C. Bud") as well as designer drugs such as ecstasy. There is also extensive "cross-pollination" among Asian Crime groups, creating mergers and joint ventures which increase their flexibility and market share.

As the gateway to the Pacific Rim, the west coast of British Columbia is vulnerable to several forms of criminal enterprise. The geographic location is ideal for international trade in commodities such as drugs, firearms, and illegal human migrants. The A.O.C. Section strategically targets high level Asian-based organized crime groups throughout the province

To suppress or eradicate A.O.C. groups using target specific enforcement, long-term projects, lasting from one to three years, are the norm when dealing with projects focusing on these sophisticated organized crime figures. However, shorter term disruption tactics such as those lasting from 6-18 months, have also proven to be effective.

The following discussion highlights specific examples of our enforcement successes.

In cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) and the United States Secret Service, O.C.A.B.C. investigators conducted an international investigation surrounding the large scale production and distribution of counterfeit credit cards.



Approximately twenty search warrants were executed resulting in the seizure of a counterfeit credit card factory with a fraudulent credit potential of over 200 million dollars. This seizure was considered to be one of the largest counterfeit credit card manufacturing operations in North America. Interestingly, during the course of this investigation, approximately 1000 pounds of dried marihuana were also seized supporting charges of massive drug exportation to the United States.

In addition to the seized credit cards and marihuana, approximately \$500,000 in cash was seized under the authority of proceeds of crime laws. At the conclusion of successful court proceedings, these funds will be forfeited to the crown.

Investigators in this case have recommended charges including conspiracy to manufacture counterfeit credit cards, counseling to commit murder, conspiracy to export marihuana and conspiracy to traffic in ecstasy, which are now being forwarded to crown counsel.

As demonstrated by the outcome of this project, there are definite links between various types of crime such as counterfeit credit cards, murder and drug offences, demonstrating the high degree of flexibility of these groups. It is also apparent from this project that the marihuana production provides the seed money for other more serious organized crime ventures.

This investigation also demonstrated the nature and extent of the collaboration among various Asian criminal groups. This particular criminal organization has developed several criminal networks in the U.S. and Southeast Asia. It is clear from intelligence gathered to date that high level Chinese criminals were buying marihuana from Vietnamese traffickers to transport to the U.S.

### **Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (O.M.G.)**



The Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (HAMC) is the largest, most criminally sophisticated outlaw motorcycle gang in the world. The HAMC currently has over two thousand full colour-wearing members in twenty-six countries worldwide. Canada has over thirty chapters and almost five hundred members spread across the country. Our province has nearly one hundred HAMC members comprising seven separate chapters, all but one located in the Lower Mainland.



In the past several years, the British Columbia Chapters have expanded significantly, reflecting the trend observed within the organization worldwide.

British Columbia Hells Angels are involved in a myriad of organized criminal activities including marijuana production and exportation, cocaine importation and trafficking, the manufacturing and distribution of methamphetamines, gambling, prostitution, extortions, intimidation, assaults and extortion. They work in concert with other club members locally, nationally and internationally in furthering these criminal enterprises and laundering the enormous profits.

British Columbia Hells Angels have had an historical association with Traditional Italian Organized Crime families in Eastern Canada and have developed significant criminal alliances. There are also indications of increased collaboration between some Hells Angels and members of organized Asian crime groups.

The threat posed to the public by the criminal activities of the Hells Angels is dramatic. As arguably the largest collective group of cocaine importers into British Columbia and the predominant methamphetamine distributors, the Hells Angels have imposed enormous harm on our society from a health and safety perspective. Further, the huge profits gained through the illegal drug trade are used to fund additional criminal ventures, to subvert legitimate market forces and to allow criminals to enjoy a wealthy lifestyle at the expense of the public.

Violence and intimidation are the organized crime engines of the Hells Angels and allow them to become a powerful force. Murders, extortions, assaults and threats related to Hells Angels criminal activity extend through all levels of our society and have impacted many innocent citizens including court officials and police officers.

Our O.M.G. Section is dedicated to the fight against outlaw motorcycle gangs and plays an integral role in the provincial response to this serious national problem. In addition to pursuing our own aggressive long-term enforcement program, our collaborative approach allows our officers to assist other police agencies from across Canada and throughout British Columbia in major O.M.G. investigations.



For example, we assisted the Calgary Police Service Organized Crime investigative team in an eleven month Hells Angels investigation which culminated in the arrest of over 40 individuals, including several members of the Calgary chapter. Our assistance provided surveillance and investigative resources while the subjects of Calgary's investigation were in British Columbia.

The collaborative enforcement efforts in this case resulted in the seizure of cocaine and methamphetamines and the laying of substantive drug and conspiracy charges against two members of the Calgary Chapter of the Hells Angels.

OMG investigators in Quebec have also requested our assistance on a number of occasions to locate and arrest fugitives in biker cases originating in their province. At the conclusion of this investigation, two close criminal associates of the Hells Angels, were arrested. This included the arrest of an individual who was described as the major money launderer for the Hells Angels.

### **Quick Response Team (Q.R.T.)**

The Quick Response Team (Q.R.T.) is responsible for investigating high impact/short term projects averaging from two to eight months and leading to the disruption of organized crime through enforcement action, under the authority of various federal and provincial statutes, and the subsequent seizure of assets under federal proceeds of crime legislation.

Over the past fiscal year, the Q.R.T. has continuously been involved in five full-time criminal investigations, targeting different organizations, all with direct ties to local O.M.G. chapters.

Strategies employed during these investigations include tactical surveillance, technical surveillance, under cover approaches, search warrant execution, source development as well as proceeds of crime initiatives.

During these operations, strong partnerships have been formed with a number of law enforcement agencies in Canada and the United States including, Langley R.C.M.P. Drug Section, Surrey R.C.M.P. Drug Section, and the R.C.M.P. Customs and Excise Section, Burnaby R.C.M.P. Drug Section, Abbotsford Police Department, Canada Customs, United States Customs, United States Drug Enforcement Administration (D.E.A.), Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) and various other U.S. enforcement agencies.

From information gained from yet another operation, O.C.A.B.C. investigators again demonstrated the link between the British Columbia marihuana grow operation industry and more serious crimes, such as money laundering, importing and exporting cocaine.

For example, a recent enforcement initiative involved a criminal group exporting British Columbia marihuana into the U.S. and importing cocaine and cash into Canada. Investigators on the Canadian and U.S. sides of the border seized \$350,000 U.S., \$260,000 Canadian, 3 kilograms of cocaine, 175 kilograms of British Columbia marihuana, an Astar 350 helicopter valued at approximately \$410,000 U.S. and seven vehicles belonging to one of the main targets with a total estimated value of \$400,000 Canadian. The helicopter and vehicles were seized as property believed to have been obtained from the proceeds of crime.





In another project, a joint operation between the R.C.M.P., Vancouver Police Department, Canada Customs, and O.C.A.B.C. involving a criminal group found links between production of B.C. Bud and illegal importation of



Possession of Weapons

firearms through the Port of Vancouver. In this case, investigators in Canada seized 1738 kilograms of marihuana and two semi-automatic pistols while investigators in Ecuador, the country of origin of the drugs, acting on information from Canadian investigators, seized approximately four thousand additional kilograms of marihuana.

In yet another target specific enforcement project, investigators from O.C.A.B.C., Surrey R.C.M.P., R.C.M.P. Customs and Excise Section and Drug Sections, along with U.S. Customs targeting a group of criminals exporting British Columbia marihuana into the U.S. and importing cocaine and currency into Canada by boat, have to date seized \$38,000 U.S., \$10,000 Canadian, one hundred pounds of marihuana, a motor vessel valued at \$15,000 Canadian and a four-by-four vehicle. Four persons from the Vancouver area and one from the United States have been charged with Exporting marihuana, Possession of Marihuana for the Purpose of Trafficking and Possession of the Proceeds of Crime.

### **Vancouver Island**

The mandate of the O.C.A.B.C. Vancouver Island office is to disrupt and suppress organized crime on the island. In addition to project-specific enforcement, investigators have been able to assist various international, national and local law enforcement agencies where invaluable partnerships and lines of communication have been established. Intelligence developed by these agencies is being shared in an open, honest and timely manner and, as the credibility of the Agency is established, these lines of communication will intensify.

The island team has initiated and completed a number of investigations over the past year, resulting in the suppression of organized crime activities.

For example, O.C.A.B.C. investigators on Vancouver Island have established links between a specific organized criminal enterprise, violence, marihuana (cultivation, trafficking and exportation) and money laundering schemes. Intelligence from this investigation led officers to another investigation of organized crime at a higher level.



Collecting and analyzing intelligence on organized crime enterprises suggests that profits from the illicit marihuana industry are routinely laundered through various avenues such as real estate, vehicles, off shore bank accounts, legitimate businesses known to be held by these people. It is also clear that profits from marihuana production serves as the fuel to drive more serious organized crime ventures such as importing heroin and cocaine, violent offences, and money laundering perpetrated by these groups.

As a result of this intelligence-led investigation, partnerships were developed with the Nanaimo R.C.M.P. Municipal Drug Section, the Vancouver Island RCMP District Drug Section (North and South Island) and Criminal Intelligence Services British Columbia (C.I.S.B.C.). Again, credibility earned resulted in open, honest and frank exchanges of information with these partners.

The project resulted in the execution of eleven residential search warrants and the seizure of more than 1000 mature marihuana plants. In addition, two vehicle checks resulted in the seizure of more than 70 pounds of dried marihuana, one involving an operation assisted by Hope R.C.M.P. Highway Patrol.

All intelligence gleaned from investigations is being documented in an intelligence report and will be submitted to the Automated Information Intelligence System. The intelligence obtained will form the basis of any future investigations.

As a result of intelligence from one project, a spin-off investigation resulted in the seizure of 2.5 tonnes of cocaine from a fishing vessel by U.S. Authorities, thereby significantly suppressing the activities of this group. As a result of that investigation, partnerships with the Vancouver Island RCMP District Drug Section as well as the U.S. Coast Guard, Customs, and D.E.A. were reinforced.



Partnerships have also been established with the Oregon State Police, local municipal police departments, the R.C.M.P. (e.g., the Unsolved Homicide Unit, Drug Section, Vancouver Island Major Crime Section), Calgary Police Services, the Provincial Gaming Audit and Investigation Office (G.A.I.O.), Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (C.C.R.A.) and the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre (V.I.R.C.C.), on cases involving gaming offences, drug trafficking, homicide, and tax evasion. Video enhancement expertise, forensic photography services, and equipment loans have also been provided for these partner agencies. Without our assistance, these units would be required to obtain these resources outside their local jurisdiction, resulting in increased costs and impaired coordination. Realizing the importance of sharing intelligence, our investigators are active participants in the Olympic Peninsula Narcotics Enforcement Team (O.P.N.E.T.), North American Intelligence Technical Investigators Association, Law Enforcement Thermal Imaging Association and Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Intelligence meetings.

### **Proceeds of Crime (P.O.C.) Unit**

The O.C.A.B.C. Proceeds of Crime (P.O.C.) program has focused on developing the structures required to advance P.O.C. investigations throughout the Agency in a uniform and consistent manner. Our P.O.C. team members have been assigned as coaches and mentors to enhance O.C.A.B.C. officers' skills in conducting proceeds of crime investigations.



We have recently implemented a document management system which will significantly streamline our ability to reproduce documents for court purposes. The Agency has invited other police forces and Crown Counsel to share this equipment, enhancing their efficiency as well.

The P.O.C. program at O.C.A.B.C. is expected to expand its capacity to include more difficult and complex seizures such as real property, financial investments and operating businesses.



The Agency has taken a leadership role in training officers in proceeds of crime investigations. First, we have hosted the R.C.M.P. accredited Introductory Proceeds of Crime Course which provided training to 28 officers: 23 from O.C.A.B.C. and a total of 5 from the R.C.M.P. and municipal police departments. Second, through active involvement in P.O.C. investigations, our Agency's officers as well as seconded investigators from municipal forces and the R.C.M.P. have received on-the-job training in this area.

In addition to supporting the investigative teams, our P.O.C. team members are nearing completion of one large investigation and will be recommending charges for illegal gambling under the *Criminal Code of Canada*. This investigation, initiated in 1998, resulted in officers freezing Vancouver-based bank accounts valued at \$10.5 million, which investigators are alleging is the proceeds of crime. All, or some portion of these monies, may be ordered forfeited to the crown if the accused persons and corporations are convicted. Over the last year, the Agency has attracted highly experienced POC investigators and now has the capacity to enforce laws related to securities and stock market offences.

Historically, proceeds of crime enforcement has been centered on drug related offences; however, proposed legislative changes, such as Bill C-24, will expand enforcement opportunities to expand the definition of proceeds of crime offence related property (property which had been or was intended to be used as an instrument of crime). O.C.A.B.C. is in an ideal position to respond to these challenges.

### ***Enforcement Partnerships***

In addition to the partnerships that have been developed and maintained through specific enforcement actions, the Agency has entered into more formal relationships through Letters of Agreement with two enforcement units: the National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (N.W.E.S.T.) and Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (C.C.R.A.). Created by the federal Minister of Justice, N.W.E.S.T. is a unit of highly trained and experienced individuals who work in support of law enforcement to assist in anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling of firearms and will help police in dealing with issues of firearm related violence.

C.C.R.A. staff work with Agency investigators both on trans-border shipment of contraband as well as on organized crime offences against the *Income Tax Act* (e.g., for failing to pay tax on illicitly obtained funds).



## Crime Statistics

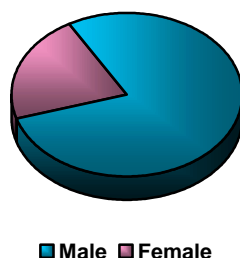
Enforcement results (to date) include 267 charges laid on 112 individuals. The following summarizes the breakdown of these charges:

### Gender Distribution

Majority (i.e. 79%) of the 112 charges in the last year were laid on males while only 21% were related to females (Figure 1).

Figure 1

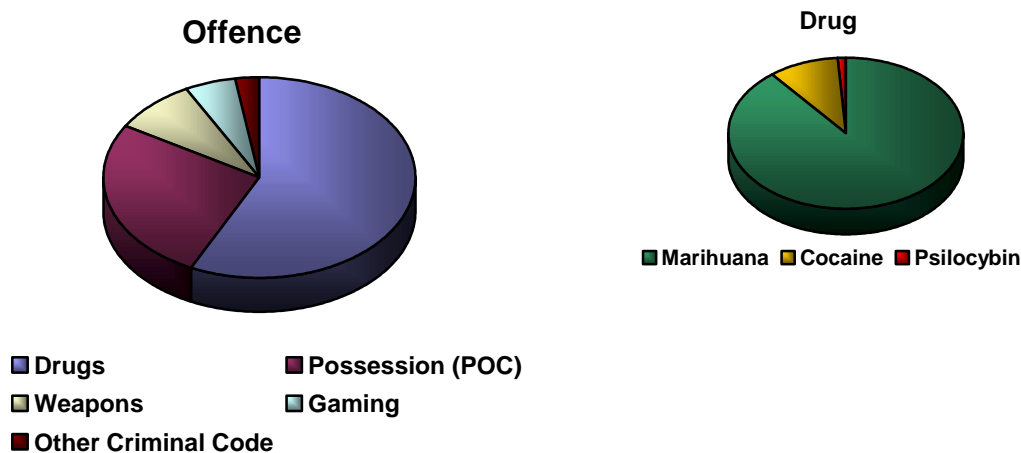
#### Gender Distribution



### Type of Charges Laid

OCABC investigators laid a total of 267 charges for cultivation of marihuana and psilocybin, possession for the purpose of trafficking marihuana, cocaine, and psilocybin, possession of proceeds of crime, weapons offences, gaming offences, and other criminal code offences (Figure 2).

Figure 2





### Value of Seizures (in CDN dollars)

In the last year, OCABC investigators seized drug and drug-related equipment valued at approximately \$11.7 million (Figure 3). A further \$5.3 million in assets and cash was seized as proceeds of crime (Figure 4).

Figure 3

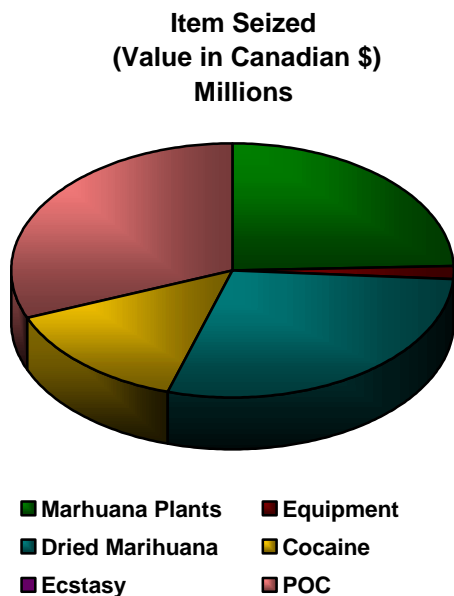
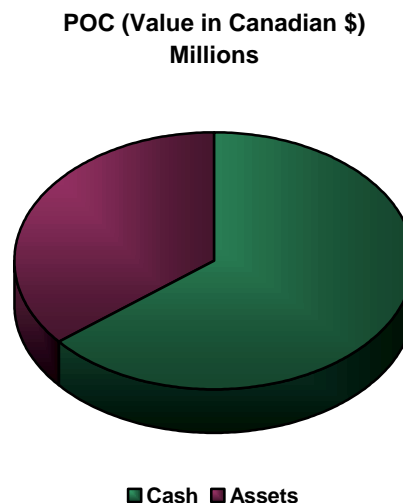


Figure 4



Our largest seizure was a counterfeit credit card factory comprising a total value of \$330 million in credit potential.



## ***Evidence of Disruption and Suppression***

There are a number of signs of disruption and suppression of organized crime activities that are directly attributable to the Agency's participation in law enforcement action. Evidence of disruption and suppression can be divided into six categories: displacement, disruption of distribution networks, reduced availability of drug supplies, changing commodities, jail sentences, and violence.

### **Displacement**

Enforcement personnel are frequently encountering evidence that in order to evade prosecution, marijuana cultivation is moving from centralized locations in greater Vancouver to venues further up the Fraser Valley and into the interior of the province. Further information indicates an increase in grow operations being developed as far east as Ontario, likely to subvert detection.

### **Disruption of Distribution Networks**

Instead of transporting drugs directly to California down the Interstate 5 Highway, organized criminals have re-routed their shipments to Toronto through Calgary then south to the US. This increases the cost of the commodity, the length of time for delivery and the risk of exposure of the criminals, thereby disrupting well-established distribution networks.

### **Reduced Availability of Drug Supplies**

Intelligence sources as far south as Los Angeles and Mexico indicate that temporary disruptions in the supply of B.C. Bud have been noted by U.S. authorities in the southwestern states. Shortages in the supply of cocaine at the wholesale level have also been noted in British Columbia.

### **Organized Crime Figures Changing Commodities**

To evade prosecution for production and distribution of cocaine and B.C. Bud, organized crime figures are migrating to less risky commodities. This results in the disruption of existing production and distribution networks.



Current intelligence indicates there is a proliferation of clandestine laboratories for manufacturing Ecstasy and Methamphetamine. This provides a means for organized crime to continue in the drug business while reducing the potential for enforcement action. However, to achieve this, new manufacturing processes, equipment and markets must be developed, disrupting activities while their new routines are established.

### **Jail Sentences**

Obtaining jail sentences for organized criminals is direct evidence of enforcement action's effect on suppressing their activities. As the result of enforcement strategies over the last year, the courts have issued significant jail sentences to a number of organized crime figures.

For example, an associate of the Hells Angels recently received a sentence of three years for an outdoor marijuana grow operation in the interior of British Columbia. In another case, a six year jail term for possession of cocaine for the purpose of trafficking was given to another organized crime figure. Significant jail sentences in the United States have also been issued for a number of targets who were the subjects of joint initiatives between O.C.A.B.C. and United States Authorities.

In a July 2001 decision in the Provincial Court of B.C., two Hells Angels were sentenced to four and a half years in jail for drug trafficking.

These sentences have suppressed key individuals' activities by interrupting their involvement in the organized crime environment.

### **Increases in Conflict and Violence**

Increases in violence among organized crime is often thought to be evidence of disruption. Home invasions, drug rip-offs, and other indicators of violence between and within organized crime groups are generally indicative that tension is increasing, cooperation is diminishing, and competition for crime market share is increasing within the underworld. Intelligence currently documents an increase in these types of offences and the corresponding disruption it causes.



## Operational Support Services

### ***Open Sources Section***

The Open Sources Section (O.S.S.) collects and collates timely and comprehensive information packages. These data are used to complement other law enforcement intelligence.

The rapid expansion of the Internet, coupled with a growing number of world-wide media and library sources, produces a wealth of information in a timely fashion, enabling investigators to respond effectively to both tactical and strategic areas of concern.

Whether it comprises library reference material for an historical perspective or current newspaper headlines, the use of open source information is recognized internationally as a vital tool within the policing community.

### ***Criminal Intelligence Analysis***

Criminal intelligence can be defined as the gathering and processing of information on the activities of individuals or groups known, or suspected, to be involved in criminal activities. The information collected relates to planning, organizing, financing and performing criminal acts or threats.

Criminal intelligence also refers to:

- The patterns of the movement of criminals;
- Emerging trends in criminal activity.

Criminal intelligence can be broken down into tactical and strategic.

### **Tactical Intelligence**

Tactical intelligence is used in a specific investigation targeting an individual, groups of individuals or specific groups or organizations. It enables officers to use well-developed action plans. Its focus is generally short term and specific (e.g., targets specific criminal activities or individuals or groups).

### **Strategic intelligence**

Strategic intelligence can be defined as insight or understanding, including advice on current and emerging trends and areas of operation, that provides direction for plans, strategies and policies to achieve organizational goals and objectives.



In general, strategic intelligence supports long range planning and is designed to provide advice and options to law enforcement managers. Intelligence analysis is the cornerstone of intelligence-led, strategic targeting of organized crime figures and is incorporated in all aspects of O.C.A.B.C. enforcement.

Most noteworthy are two initiatives Agency analysts are pursuing: Project EMERALD and Geographic Information Systems.

### ***Project EMERALD***

There has been a significant increase in the number of marihuana grow operations in British Columbia over the past five years, particularly in the Lower Mainland. Organized crime groups have taken control of many of these illicit operations, resulting in a marked increase in violence (e.g., home invasions, drug rip-offs and firearms offences). It is believed that outlaw motorcycle gangs (O.M.G.s) and Vietnamese crime groups, through the use of marihuana brokers, now control 85 percent of the marihuana production and distribution in British Columbia.

It is conservatively estimated that there are 15,000 to 20,000 grow operations currently in existence, at least 2,700 within the Lower Mainland. It is further estimated that the value of marihuana production in the Lower Mainland totals \$4.2 billion. Provincially, the annual wholesale value is approximately \$6 billion.



Project EMERALD is a provincial undertaking that strategically targets marihuana grow operations in British Columbia at the highest level of organization to support concerted law enforcement action. The design and function of the database is simple, yet effective. O.C.A.B.C. analysts receive drug files from police agencies in British Columbia and other jurisdictions. Information is verified for accuracy, expanded upon and stored in a database for strategic and tactical analysis as well as law enforcement action.



As the EMERALD database develops, analysts and investigators are seeing organized crime cells at the heart of the lucrative marihuana industry in British Columbia. While widely depicted in the media as independent “mom & pop” operations, a much closer inspection of the data reveals sophisticated and highly organized drug trafficking alliances with numerous ties to transnational organized crime.

In addition to this, O.C.A.B.C. is also witnessing the eastward movement of marihuana growers, especially Vietnamese crime groups, to the Fraser Valley region and beyond. As a further indication of this trend, the crown is prosecuting increasingly more Vietnamese marihuana growers, a development unheard of just a few years ago.

O.C.A.B.C. analysts have carried out detailed analysis of marihuana grow operations in the northeast sector of the lower mainland. Additionally, they have provided target profiles and link association charts on a major subject of interest to the R.C.M.P. Airport Drug Squad. The EMERALD database has been routinely queried on subjects of interest by both foreign and domestic police and regulatory agencies. These include the R.C.M.P., Abbotsford Police Department, Port Moody Police Department, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Olympia Police Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation and US Customs Service, to name a few.

As part of Project EMERALD, a court report was prepared on April 17-18, 2000 that examined the social impacts of residential marihuana grow operations in the City of Vancouver. The report identified local public facilities that were seen to be at risk from the operation. These were elementary schools, daycare facilities, churches, parks and community centres. The report highlighted the presence of a hydro bypass, faulty wiring and a carbon dioxide generator at the residence. The operation had also violated community standards set by, and for, local area residents and placed residents, particularly children and youth, at risk from potential harm.

This case contributed to important sentencing guidelines in the British Columbia Court of Appeal which stated “the range that has thought to have been appropriate in past cases may be superseded by new views, taking into account and reflecting the concerns of society for the flourishing of this kind of crime”.



Work is underway to further develop the impact assessment model using a variety of tools and techniques. This strategy is being considered for use as a national best practice by the R.C.M.P. Drug Enforcement Branch in Ottawa.

### ***Geographic Information Systems (GIS)***

O.C.A.B.C. has chosen to employ the use of Geographical Information Systems (G.I.S.) for both strategic and tactical operations. This technology allows a computer to warehouse vast amounts of spatial data that would otherwise be stored on paper, making the retrieval and storage of information far more efficient than it would be on conventional paper maps. G.I.S. outputs also provide more flexibility in displaying the data.

Unlike paper maps, G.I.S. technology allows for manipulations and calculations to be made directly on the computer, without affecting the map data itself. A geographical information system is useful for the planning and active stages of an investigation, and also allows for a clear and concise overview of an investigation upon its conclusion. O.C.A.B.C. sees the benefit of using a G.I.S. and will continue to improve its technology in the future.

### ***International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts (I.A.L.E.I.A.)***

Members of O.C.A.B.C.'s analytic unit are in the process of seeking approval to initiate a Western Canada Chapter of International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts (I.A.L.E.I.A.) serving British Columbia, Alberta and the Yukon. It would offer professional membership to law enforcement intelligence analysts and other professionals working in the intelligence community, as well as provide opportunities for networking, collaboration and training at both the local and international levels.

Founded in 1980, I.A.L.E.I.A.'s mission is to advance high standards of professionalism in law enforcement intelligence and analysis. Currently, the association includes more than 1,500 members in 50 countries worldwide.



## **Technical Services**

Technical Services comprises various units which provide support to the Investigational teams.

### **Equipment**

This unit is responsible for meeting the day to day equipment needs of the investigators by issuing cell phones, pagers, photography equipment and video equipment.

### **Information Technology (I.T.)**

This unit is responsible for providing I.T. services for the Agency by providing computer help desk support, systems analysis and design, custom software development, computer training, and maintaining computer hardware and software for the Agency.

### **Fleet**

This Unit is responsible for all the Agency's vehicle needs by making the necessary arrangements for new vehicles as well as maintenance and repairs for the existing fleet.

### **Records**

This section maintains the Agency's operational records through file management including updating and maintaining data in various police data bases.

### **Property Management**

The Property Management unit is responsible for all the building facilities by arranging for all maintenance, renovations, furniture and supplies, space planning and telephone services.

### **Technical Support Unit (T.S.U.)**

This area is responsible for technical support to investigations including the electronic surveillance capacity.

### **Communications**

This unit is responsible for the radio communications needs of the Agency by providing radio equipment, maintaining mobile and portable radios, repeater sites and vehicle installations.



## ***Legal Services***

Appropriate and timely legal advice is essential to the aggressive fight against organized crime. In response to this need, the federal Department of Justice and the Agency have agreed to enter into a cost-sharing agreement to fund a solicitor to provide legal advice on specific investigations.



## Administration

### ***Financial Management***

In order to meet the Agency's mandate to facilitate the disruption and suppression of organized crime which affects all British Columbians, adequate funding is crucial.

OCABC funds are received primarily from the Solicitor General (formerly the Ministry of Attorney General), Province of British Columbia. For the 2001/2002 fiscal year, the Province provided approximately 67% of total funding for the Agency.

Other funding sources include the RCMP, the Vancouver Ports Authority which is administered through the Province and occasionally other law enforcement agencies for project specific funding where the OCABC is requested to provide assistance.

OCABC has exceeded all operational expectations and has done so in a fiscally responsible and accountable manner.



## ***Human Resources***

### **Focus**

Globalization and the use of technology by criminals has changed the face of organized crime. Leadership in the aggressive fight against organized crime requires highly trained and skilled personnel who possess the leading-edge skills in diverse areas of expertise (e.g., law, accounting, computer technology, surveillance, human source handling, witness protection).

The Agency has attracted highly skilled personnel with training and experience in forensic video recording, proceeds of crime, undercover operations, language skills (e.g., Spanish, Polish, Russian) electronic tracking and thermal imaging, to name a few. In addition to this, many of our officers have been certified as expert witnesses in the Provincial and Supreme Courts of British Columbia as well as Canadian Immigration Court in Asian Organized Crime, Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, drug production and trafficking as well as conspiracy.

### **General**

O.C.A.B.C. achieved its full staffing complement of sworn police officers and civilian personnel in May, 2001.

The contingent of police officers comprises a combination of O.C.A.B.C. fully authorized police officers who are appointed by the Agency's Governance Board, along with seconded municipal and R.C.M.P. officers.

Complementing these fully authorized police officers, our Board of Governance has appointed designated law enforcement officers who maintain partial police powers and possess specialized expertise in areas such as forensic computer analysis, electronic surveillance, accounting, proceeds of crime and witness protection.

Similarly, civilian staff perform a myriad of functions crucial to the operation of the Agency such as technical services, electronic surveillance, records management and work related to cyber crime investigations. With this full staffing complement, the Agency is now able to forge ahead to advance the fight against organized crime.



## **Recruitment Strategies**

Our strategic hiring goals include:

- Attracting high caliber candidates that possess diverse and sophisticated skills, knowledge and abilities;
- Utilizing job-specific core competencies as a measurement tool when aligning employees to positions;
- Balancing internal and external hiring strategies to ensure the best candidates are selected;
- Emphasizing competencies and skills, de-emphasizing rank; and
- Ensuring the competition process is fair, open and transparent.

## **Retention Strategies**

The Agency is committed to developing and retaining our highly motivated and dedicated staff through the following initiatives:

### ***Performance Appraisal System***

By continuously providing staff with constructive feedback which is consistent with the Agency's goals and objectives, all employees will be working toward a common goal.

### ***Reward and Recognition Systems***

Acknowledging and recognizing staff for their contributions and achievements will build employee morale and benefit the Agency as a whole.

### ***Attractive Compensation and Benefit Package***

To continue to attract and retain highly trained and experienced candidates, we have developed a system to compensate staff through a competitive wage and benefit package.

### ***Portability of Pensions***

Increased flexibility in pension portability is more attractive to potential candidates; to this end, we are maximizing the potential for portability from other pension programs into our municipal scheme.



## **Development Strategies**

O.C.A.B.C.'s human resource goals include:

- Developing organized crime investigators who will be capable of addressing all aspects of organized crime. The goal of this concept is to break away from commodity-based policing and to strategically target criminal organizations and groups;
- Facilitating this innovative and proactive goal by investing in training and succession planning, developing leadership qualities in all personnel, and fostering a dedicated and cohesive team that will aggressively investigate and prosecute organized crime;
- Providing opportunities for professional development through challenging work assignments, satisfying work environments, effective management, and empowering a successful and well respected policing environment.

The Agency recognizes the need to provide high level training for all staff. In the past year, two significant training opportunities were initiated:

### **Proceeds of Crime**

The RCMP Introductory Proceeds of Crime Course hosted by O.C.A.B.C. in May 2001, was attended by 23 Agency members and five municipal and R.C.M.P. officers. This is the first time that this course was held outside of the R.C.M.P. central training system and it represents an increased commitment to partnership. Two of our senior investigators acted as facilitators on this course and are committed to conducting this course on future occasions for both the RCMP and OCABC. Having established this core level of training, our Proceeds of Crime Team now provide coaching and mentoring support to investigators who are conducting substantive investigations with the expectation that they will become increasingly sophisticated in initiating the seizure of assets as "the next step" in their investigations.



## **Intelligence Analysis**

One of the Agency's strategic objectives throughout the past year and in years to come is to increase our capacity to effectively and efficiently use the principles and techniques of intelligence analysis. We will achieve this through training and have already established and delivered criminal intelligence training courses and workshops.

We plan to continue to develop our training program and continue to provide courses for our staff and investigators in years to come.



## Concluding Comments

British Columbians face a serious threat to public safety and well-being that is directly and indirectly attributed to the activities of organized crime groups. Although there are many diverse organized crime groups, the most serious problems emanate from the activities of two groups: outlaw motorcycle gangs and Asian organized crime groups.

The Agency is specifically structured to facilitate the aggressive enforcement program targeting these two criminal groups. Our flexible organization design, coupled with highly trained and skilled officers and civilians, ensures the efficient and effective fight against organized crime.

Since becoming operational just over a year ago, the Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia has demonstrated its ability to disrupt and suppress organized crime through an aggressive enforcement program. Contributing to our success is our use of partnerships, intelligence-led investigations, strategic targeting, project specific enforcement and a variety of enforcement tools such as proceeds of crime legislation.





## Memorial to Brent Barbour



It was with heartfelt sadness that we learned of the death of Brent Barbour in March of this year.

Brent retired from the R.C.M.P. and was subsequently hired on April 3, 2000 by O.C.A.B.C. as our Human Sources and FOI Co-ordinator.

Not only was Brent a valued member of the R.C.M.P. and the Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia, he was also well known and respected for his role as community leader, most notably for his dedication to advancing high standards, fairness and ethics in amateur sport.

Brent was described as “a great friend, father, husband, leader in our community and member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police”. His death has left a huge void for all of us whose life he touched.

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with Brent’s family and loved ones as they adjust to the challenges each day brings.



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