

SITUATION

California cities make up 9 out of the top 10 Hot Spots for Vehicle Theft according to the National Insurance Crime Bureau*. Chop shops are frequent destinations for many of the hundreds of thousands of vehicles stolen annually in these Hot Spots, and across the United States. Thieves work with chop shops to disassemble stolen cars and to subsequently profit from selling the individual parts.

STRATEGY

In an effort to better serve its community, the Oxnard Police Department recently teamed up with CARFAX, giving investigators access to information from CARFAX Vehicle History Reports. In doing so, Oxnard Police now have additional tools to help solve a variety of crimes faster. Additionally, using just a VIN, investigators can automatically track vehicles of interest and receive activity alerts through CARFAX VIN Alert.

ACTION & RESULTS

Oxnard Police investigators working with the Ventura County Auto Theft Task Force served a search warrant on a suspect in possession of auto parts believed to be stolen. During the search, they discovered an engine, transmission and liftgate. Investigators believed the parts belonged to a 2013 Subaru XV Crosstrek reported stolen in the State of California earlier in the year. However, there was no direct way to tie the parts, and the suspect, to the stolen Subaru.

To identify the source of the stolen parts, Oxnard Police obtained a CARFAX Vehicle History Report associated with the stolen Subaru's VIN. Using CARFAX's unique sources of information, officers were able to quickly identify the Ventura, CA dealership that sold and serviced the vehicle.

Upon contacting the dealer and providing serial numbers belonging to the engine and transmission, investigators confirmed that the parts did, in fact, come from the Subaru Crosstrek.

With the unique sold and service information pulled from CARFAX, Oxnard Police were able to track down the evidence they needed to definitively link their suspect to the stolen vehicle.

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to solving auto theft crimes, the Oxnard PD intends to leverage CARFAX Vehicle History Reports across a broad array of crimes. Mileage and location discrepancies can help police identify potential VIN cloning cases.

Oxnard's traffic collision rate also results in a high number of hit-and-run accidents. Investigators plan to further leverage Investigative Tools to locate the responsible suspects, and suspects of other types of other crimes, by using VIN Alert to get instant information from private sector sources about where vehicles of interest are being serviced, inspected, and more. Access to critical information on mobile devices will ensure Oxnard Police can continue to get the information they need, when they need it, in the field.

*Hot Spots 2013, https://www.nicb.org/newsroom/nicb_campaigns/hot_spots

