

## THIRD DEGREE COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

### TRAINING BULLETIN

#### *Drug Case Flash Roll Management*

By Gregory D. Lee

A *flash roll* is a sum of money displayed to a drug trafficker by an undercover agent (UC), for only a brief period of time, to prove he or she has the means to purchase a quantity of drugs under negotiation. Drug investigators and their supervisors need to know when, where, and how to safely display departmental funds to known drug dealers.

#### SURPRISE FLASHES VS. SCHEDULED FLASHES

To minimize the danger to UC agents, a technique known as a *surprise flash* has proven to work extremely well.

A surprise flash is when a UC agent displays money to a drug trafficker under investigation, *without his prior knowledge*. The money only needs to be shown long enough to convince the dealer that the UC agent has enough money to purchase the drugs under negotiation, and that he is serious about completing the transaction. Suspects sometimes become anxious to complete the drug deal because they know the buyer has the means to purchase the drugs he has to sell. Once the money is shown to the drug dealer, he knows that it is now up to him to prove he can deliver the drugs.

Money should only be shown to a drug dealer who has the authority to deliver the drugs to the UC agents. Performing a surprise flash to a low-level co-conspirator who has little credibility with the ultimate source of supply is a waste of time and resources. The UC agent should invite this person to attend a meeting on the pretense of further price negotiation, when in reality he intends to display the “buy” money to him. When planning such a meeting, the UC should never divulge that money will be shown or that it is nearby the meeting place.

Surprise flashes in public places help prevent the suspect(s) from robbing the UC agent of the money. A restaurant, public parking lot at a shopping mall, or similar place works well, however the suspect(s) will now know that the UC agent has access to the money. The suspect(s) may later consider kidnapping the agent and hold him or her hostage until the money is delivered to them. To avoid this, the UC agent must make it clear to the suspect(s) that the money does not belong to him, and he will not have access to it again until he buys the drugs in question.

*Scheduled flashes* are when the suspect knows in advance he is going to see the money that will be used to purchase drugs. This should only be done in extraordinary circumstances and only in an extremely controlled environment such as a safety deposit box inside a bank during normal business hours.

#### USE OF A SECOND UNDERCOVER AGENT

Using a second UC agent in a money flash enhances the safety of the operation, and shows the suspect he is dealing with professionals who take their business seriously. Money that is displayed to any suspect must leave the area as soon as practical.

For example, a UC agent meets with a suspect in a restaurant to further negotiate the price and method of the delivery of a quantity of drugs. The previous agreed upon amount of money needed for the purchase of the drugs is \$100,000 dollars.

During the negotiations, the UC agent uses his cellular telephone to call a second UC agent who is nearby.

A few minutes later, the second UC agent drives to the restaurant's parking lot and calls the first UC agent. The primary UC agent asks the suspect to accompany him outside. When they approach the second agent's vehicle, the agent places a gym bag on the front passenger seat of the vehicle. The door is locked and the window is closed. The agent unzips the bag and shows the suspect the money inside. The agent fans the bills of each *bundle* to prove they are all one hundred dollar bills, and *bundle counts* the ten stacks, each containing ten thousand dollars. The agent then immediately drives off as the first UC agent and suspect return to the restaurant to continue their discussion about the delivery of the drugs.

Of course, all of this transpires only when adequate security and surveillance agents are positioned to cover the meeting.

#### USE OF AN INFORMANT TO DISPLAY THE MONEY

Confidential informants can never be completely trusted; they should never be used to display the "buy" money. Some informants have been known to be in collusion with the suspects for the sole purpose of stealing the flash money. If the informant complains, he should be told that department policy prohibits them from performing this role.

Informants can, however, conduct negotiations and call a UC agent to conduct the surprise money flash. Any scenario is permissible so long as the informant does not have control and dominion over the flash roll.

#### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this bulletin is to introduce the reader to the investigative technique of using a flash roll to increase the credibility of UC agents, and to move their investigation forward rapidly. Whether this technique can be used during one of your investigations is governed by departmental policy. Some departments have money set aside for use as flash rolls; other departments borrow the money for such purposes, but it become liable for its loss.

UC agents should always ask the suspect to show his drugs before showing any money. Most credible drug dealers will not, but there's always a chance he will. Never let the trafficker know you have access to the money, and surprise him with it when you do. Showing money to drug traffickers frequently speeds up the delivery of drugs to the UC agents who can take them off the streets that much sooner.

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