

The Badge



The newspaper of the Toronto Police Service

January 2007



A United States Coast Guard Dolphin helicopter hovers above a Marine Unit vessel during December training. See Page 8

Photo Sgt. Kathy Doughty, Marine Unit

Mapping out sex crimes arrest

An alleged sexual predator on the loose for a year was snared by geo-profiling.

Sex Crimes Unit investigators called upon D/Const Manny San Pedro, a geographic profiling analyst at Corporate Planning, to put his knowledge to work on a long series of occurrences involving a man exposing himself to children.

Over the course of a year, there had been 20 similar occurrences in North York and Scarborough, in which a man drove up to early-teen and pre-teen girls and exposed himself while in his vehicle.

"It had become an issue," said lead investigator Sex Crimes Unit Det. Kim Hancock, noting the man had been targeting young girls quite often. Area schools sent out notices to parents while police issued news releases.

"Escalation of his behaviour was a community concern."

There was a partial licence plate, a description of the vehicle and a composite picture of the suspect but all efforts to identify and find him had yielded nothing.

After putting together his profile of coloured maps and graphs using the Rigel Analyst software, San Pedro was left with a 292 square-kilometer area, criss-crossed by highways 404 and 401, to find a place where the man would strike again. Two distinct areas where occurrences had occurred stood out. He identified a peak area of seven square kilometers.

Adding the schools in the area and a five-minute walking buffer

around them for children walking home, he was left with a good target area for investigators.

"You identify the routine activity space for potential victims," he said, of looking for a future occurrence.

"By the offender's behaviour so far, he's likely to return to that area," said San Pedro, who also looked for times the offender struck when children were en route to and from school.

Because the case qualified as a sex crime and was more complex, San Pedro consulted with Ontario Provincial Police geo-profiler D/Sgt Brad Moore who offered his advice on the case.

San Pedro prescribed a one-month project, targeting the areas

"The analysts don't solve crimes, we provide investigative leads – it's all about the strategic deployment of resources so you're not wasting our efforts."

-D/Const Manny San Pedro

on specific days of the week at certain times of day, briefing officers from 33 and 41 Divisions where the crimes had taken place and handing them a geo-profile package.

"You could see the pattern, certain days and school hours," Hancock said. "Manny inputted all the information, got rid of the peripheral stuff and gave us an area to focus on."

Teams of officers were then dispatched to the roads San Pedro had highlighted as potential offender trolling areas.

Within 33 minutes of setting up on a driveway at a street, Consts. Jessica McInnis and Colleen Sweetnam, 41 Division's school liaison officers, saw a van

matching the description pass them. They followed the van and eventually pulled it over after the man is alleged to have driven for several blocks.

Hancock said the profile helped focus the search.

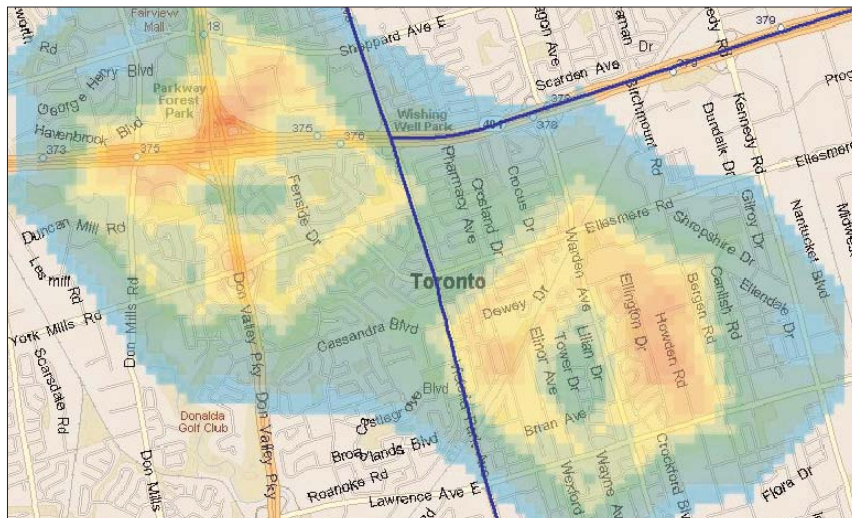
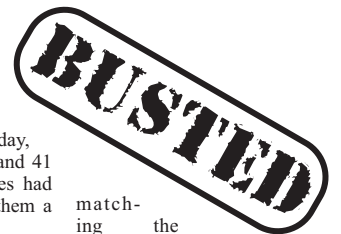
"It was wonderful," Hancock said, of the profile. "It helped focus us. We had officers driving around a bigger catchment area the week before."

The man is charged with invitation to sexual touching, criminal harassment and dangerous operation of a motor vehicle, four counts of exposure to person under 14 years, and 10 counts of indecent act.

"It's great to see we can net some good results," San Pedro said. "The analysts don't solve crimes, we provide investigative leads – it's all about the strategic deployment of resources so you're not wasting our efforts."

He said gathering more eye-witness accounts and other evidence makes the geo-mapping process more powerful because it thrives off information. He said the open lines of communication between himself and Sex Crimes investigators helped a great deal.

"It's not an exact science – it's based on probabilities," said San Pedro. "What I do is not evidence; it's up to investigators to collect that. I provide leads to assist detectives with investigative strategies."



The mapping system shows hot spots where the suspect allegedly exposed himself to children