

DBA Design Effectiveness Awards 2013

FOR PUBLICATION

Project title	Scratch'n'sniff cannabis campaign
Category 14	Design for Society
Sub category	Campaign
Client company	Crimestoppers
Design Consultancy	Felton Communication
Launch date	18th March 2013
Entry date	28th June 2013



"We are delighted with the success that the Crimestoppers' cannabis cultivation campaign has experienced. It has over-achieved on all of its objectives."

Lucy Reid
Campaigns Manager
Crimestoppers

Executive summary

The brief

- › A national campaign to generate information about cannabis cultivation from the public.
- › Raise public awareness of the social and economic consequences of cannabis farms.

The challenges

- › Cannabis is seen by many as the more acceptable side of recreational drugs so asking people to report cultivation was contentious amongst the public.
- › As cannabis farms are illegal they are discreetly hidden even though many are situated in flats and houses in urban communities, so we had to tell people how to spot them.
- › The campaign needed to specifically reach residents in urban neighbourhoods with high crime rates and where the cannabis farms were likely to be located.
- › The creative budget was just £5893 and the production, distribution and media buying costs only allowed for a single national hit.

The results

- › Highlighted the association of cannabis cultivation with violent crime.
 - › Telephone and online reports to Crimestoppers about 'Drugs manufacture and cultivation' increased by 63% over the two weeks immediately after launch and 40% over the following month.
 - › There were an estimated 1500 more drugs related reports than in the same two month period in the previous year.
 - › There were 435 different items of local, national and even international media coverage during the two months after the launch - reaching millions of people.
 - › Crimestoppers' Twitter followers increased by 97% from the week before the campaign launched and 1735 campaign related comments were posted on their Facebook page.
 - › Traffic to Crimestoppers' website increased by 24% during the week of launch.
 - › Based on information from Crimestoppers and other intelligence, the Metropolitan police raided and closed 34 cannabis farms, made 387 arrests, seized plants with an estimated street value of £2.1m and an undisclosed number of firearms.
 - › Merseyside police received a 56% increase in intelligence logs in the first month of the campaign and there have been at least 25 cannabis farms identified as a result.
 - › West Yorkshire Police reported a 94% increase in intelligence logs.
 - › West Midlands Police reported a 77.5% increase in intelligence logs.
- › This campaign has been the most successful in Crimestoppers' 25 year history.

Project overview

Crimestoppers approached Feltons to work with them on a national campaign to increase reports from the public about cannabis cultivation. The brief was also to raise public awareness of the social and economic consequences of cannabis farms on local communities.

Overview of cannabis cultivation in the UK

An urban cannabis farm can be in a single room like a loft or basement, or a complete house, flat or warehouse. These farms are typically located on inner city housing estates.

There was a 15% increase in cannabis farms in the UK during 2011/12* with nearly 1,800 farms identified. Over the past two years police forces across the UK have seized over one million plants, with an estimated value of £200 million. The problem is getting worse.

Evidence strongly indicates that "organised crime" is behind the majority of cannabis farms. These gangs undoubtedly bring violence and other crime to the communities.

There are numerous reports of cannabis being sold to primary school children.

Cannabis farms require a significant amount of electricity to light and heat the growing rooms 24 hours a day. This electricity is rarely paid for but syphoned directly off the national grid. Not only can the makeshift cabling be a serious fire risk, it is also "energy theft". Suppliers and Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) report over 25,000 energy thefts per year. The total value of related energy theft is unclear but OFGEM reports that it could be around £400m per year.**

Cannabis is regarded by many as the more acceptable side of recreational drugs

Cannabis is seen by many as the more acceptable side of recreational drugs and this attitude has allowed cannabis farms and dealing to thrive in many deprived inner city areas. The serious social and economic consequences of this relaxed attitude in the communities has never been successfully communicated.

Encouraging residents within the targeted urban communities to report any crime, including a cannabis farm, has always been fraught with difficulties. Crimestoppers offers the opportunity for people to report crime completely anonymously and avoid the tag of being a "grass" (unintended pun in this instance).

Funding the campaign

Achieving coverage to the target audience relied on regional police forces buying in to the campaign and redirecting limited resources to support it. So co-ordinating both the funding and the deliverables was a major logistical endeavour in itself.

The total design budget for the campaign was just £5893 (excluding VAT but including image generation). Despite additional funding, the total production and media budget only allowed for a single national hit on 18th March 2013.

* ACPO UK National Problem Profile, Commercial Cultivation of Cannabis 2012

** OFGEM, Strategy consultation for the RIIO-ED1 electricity distribution price control - Outputs, incentives and innovation, para 5.27

Outline of design solution

Core messaging was explored to determine the most compelling reasons to motivate the targeted individuals to report a cannabis farm in their neighbourhood - especially when cannabis was seen as relatively acceptable by many. The possible routes included electricity theft, danger of fire as a result of dodgy wiring and excessive powerage, drug related and violent crime as well as children being sold drugs. Both client and agency determined that the threat of violent crime by gangs connected to organised crime was the issue that carried the most weight amongst residents of all ages.

The campaign funding wouldn't accommodate a national advertising campaign so a highly targeted campaign was required which would reach residents living on or near estates with high crime levels where cannabis farms are usually located. A mailed item would allow recipients to read about the harm that farms could cause to their community in the privacy of their own home. Unlike a poster or a press ad, the item could also list the tell-tale signs that a factory is operating in their neighbourhood - or even next door.

But what would make someone engage in the content of a direct mail piece and then talk about the issues and the signs with their neighbours? And how could we get the issues more widely discussed in the national and local press to raise general awareness?

A scratch and sniff cannabis mailer had been used in Holland by the Dutch police which used cannabis slurry to replicate the distinctive smell of cannabis plants but which didn't contain any THCs - so was safe. We thought this would be engaging as a delivery vehicle. Unlike the Dutch mailer, which was recessive and lacked visual impact, we needed to develop an overall visual concept that was distinctive and that could also be used on posters, flyers and even in social media where scratching and sniffing was not possible.

Giving a newsworthy vehicle more impact

The creative had to take the public appeal beyond mild curiosity of a scratch and sniff gimmick to an impactful message which associated cultivation with violent crime. By engaging journalists in both the vehicle and the message we would get greater coverage within the limited budget.

We also needed to engage Crimestoppers' regional supporters and volunteers through social media and e-shots so they could support the campaign.

So we had a launch vehicle - the scratch and sniff direct mailer. We had a core theme - cannabis farms bring violent crime to neighbourhoods. 13 regional police forces across the UK had identified key urban areas to target and supplied 220,000 addresses (see table 1). We just needed the creative to glue the whole campaign together.

The creative solution was simply to represent violence as an integral part of cannabis cultivation. So the basis of our concept was - **'Growing cannabis = Growing violent crime'**.

"Cannabis farms grow more than just drugs. Those who are cultivating cannabis tend to be involved in other areas of crime and are often involved in related gang crime and other violent crimes involving firearms.

These individuals use violence and intimidation to carry out these crimes and endanger the lives of those around them. We want to help put an end to this and the funding that cultivation provides to serious organised crimes like human trafficking and gun crime."

Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC

Founder and Chairman
Crimestoppers

Cannabis farms grow more than just drugs

Is there one under your nose?



How can you tell if there's a cannabis farm near you?

- 1 Strong, sickly smell given off by cannabis plants.**
- 2 Cannabis growing equipment being taken into a house.** For example, lighting and ventilation equipment.
- 3 Constantly covered or blocked-off windows.** Cannabis factories often have constantly pulled curtains or black-out blinds.
- 4 Unsociable coming and going at all hours.** Lots of different visitors might be a clue too.
- 5 Strong and constant lighting day and night.**
- 6 High levels of heat and condensation.** Cannabis factories often give off heat and the windows stay misted up.
- 7 Constant buzz of ventilation.** Listen out for a whirring sound as the growers try to create an ideal climate for the plants to grow.
- 8 Lots of power cables.** Gangs dig underground to lay cables that hook up to things like lamp posts so they don't have to pay for the enormous amounts of electricity they use. They can easily bypass a £20,000 utility bill; money that will be pushed back to others to pay through energy price rises.

Cannabis farms make everyone a victim.

If you suspect you have come into contact with a cannabis farm call **Crimestoppers** anonymously on **0800 555 111** or go to **www.crimestoppers-uk.org**

Tell us where they are, not who you are.



CRIMESTOPPERS
0800 555 111
Call anonymously with information about crime



Cannabis farms grow more than just drugs.

Is there one under your nose?

Scratch and sniff to see if you recognise the smell of a cannabis farm near you

Signs to look out for:

- 1 Strong and sickly sweet smell
- 2 Cannabis growing equipment
- 3 Constantly covered or blocked off windows
- 4 Visitors at unsociable hours
- 5 Strong and constant lighting day and night
- 6 High levels of heat and condensation
- 7 Constant buzz of ventilation
- 8 Lots of cables



Scratch and sniff

It's completely safe; there are no drugs in the card, it's just the smell of the plant.

Is organised crime running a cannabis farm in your neighbourhood?

Call **Crimestoppers** anonymously
on **0800 555 111** or go to
www.crimestoppers-uk.org

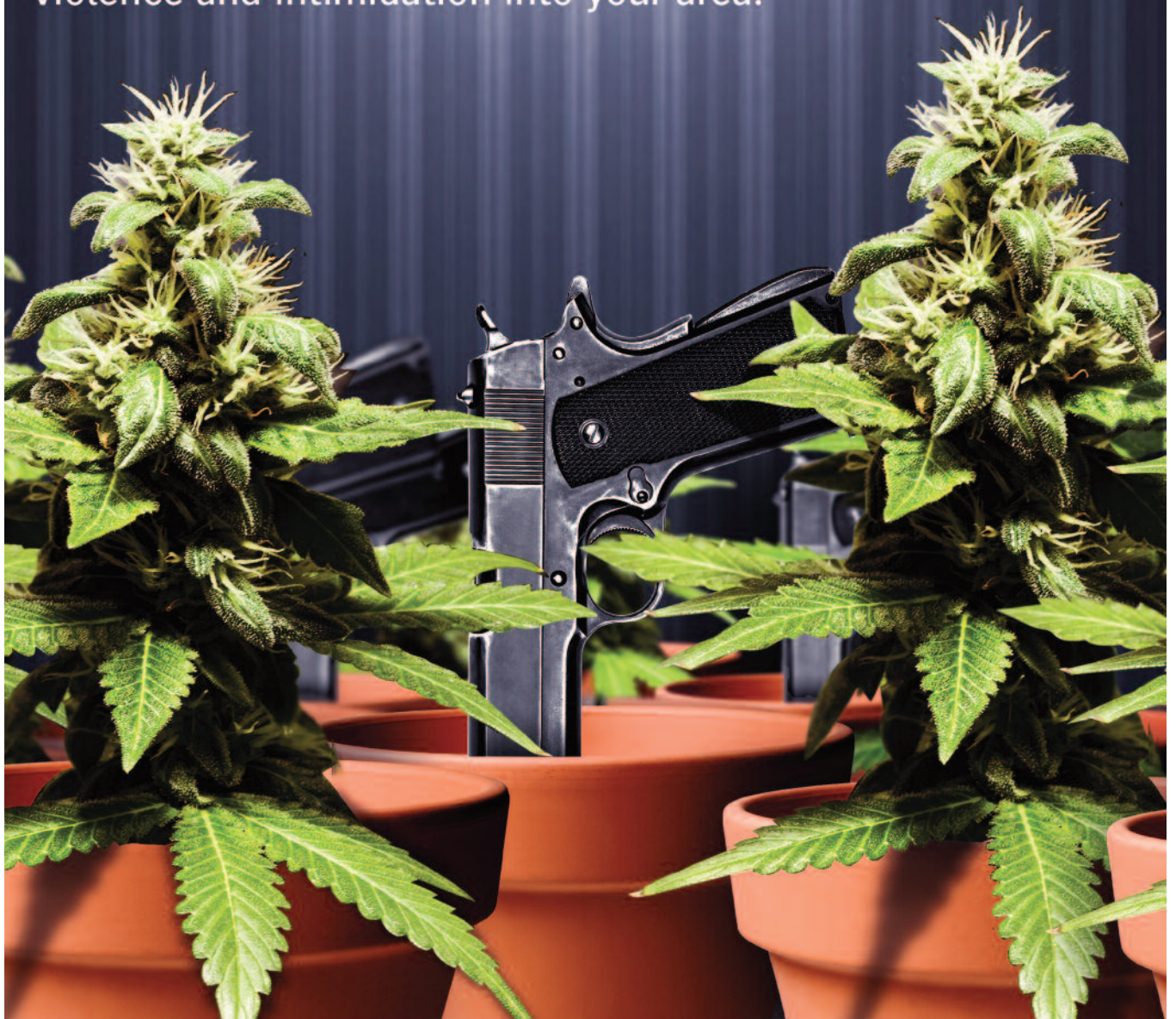


CRIMESTOPPERS
0800 555 111
Call anonymously with information about crime

Poster (personalised to name city, town or even neighbourhood)

Cannabis farms grow more than just drugs

Cannabis isn't the harmless drug people often think it is. Organised crime gangs that grow it can bring crime, violence and intimidation into your area.



Go to www.crimestoppers-uk.org for tips on how to spot the signs.

Call us anonymously or go online to tell us about a cannabis farm in your area.



CRIMESTOPPERS
0800 555 111

Call anonymously with information about crime

E-shot to supporters

New Message

Send Chat Attach Address Fonts Colors Save As Draft

To:

Cc:

Subject: Cannabis is not so harmless

Signature: None

Cannabis farms grow more than just drugs



CLICK HERE for tips on spotting the signs

Cannabis isn't the harmless drug people often think it is. Organised crime gangs that grow it can bring crime, violence and intimidation into a neighbourhood.

Call us anonymously or go online to tell us about a cannabis farm in your area.



CRIMESTOPPERS
0800 555 111
Call anonymously with information about crime

Table 1. Participating police forces and mailers distributed:

Greater Manchester Police	23,700
West Yorkshire Police	11,200
South Yorkshire Police	11,200
Northamptonshire Police	11,200
Nottinghamshire Police	11,200
Humberside Police	11,200
Merseyside Police	11,200
Kent Police	23,300
London Metropolitan Police	54,000
Avon and Somerset Police	10,000
Suffolk Police	5,000
Hertfordshire Police	2,000
West Midlands Police	12,000
Total mailers distributed	220,000

Planning, creative and production process:

- › Approach regional police forces for funding to develop a campaign
- › Campaign strategy and creative development
- › Collection and processing of cannabis plants by Dutch police to make the 'slurry' needed for the scratch and sniff patches
- › Cannabis slurry delivered to French printers.
- › Printed scratch and sniff mailers delivered to mailing house in the UK
- › Campaign briefings to regional police forces
- › Mailers distributed to 220,000 addresses across UK
- › Sample mailers and press releases sent to local and national press and TV journalists
- › Posters and leaflets printed and delivered to regional police forces for distribution
- › E-shots, Facebook and Twitter campaigns planned and assets developed
- › Launch campaign on Monday 18th March 2013

Summary of results

The effectiveness of the campaign is reflected through both the dramatic increase in call volumes to Crimestoppers from people reporting cannabis farms and the extraordinary media coverage for the campaign.

Increased calls to Crimestoppers reporting cannabis farms

The bureau reported a 63.2% increase in legitimate "Drug manufacture and cultivation" reports during the 14 days after the launch of the campaign. This figure dropped to a 40% increase the following month and was still 10% higher than usual the following month (See figures below). Call flow on all crime to the bureau increased during the launch week by 32%. And there were 1500 additional drug related reports in two months.

Calls received on Drug manufacture and cultivation

Period:	Calls in 2012:	Calls in 2013:	Increase:
17 March - 31 March	421	687	63.2%
01 April - 30 April	908	1272	40.1%
01 May - 31 May	928	1029	10.9%

Media coverage on campaign and related messaging

There were 339 separate items of media coverage during the week of the campaign launch which increased to 435 items after two months. This represents the most media coverage generated by any Crimestoppers' campaign in its 25 year history.

Coverage included 11 international broadcasters and publications including CNN, BBC World and Time. As well as 29 national broadcasters and publications including 'This Morning', Sky News and BBC 6 o'clock news. At one point in the launch week the campaign was the second most shared item on the BBC website.

All this coverage is attributed directly to the Crimestoppers' campaign as there were no other related media stories at the time. It is estimated that the campaign messaging reached well over 10 million people.

Increased activity on Crimestoppers' website and engagement on social media

There were 7957 unique visitors to the campaign landing page during the first two months of the campaign of which 266 clicked through to the anonymous online reporting form. Overall traffic to the website increased by 24% during the launch week.

The e-shot open rate was 37% with a CTR of 15%

During the week of the campaign launch, Crimestoppers posted nine statuses/photo posts on their Facebook page about the campaign and received 140 'Likes', 1735 comments and 72 shares.

The campaign contributed to a substantial rise in Twitter followers during the launch week with 443 compared to 225 the week before. There were also 236 retweets and 12 'favourites'.

Early indications from several police forces of reports, seizures and arrests

Collecting this type of comparative and coherent data is extremely difficult and time consuming so after three months we only have the following reports:

Metropolitan Police conducted 'Operation Hawk' in London a week after the campaign launch. Based on intelligence submitted by Crimestoppers and other intelligence, they raided and closed 34 cannabis farms and made 387 arrests. They also seized plants with an estimated street value of £2.1m and an undisclosed number of firearms.

Merseyside Police received a 56% increase in information from the bureau and directly from the public during the first month of the Crimestoppers' campaign and there have been at least 25 cannabis farms identified as a result.

West Midlands Police reported a 77.5% increase in intelligence logs about cannabis cultivation compared to February. One piece of information led to the closure of a cannabis farm in which 300 plants were seized.

South Yorkshire Police reported a 34% increase in intelligence logs in May. Based on information from Crimestoppers and other intelligence, Operation Barracuda resulted in £89,000 worth of cannabis plants being seized and 15 persons being processed. Of the intelligence used to inform the operation, 17 reports were submitted by Crimestoppers and 15 were positive.

West Yorkshire Police reported that there were 278 intelligence logs submitted by Crimestoppers during the three month campaign period compared to the same period before the launch, which is a 94% increase.

Humberside Police reported a spike in the logs submitted by Crimestoppers about cannabis cultivation.

Northamptonshire Police reported nearly twice as many intelligence logs from Crimestoppers about cannabis cultivation in two months compared to the same timeframe before the launch.

Suffolk Police reported a small increase in cannabis cultivation logs but that the quality of the intelligence that Crimestoppers submitted was very good.

Nottinghamshire Police reported that there was a 15.8% increase in intelligence logs submitted by Crimestoppers.

Hertfordshire Police reported an increase in reports submitted by Crimestoppers following the campaign launch and an extra three cannabis farms were detected.

Avon and Somerset Police reported that there was an immediate spike in the level of cannabis cultivation intelligence received and 95 cannabis farms were identified.

Kent Police reported a 29.7% increase in intelligence logs submitted by Crimestoppers.

Unfortunately there are no comparative statistics yet from OFGEM on electricity theft.

Other influencing factors

To the best of our knowledge none of the regional forces were running any of their own campaigns relating to cannabis cultivation during this time period. There were also no other news stories relating to drug cultivation in the press immediately prior to the campaign launch or during the launch week.

“We are distributing ‘scratch and sniff’ cards because not many people know how to recognise the signs of cannabis cultivation which is increasingly happening in their neighbourhood, many are also not familiar with the established links between this crime and serious organised crime.

Roger Critchell

Director of Operations
Crimestoppers

Client team

Lucy Reid - Campaigns Manager
Joe Henegan - Campaigns Project Co-ordinator

Agency team

Roger Felton - Managing/Creative Director
Brion Furnell - Designer
Alan Foulkes - Designer
Josh Gay - Designer/Retoucher
Richard Spencer - Copywriter
Juliette Mauve - Project Manager