

# **CHAPTER A**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## **PREAMBLE - INTRODUCTION**

Crime Stoppers is a not-for profit community-based charitable programme involving the co-operative efforts of the community, the media and the police in the fight against crime. Crime Stoppers encourages the public to call with information concerning crimes that have been committed, are being committed or are about to be committed. Crime Stoppers has become an invaluable investigative tool to Ontario Police Services.

Crime Stoppers is based on the simple principle that for every crime committed someone other than the criminal has information that might solve it. Crime Stoppers is the brainchild of a Canadian-born Albuquerque, New Mexico police detective, Greg MacAleese. MacAleese was assigned to investigate a 1976 robbery gone afoul that resulted in the senseless shooting of a young part-time employee of a gas station. Frustrated by the lack of a solid investigative lead in this case, MacAleese recognized there were two reasons the public did not communicate information concerning crime to authorities. These two prohibitions were a valid fear of reprisal and pervasive public apathy. This crime occurred at dusk, in a well-travelled neighbourhood in Albuquerque, leading MacAleese to believe that someone, other than the killers, must have knowledge concerning this homicide.

He reasoned that if he were to offer a cash reward, to overcome the apathy, while guaranteeing anonymity, to protect against reprisal, he might be able to solve this case. He contacted the local media, staged an on-site televised re-enactment of the crime and offered a cash reward from his own pocket for information that led to an arrest of the persons responsible. He set up a secure "tips" line and invited the public, after viewing the re-enactment, to call with information. He received a number of calls and the case was solved.

The Crime Stoppers triad was forged when MacAleese approached several members of the community to serve on a governing board of directors to administer the fledgling programme and raise the necessary charitable funding. The concept of the community, the media and the police working together to solve crime spread rapidly to point where there are Crime Stoppers programmes across the United States, Canada, Britain, South Africa, Guam and Australia. In Ontario, there are 39 Crime Stoppers programmes, linked together by a national toll-free Crime Stoppers telephone number (1-800-222-8477 or TIPS), covering the entire geography of our Province. The impact of this crime fighting network in Ontario has been astounding! Since the original Ontario programme commenced operation in 1983 to the end of 1999 Crime Stoppers tips have led to the arrest of 50,000 persons and the recovery of \$375 million in stolen property and seized illicit narcotics.