



Project Haven

December 19,2005

Fact Sheet

The VPD has just completed another project in the Downtown Eastside (DTES), this time targeting “crime” hotels. Undercover police officers posing as tenants exposed a world of fraud, drugs and stolen property.

This unique investigation was the first of its kind probing drug activity, stolen property, and welfare fraud. But more importantly, it involved hotel operators taking advantage of some of Vancouver’s poorest citizens and forcing them out on the streets. Because the VPD believes that everyone deserves a safe place to live, it was appropriate to name this investigation *Project Haven*.

Reasons for initiating Project Haven include these facts:

- The Vancouver Police Department is committed to keeping residents in the DTES safe.
- The VPD is cracking down on property crime by disrupting the drug–property crime cycle.
- The VPD is committed to keeping the people who live in the DTES free from crime and exploitation.
- There isn’t one quick single solution to the drug and crime problem plaguing the DTES.
- Following on the heels of *Project Lucille* and *Project Raven*, the VPD continues to disrupt the crime cycle and arrest criminals.
- These projects require many officers and resources. We are committed to doing whatever it takes to make the DTES safe; no other alternative is acceptable.

Facts about Project Haven:

- Ten week Vancouver Police undercover operation
- Targeted criminal activity in three buildings:
 - Astoria Hotel (769 East Hastings)
 - Lucky Lodge (134 Powell Street)
 - The Gastown Hotel (110 Water Street)
- Locations were chosen because they were known to be a centre of criminal activity in the DTES
- A number of undercover police officers were inserted into these hotels posing as tenants.
- Over the next several months, these undercover officers gave the appearance that they were actually living there.
- During this period evidence was collected on drug activity, stolen property and welfare scams.
- Welfare cheques intended to pay for accommodations were purchased by hotel operators for a fraction of their value.
- The residents are essentially trading their cheque money intended for rooms, just so they could feed their drug habit.
- Once this money was spent they are forced to live out on the streets.
- The rooms would simply be rented over and over again for the same period by the hotel operators.

- Results:
 - 17 drug trafficking charges
 - multiple counts pending for welfare fraud
 - business licence reviews pending by the City
 - Liquor control and Licensing Branch reviews pending for two licensed premises

Facts about Project Lucille:

- Spring of 2004
- Undercover VPD police operation
- Concentrated on ten licensed premises, nine pawn shops and second hand dealers and two convenience stores.
- Criminal charges and business license reviews
- Targeted the flow of stolen goods purchased by these fences

Project Raven:

- Fall of 2004
- Undercover VPD police operation
- Investigation into 30 businesses in 30 days
- Pawn shops, second hand dealers and convenience stores
- Numerous criminal charges and business license reviews

Projects Lucille and Raven alone accounted for more than 70 criminal charges.

Please visit our website (www.vpd.ca) for an 8 minute video on the undercover operation, Project Haven.