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# THE ULTIMATE THEFT-STOPPER

*Hide your valuables with FlashFog.  
They can't steal it if they can't see it!*

By Denis Prisbrey

**H**andling burglar alarms, setting up on various premises, securing them, detailed reports of stolen items, and follow-up investigations take up a substantial amount of time and resources in the average day-to-day operations of any sizable police department. The ideal model for law enforcement is prevention rather than apprehension. Many departments have one or more officers assigned to monitor trends, work with the private sector and educate people in how to reduce either personal or business vulnerabilities to break-ins. Directing part of the responsibility for maintaining order back to the community at large can reduce the workload for law enforcement, improve the efficiency of available manpower and physical support systems and materially affect the crime rate in certain types of retail establishments. When properly and effectively done, it can also build better relationships between police and retailers, which helps both.

Although we normally cover technology that's used directly by law enforcement in this column, we'll take a look here at a system that the business community can use in partnership with police and by police, too, to reduce theft and property damage resulting from burglaries and other break-ins.

Burglaries, like other crimes, involve various levels of planning and execution, from a quick smash-and-grab of a carton of cigarettes to a carefully planned and orchestrated team effort that results in the loss of several hun-

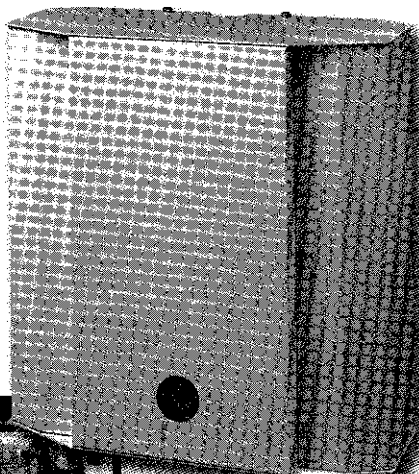
dred thousand dollars' worth of computers from a warehouse. One thing all have in common, though, is physical entry. To get stolen items out, somebody has to get in. Alarm systems obviously also come in varying levels of sophistication, from a single hard-wired "broken-contact" magnet point on a door that activates a bell to sophisticated sound and infrared setups that register with a central alarm company monitoring station or automatically dial police. One thing all of those have in common is that they can generally only sound the alarm, they can't stop somebody who's already inside from either grabbing

items or doing extensive damage on the way out. They also can't immobilize an intruder in one area, or prevent one from getting in farther to more sensitive areas if he or she is willing to gamble on the response time of the first units to arrive. There is a system that does more than just sound an alarm and it's turning out to be both very effective and in use in places that might surprise you.

## ABOUT FLASHFOG

The FlashFog concept is in use in more than 60 countries around the world. Operating on the principle that you can't steal what you can't see, and you generally can't get in or out if you can't see, the key to the system is a high-density fog, instantly generated inside a building on alarm activation, complemented by an incredibly bright light, flashing 12 times per second. The fog is created by vaporizing a specially formulated glycol solution, classified as a food stuff and present in many everyday products such as toothpaste and deodorant, to produce a dense white fog that reduces visibility to less than arm's length. The fog vapor is non-toxic and harmless to inhale, can be structured to completely fill either large or small spaces, and leaves no damaging residue of any kind when it evaporates and disperses. It carries a distinctive orange or mint smell to help the public identify it, and to avoid confusion with smoke from a fire. The strobe light pulsates at a rhythm intended to keep the eye in shock. The bright light causes extreme glare on the fog, making it three times more effective. The light is specially important because it also gets the burglar's attention fast and typically makes him flee.

The FlashFog "box" is installed in connection with a variety of existing alarm systems and detectors, and once activated by the alarm system the device pumps out enough high-density fog to fill



1) The FlashFog box is installed in connection with a variety of existing alarm systems and detectors. 2) Would-

be thieves are shown breaking into a bank. 3) FlashFog is seen being activated to fill the room with disorienting fog and strobe light. Time to smoke saturation is no more than 20 seconds.



a room in less than 20 seconds. "Hang time" is 30 minutes or more, which allows plenty of time for police response. Depending on the initial sensor protocol, locations and sensitivity, specific zones can be protected with a FlashFog activation, or entire building interiors. FlashFogs are designed to prevent entries to ensure safety, rather than trapping intruders. This is accomplished by placing the box at a location away from the point of entry, letting the burglar see it is coming, and leaving if he chooses to, as the vast majority will. The strobe light that is included as standard "motivates" the intruders to leave right away, greatly reducing their risk of becoming trapped. The real world experience is that the extreme majority of burglars don't face the fog, and those who do, flee when they realize just how thick it is.

The fog is dry and cold, does not stain or leave an odor. If a burglar does get trapped, a canine unit will be able to quickly locate the intruder as it does not interfere with the dog's nose. The alarm infrared sensors will continue working, so that the alarm dispatcher



**The scene outside a FlashFog activated establishment. Some 45 minutes are required to clear the premises.**

can tell officers in real time where in the building there is movement.

The FlashFog normally operates on a main electrical system with batteries for backup. Each "box" is capable of dispersing multiple "blasts" of fog as needed on either main or battery power and tops up non visibility either using a timer or a monitoring sensor to check fog density and disperse another blast if needed to maintain density, and each box can operate even if external alarm lines and phone lines are cut.

Three models are available in different sizes and capacities, and systems

are custom tailored to customer specifications. A mid-size model covers 1000 square feet and costs less than \$2,000 installed. The FlashFog is built with premium components and designed to operate almost anywhere.

The company is soon taking off the wraps of a car model, capable of eliminating the notorious Smash-and-Grab problem in automobiles. Initially the company expects contractors, camera crews and other common targets of car burglary will take great interest.

## **FINAL NOTES**

As an anti-theft system, the FlashFog offers an effective product that Crime Prevention Units can suggest to the business community at large and it also offers PDs a protective system for certain key areas of their own, such as evidence rooms and records rooms.

For more information, contact Arias Tech Ltd, at 375 Brunel Rd, Dept. GW/LE, Mississauga, L4Z 1Z5, Ontario, Canada; 888-282-7740; [www.ariattechltd.com](http://www.ariattechltd.com)