

Appendix 3B

Training Memo—Gone-on-Arrival (GOA) Cases

Domestic violence incidents where the suspect leaves the scene before police arrive often involve dangerous suspects hoping to evade consequences for their actions.¹ When an officer makes a determination that probable cause exists for an arrest, but the suspect is not present, the officer should search for the suspect.

Officers should obtain the following information:

- Suspect's name, date of birth, and physical description, including clothing
- Suspect's means and direction of travel
- Description of the suspect's vehicle if applicable
- Where the suspect might have gone
- Where the suspect stays when not with the victim
- Whether the suspect has ever interfered with the victim's attempts to seek help

Officers shall take the following action:

- Search for the suspect on the premises.
- Search for the suspect in the immediate area and where suspect might have fled.
- Issue a pick-up and hold.
- Encourage the victim to call 911 if suspect returns.
- Provide information to the victim about restraining orders, advocacy services, and shelter.
- Offer to transport the victim (or arrange for transport) to a shelter or medical facility if needed.

In those cases in which the **suspect was not arrested** on scene, prosecutors find it helpful to the case for the investigator to attempt to interview the suspect in order to commit the suspect to a story or a defense. Primary consideration for the victim's safety must be taken into account prior to doing so. Potential danger factors to consider include: (1) a suspect who is unaware that the police were called, (2) a suspect who is gang-affiliated, (3) a victim who is unaware of the possibility the suspect could be interviewed several days or weeks after the crime, and (4) a suspect who has made prior threats or acts of suicide, homicide or taking the children. When a decision is made to interview a suspect, inform the victim that the suspect may be interviewed within the next two weeks or so. If the suspect has a violent history, conduct the interview as soon as possible. Conduct the interview in person, for victim safety as well as to assess the suspect's reactions and truthfulness.

If the case has been submitted to prosecutors for consideration and if the **case has been declined**, notify the victim of the prosecutor's decision.

¹ An estimated 42-66% of suspects are "gone on arrival" (Klein, 2008). In the Quincy study of a proactive court model, "those offenders who left the scene had twice the number of past criminal charges and twice the recidivism rate of those present when police arrived" (Buzawa, et al., 2000). See Blueprint Chapter 9, Endnotes, for complete citations.

