

# Bureau of Criminal Identification

The Bureau of Criminal Identification, or B.C.I. Unit for short, was established by Chief Louis Fouchecourt in 1950. Before then, B.C.I. work had been conducted by several officers in addition to their regular duties.

B.C.I. officers are responsible for the classification of fingerprints, maintaining criminal records, processing crime scenes for forensic evidence, storage of physical evidence, and developing photographs. This unit is very important for the successful prosecution of many cases.

Cranston's first B.C.I. officer was Joseph Austin, who was assigned to this position because of his innovative thinking as well as his ingenuity and skill for fixing and inventing things. He was responsible for establishing a photographic dark room filing system, and did so at a low cost because he did most of the work himself. He was also responsible for obtaining much needed equipment for processing crime scenes.

Because of Officer Austin's efforts, many crimes were solved that previously would have remained open cases. Officer Austin's success led other departments in the state to request his services because they lacked the resources that Cranston had.

Due to the many advances in the B.C.I. Unit, Chief Fouchecourt designated B.C.I. officers be given the title of "Specialists"



Patrolman Harry F. Sunderland & Specialist Joseph E. Austin,  
Police Photographer and Identification Officer,  
1957



This 1981 GMC van began its career as an ambulance.  
It was obtained by the police department in 1992



B.C.I. van, 1992