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January 12, 2009

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Richard Carter

Mr. Jerry Bruckheimer  
Jerry Bruckheimer Films  
1631 Tenth Street  
Santa Monica, California 90404

Dear Mr. Bruckheimer,

On behalf of the thousands of volunteers, police officials, business leaders, and news media personnel who make Crime Stoppers successful throughout the United States and countries around the world, I am writing this letter regarding the inaccurate portrayal of Crime Stoppers during the *CSI: Miami* "Tipping Point" episode which aired December 15, 2008. The use of Crime Stoppers in the story line was a pleasant surprise; however, I believe that the image portrayed was inaccurate and may have the potential to severely damage our reputation. For more than thirty years, Crime Stoppers programs have given ordinary citizens the opportunity to anonymously provide information about crime and criminals in their communities and millions of people have benefited from our services. I believe that once you and your writing staff have a better understanding of Crime Stoppers, you will understand our concerns and how we may better provide interesting story lines for future shows.

Crime Stoppers programs are not-for-profit organizations established in local communities to enable citizens to safely and anonymously provide information about crime and criminals. Each program is run by a board of directors made up of business executives and community leaders who raise the funds used to offer cash rewards for anonymous information leading to felony arrests. Tax dollars are not used for cash rewards as implied in the "Tipping Point" episode when one character commented that Crime Stoppers callers were just "trying to make a buck off the county."

I want to emphasize to you that the cash rewards are secondary to our guarantee of anonymity and we believe this is the primary reason people call Crime Stoppers tip hotlines. It is estimated that nearly 30% of people eligible for rewards never claim the money. Callers are not asked their name and we do not use caller id. Crime Stoppers does not want to know the identity of the caller. During the "Tipping Point" episode, our guarantee of anonymity was virtually ignored when the caller was paraded through the police station and questioned, the detective was seen accessing and browsing through the Crime Stoppers Database obtaining the names and addresses of callers, the caller was nearly blown-up because the criminals learned she provided information, and in the end she was handed a reward check with her name on it. Many of our members fear that these misrepresentations will put thirty-two years of winning the trust of our communities into peril.

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Crime Stoppers programs in the United States have taken millions of anonymous tips and forwarded them to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies which used that information to make nearly 478,000 felony arrests, clear 808,000 criminal cases, and recover over \$4 billion in stolen property, money, and illegal drugs. Our volunteers and supporters have raised the funds to operate these programs and have paid out \$71.5 million in rewards to anonymous tipsters. It has not been easy to win the trust of communities who are already distrustful of law enforcement. We have spent many years educating the public on the guarantee of anonymity and effectiveness of Crime Stoppers. Thousands of homicides, robberies, rapes, and other terrible crimes have been solved using the anonymous information provided by those who are either unwilling or unable to cooperate directly with police. I challenge anyone to find another more powerful, non-governmental entity engaging the community to be so effective in directly combating crime in their communities.

I hope you and your writers use Crime Stoppers again in your story lines. The stories you tell are fascinating and entertaining to millions and I think the accurate portrayal of an anonymous Crime Stoppers caller aiding in the solution of sensational crimes would add to the suspense. We experience it every day; a frightened voice giving information that helps locate a sexual predator on the loose, or identifies the image shown on the evening news of a man who earlier in the day robbed a bank, or reveals the gang who slaughtered two mothers and the infants they held in their arms during a home invasion robbery.

As a 22-year police veteran I have often been amused by the "CSI effect" and how people are convinced law enforcement has access to incredibly sophisticated methods and can solve complex crimes in just an hour. I appreciate any support you can give to our organization and I look forward to any opportunity to discuss the Crime Stoppers mission and our concerns about how the "CSI effect" from this episode may impact our local organizations.

Sincerely,



Tom Kern  
Chairman  
Crime Stoppers USA  
317-258-9399  
TomKern@CrimeTips.org

Cc: CSUSA Board of Directors  
CSUSA Membership