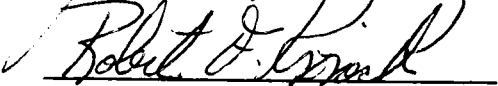


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Calvin N. Taylor, Jr., entitled "Juvenile Arson--The Social Consequences." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Sociology.


Samuel E. Wallace, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


The Graduate School

JUVENILE ARSON--THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Calvin N. Taylor, Jr.

August 1983

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, Calvin N. Taylor, Sr., J.D. (1924-1983).

For his sacrifices, love, devotion, and encouragement which made more than just my graduate years possible, for his constant humanistic values he used in practicing law and which stimulated my interest in people and justice and thus the idea for this study, for his trust in me and encouraging me to pursue the career of my choice, and for much, much more than words can express, this thesis is dedicated to the greatest man I have ever known, my father.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the motives of juvenile firesetters, socio-cultural dimensions, and the differences between low income firesetters and middle income firesetters.

The data was obtained from the Knox County Juvenile Court. A data sheet was prepared and completed by the author during the inspection of the case files. There were fifty different arson cases which were analyzed.

The findings were that juveniles from all incomes are potential firesetters. In fact there was not a significant difference between low income and middle income juveniles in terms of the frequency of firesetting and the amount of damage caused by the fires.

It was also found that the most common motive for children firesetters (under twelve years of age) was curiosity due to inexperience with fire and an overall fascination with fire.

With regard to adolescent firesetters revenge and excitement are the two most frequent motives for firesetting.

Juveniles who set fire in their home have deeply rooted psychological problems. All four juveniles in the sample who were homebound firesetters received specialized psychological counseling as a result of their firesetting behavior.

In addition it was found that the psychological problems result from parents who mistreat the juvenile, parents who reject the child, and/or a missing parent who was not available as a role model for the child.

Furthermore, it was found that solitary firesetters engage in arson for self-gratification and self-fulfillment. Often the juvenile receives sexual satisfaction from the fire by engaging in masturbation while watching the fire.

As for the group firesetters, revenge and excitement are the most common motives for firesetting especially in relation with acts of vandalism. Revenge is always present because at the subliminal level the juveniles are striking back at society.

Finally, revenge is an always present motive for all firesetting behaviors, whether it is a primary motive, a secondary motive, or a subliminal motive.

The above findings indicated that there is a need for more study in the area of juvenile firesetting, particularly since it is difficult to obtain case histories on juveniles who come from wealthy families due to their ability to avoid Juvenile Court hearings by settling with the petitioner before the hearing.

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INTRODUCTION

Overall, it is estimated that juveniles are responsible for somewhere between 30 percent and 50 percent of all arson in the United States. Every two minutes a juvenile intentionally sets fire to something. When fire is abused it causes the destruction of property--between \$750 million and \$1.1 billion in 1978, the disruptions of many lives, and most importantly of all, needless deaths--over 1,000 a year (Rider, 1980a:7).

"Arson is our costliest crime with loses estimated at two billion dollars a year and rising at a rate of twenty-five percent annually," according to Senator Sam Nunn (D-Georgia) (Rider, 1980a:7). There are indirect costs as well. The U.S. Senate Arson-For-Hire Hearings before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations estimates the total costs of arson averages ten billion dollars a year. The reasons for the high cost of arson are related to increased taxes for more and better fire protection, higher insurance premiums to cover the costly payoffs, increasing medical costs for those who are injured, and the increased in costs for the investigation of the causes of the arson fire.

In 1978, the National Fire Protection Association reported that there were 557,000 suspicious fires in the United States. If juveniles are responsible for 30 percent to 50 percent of all suspicious fires, then juveniles set somewhere between 167,000 fires

and 278,500 fires in 1978. These figures represent the arson fires which were officially reported to the authorities; however, an undetermined number of fires go unreported because the fire was insignificant or the victim was afraid to report the fire due to threats from the arsonist.

Karchmen (1981) in the Handbook on Information Systems and Action Programs reports that 43 percent of all arsonists are juveniles ages thirteen to nineteen. The 43 percent figure represents a milestone for the investigation of juvenile arson due to the fact that records and data collection has just been modified to reflect the growing significance of juvenile arson and juvenile delinquency in general. For the first time (in 1980) there is specific data available on juvenile arson.

Now that there is sufficient interest in juvenile arson to warrant sociological investigation, the researcher must determine what must be investigated and how sociology can be used to alleviate the problem. First of all the sociologist must determine to what extent the fire setting behavior is a group activity or an individual act. In other words, do groups of juveniles set the most fires or do individuals set the most fires? If individuals set more fires then are they acting independently or are the individuals setting fires due to peer pressure and the willingness to gain acceptance from their reference groups. Also, whether the individual acts alone or is led into firesetting by significant others, these acts of arson have significant social and economic consequences.

David Matza (1964:51; 1973:238) identifies the "situation of company" as the driving force that causes juveniles to commit delinquent acts. The situation of company refers to the peer group of the juvenile which is also the juvenile's primary group. According to Matza (1964:51) the distinctive feature of the delinquent subculture is that its beliefs are imbedded in action. There is a delinquent code which is not written, nor is it even well verbalized but it governs the activities of juvenile delinquents. Matza (1964:52) states that the ideology of delinquency is communicated through concrete verbal directives, hints, sentiments, gestures, and activities.

The delinquent members continue to engage in delinquent activities because each member believes that the others are committed to their delinquencies (Matza, 1973:238). The result of the belief system is that the juvenile maintains daily contact with other delinquents in order to keep up his membership in the peer group and ascertain his masculinity among his peers. One of the many methods of maintaining his masculine image is by engaging in firesetting which demonstrates to the peer group that the juvenile is capable of acting like a man--rather than like a "fag" or a "kid" (Matza, 1964:54).

The sociologically oriented investigator must also identify why certain targets are selected for arson by the juvenile in order to determine the sociological significance of the act. For example, when the working class juvenile goes into a middle class neighborhood to set fires is he striking out at society? Or is he simply more excited in watching larger houses burn?

The sociologically concerned investigator must be able to identify the motives of the juvenile arsonist. The sociological circumstances behind the firesetting may reveal the effects peer pressure has on the juvenile, the nature of his family, and his social-psychological history. Previous researchers have identified eleven motives that drive juveniles to commit arson: arson-for-profit, conscious, unconscious, pathological, nonpathological, revenge, jealousy, group firesetting, vandalism, specific targets, and revenge.

Once the sociologist is familiar with the juvenile firesetter and the circumstances of the arson then he needs to investigate the social and economic characteristics of the juvenile firesetters. Ninety percent of the firesetters are male (Lester, 1975:22; Rider, 1980b:8). Eighty-five percent of the firesetters are Caucasian. Most firesetters are mentally deficient but no correlation has been established between intelligence and firesetting behavior (Rider, 1980b:8). The academic performance has consistently been lower for the firesetter and grade failures and severe scholastic retardation is very common. Rider (1980b:8) identifies two causal agents for the high scholastic failure rates. The first is an intellectual impairment and the second is social and personal maladjustment.

For the most part public schools are the major targets of juveniles who set fires. Karchmen (1981) reports there were 24,000 school fires nationwide in 1978. In 1979 there were over 25,000 public school fires. The motive most commonly expressed by the juvenile is simply malicious intent or vindictiveness which is a

form of revenge. In these cases the pupil desires to strike back at teachers or administrators for some real or perceived wrong done to him by an educational institution. Other common targets of juvenile firesetters include houses, large buildings, warehouses, open space (natural products), storage buildings, garages, and general match playing in which there is no specific target. In 1978 the F.B.I. Uniform Crime Report shows that 65.8 percent of all individuals arrested for arson are under twenty years old. It is interesting but horrifying to know that juveniles have the highest rate for firesetting.

The basic objective of our research was to develop a profile of the juvenile arsonist in Knox County. It was hoped that the discovery of the sociological circumstances of arson would be useful in ongoing research on juvenile delinquency in terms of its potential application, the research findings could be used to develop a more efficient counseling curriculum for the counselors who work with firesetters.

Given the seriousness of juvenile arson, this investigator decided to study this problem in Knox County, Tennessee. In Knox County during 1978 thirty-one juveniles were known to have set fires out of a total of fifty-eight suspicious fires. Therefore, the juveniles in Knox County set 53 percent of all reported arson fires in Knox County. In Knox County during 1979, twenty-eight juveniles were held for arson offenses. The monetary losses were estimated to be about one million dollars in Knox County during 1979.

Pursuant the foregoing objectives, Chapter I examines the literature on juvenile firesetting. Chapter II reviews the methods

followed in this research. Chapter III presents a brief history of the major arson fires in Knox County since 1977 which were set by juveniles. Chapter IV presents the basic research findings. Chapter V presents the conclusions of the data, the implications of juvenile arson on society, and discusses how the data can be used to improve the counseling programs available for juveniles. The appendix, bibliography, and vita conclude this thesis.

CHAPTER I

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON JUVENILE ARSON

Older Studies

Juvenile arson has been studied by many different investigators from many different disciplines. The investigators have included law enforcement officers, employees of governmental agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation, members of all facets of law enforcement, fire departments, and researchers for Congressional committees and various task forces. Some of the disciplines involved in juvenile arson are medicine, psychiatry, psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, history, and law.

This diverse set of investigators and research on juvenile firesetting has created an illogical and an inconsistent body of literature: for example, there are numerous words which probably mean the same thing; there are other instances in which the same words mean different things; and finally, rarely does one researcher refer to another.

We can divide the research on juvenile firesetters into two areas: child and adolescent firesetters. Although there is not exact division by age, for the most part those thirteen years and younger are termed "children" while those fourteen to nineteen are defined as "adolescents."

Firesetting by Children

The motives of children who set fires have been widely commented upon by previous researchers. The 1966 Tennessee Fire School report stated that children who set fires are motivated by pyromania. William C. Rohan, (1956) Deputy State Fire Marshal of Eau Claire, Wisconsin states that children set fires because of their fascination with fire. Rohan, as others, have labeled this as playing with matches in which fires are set accidentally. Rohan also identifies jealousy and the seeking of parental attention as motives for setting fires.

Examples of jealousy and lack of parental attention are most commonly found when a parent gives a special gift to one child but not the other, according to Captain Samuel S. Cobb (1962) of the Norfolk, Virginia Fire Department. He adds that bicycles and pets are the two gifts which have been the most responsible for motivating a child to set a fire.

Ralph C. Stropes (1964), Assistant Superintendent of the Division of Fire-Department of Safety in Cincinnati, Ohio states that children who set fires are using firesetting as an assertion of manhood, a way of "projecting it to others." These children usually set fires in the company of peer group members to gain acceptance.

Lewis and Yarnell (in Rider, 1980) report that revenge is the underlying motive for all firesetters. Revenge is a broad motivation in which jealousy, lack of parental attention, vandalism, arson-for-profit, conscious firesetting, specific targets, and group firesetting can all be derived, according to Lewis and Yarnell. Other authors

and researchers such as Baumgart (1968), Fishbeing (1969), the International Association of Arson Investigators (1969), Wolford (1972), Straeter (1954), Fortin (1955), Rohan (1957), and Cobb (1962) state that revenge is only found in arson motivated by jealousy, lack of parental attention, or perhaps by maliciousness.

The issue of whether revenge is the underlying motive of all firesetting continues to be debated. As for the adolescent firesetter most of the authors Straeter (1954), Fortin (1955), Rohan (1957), Smith (1957), Cobb (1962), Bassart (1963), Stropes (1964), Cobb (1972), Earle (1973), Lewis and Yarnell (in Rider, 1980) agree that revenge is more prevalent in the adolescent but that the margin of motives are narrowed at the same time. These authors state that revenge is an underlying motive in malicious firesetting, which includes vandalism, specific targets, group firesetting, riot firesetting, and jealousy.

Bassart (1963) separates "humiliation," "degradation," and "suicidal motivations" from revenge. "Humiliation" and "degradation" are linked with adolescents who are attempting to gain recognition for accomplishment within their social pattern, e.g., acceptance into a peer group. "Suicidal motivation" is linked to adolescents who are trying to gain attention from others (peer groups, parents, and/or society) or they are simply trying to use fire as a method of suicide.

Pyromania is another motive for firesetting which is not linked to revenge by most investigators. Pyromania is a broad concept which has no specific meaning but the concept is regularly

used for the firesetter who displays a certain set of signs and symptoms in which not all of the signs and symptoms need be present at any given time.

Bossart (1963) defines the pyromaniac as one "who sets fire for some irresistible impulse." The pyromaniac has an abnormal craving for power and prestige and many times wishes to identify himself with the firemen themselves. Bossart (1963) separates sexual excitement from pyromania. However, Lewis and Yarnell (1953), MacDonald (1977), Moll (1974), Cobb (1963), and Smith (1957) identify sexual pleasure as a major force behind pyromania. In fact 43 percent of the arrested pyromaniacs have been discovered engaging in masturbation near the scene of a fire that they set.

Bossart (1963) identifies three types of males who set fires for sexual experience:

1. The one who gives some sexual expression from watching the fire.
2. The one who sets the fire during periods of sexual remission or abstinence. It is a substitute for the act.
3. The one who uses fire-setting as a total sexual substitute in order to break another undesirable sexual habit.

The last motive of adolescent firesetting which has received attention is excitement. Excitement for the adolescent is equated to playing with matches for the child. Although excitement is mentioned by all of the authors, it is downplayed as a motive and given less significance. Excitement is defined as adolescents who set fires when there is a lack of other activities to keep them occupied.

Smith (1957) and Cobb (1962) state that excitement motivated fires are most likely to occur during summer vacation in the late afternoon and early evening hours. It is at this time that recreational activities at public and private facilities have closed for the day and the adolescent has free time. The fire is set to occupy time and the fire is used as entertainment.

The motives which have been discussed are listed in Table 1. The top half of the chart contains the motives of children and the lower half contains the motives of adolescents. The motives are listed in order from most common to least common for each half. The terms to the right are synonymous with the first motive (word).

Contemporary Studies

The current literature on juvenile firesetting is very limited in quantity but the quality and content is much improved over the older ones. In fact, there are only three researchers who deserve major recognition for their contributions to the research on juvenile firesetting, and one of them cites the other two authors more often than anyone else. The three researchers are David Canter (1980), Anthony Rider (1980), and Clifford L. Karchmen (1981).

The two most distinguished contributions by these researchers are the establishment of a logical and consistent terminology and definitions and the development of detailed psychological profiles of the typical and the atypical juvenile firesetter.

Table 1

Motives of Firesetting for Children and
Adolescents Based On Older Studies

<u>Children</u>	
1. Pyromania	Match Playing
2. Jealousy	Seeking Parental Attention
3. Assertion of Manhood	Showing Off
4. Revenge	Getting Even
<u>Adolescent</u>	
1. Vandalism	Malicious Firesetting
2. Specific Targets	Malicious Firesetting
3. Group Firesetting	Malicious Firesetting
4. Riot Firesetting	Malicious Firesetting
5. Jealousy	Malicious Firesetting
6. Humiliation	Embarrassment
7. Degradation	Being Put Down
8. Suicidal	Psychological Disturbances
9. Pyromania	Compulsive Firesetting
10. Excitement	Fun
11. Revenge	All Previous Listed Motives

Motives

Canter (1980) defines the typical child firesetter as being eleven years of age and younger and the adolescent firesetter as being twelve years of age and older. Canter (1980:35) states that malicious firesetting is uncommon for juveniles under twelve years of age, but is most prevalent for juveniles over eleven years.

Canter (1980:52-57) states that children who play with matches are characteristically problem children. In nonscientific terms, he (1980:52) describes such a child as a "rascal," one who is mischievous, energetic, adventurous, exhibitionists, aggressive, and more impulsive than his peers. The rascal is more likely to be involved in accidents and lead other children into dangerous situations. The conclusion reached by Canter is that child firesetters are the ones who have a variety of problems in which they are labeled as "hyperactive."

The child firesetter is an accident-repeater child. Accidents are very common for the child and are directly related to hyperactivity. The major features of hyperactivity are inattentiveness, learning impediments, and behavioral problems; and minor features are impulsivity, peer difficulties, and low self-esteem (Canter, 1980:52; Martin, 1961:26). These characteristics are found in all delinquents who engage in delinquent behavior on a regular basis (Canter, 1980:53; Shaw and McKay, 1969).

Firesetters, accident-prone children, hyperactive children, and delinquent children are characterized by the behavioral and

personality patterns earlier noted as the "rascality" pattern. These characteristics are viewed as being negative because there are many negative consequences, including strained family relationships, the high cost of restitution, and high medical costs. However, there are positive characteristics as well. The first general positive trait is the child's high level of energy and activity (Canter, 1980:53). The second positive trait is that the child may be more mature, independent, assertive, and adventurous as compared to his peers (Canter, 1980:53).

The child repeat firesetter is perceived as more mischievous, boisterous, and temperamental than the nonrepeat firesetter but the repeat firesetter is also more curious, enthusiastic, imaginative, masculine, and original (Canter, 1980:54). The latter traits make the child more likeable and impressive in the eyes of other delinquent children and more of a nuisance to his parents.

The only area of juvenile firesetting that is not fully developed by Canter is the way he treats all juveniles under twelve years of age. However, for the juveniles who are twelve years and older he is specific in his analysis.

The motives for adolescent firesetting identified by Canter are arson-for-profit, conscious, unconscious, pathological, nonpathological, revenge, jealousy, vandalism, solitary firesetting, group firesetting, and specific targets. In the instances of arson-for-profit, conscious, unconscious, pathological, nonpathological, revenge, and jealousy are the motives. In the instances of vandalism,

solitary firesetting, group firesetting, and specific targets these are descriptive terms used to describe a set of motives which can for the most part be traced to the underlying motives of revenge and jealousy.

The juvenile firesetter is guilty of committing arson when a fire is willfully and maliciously set. The problem in catching the arsonist starts with the skill and expertise of the arson investigator. The investigator must be able to identify where the fire started, how the fire started, the presence or absence of an accelerant, the type of structure, the time the fire started, who owns the structure, the market value of the structure, if there is fire insurance and how much coverage, and whether there is a subject who has some motive for setting the fire.

Once a subject is identified, the investigator must determine the motive of the subject who set the fire. Motive is some inner drive or impulse that causes a person to do something or to act in a certain way. Motive is the cause, reason, or incentive that induces or prompts specific behavior (Canter, 1980; Rider, 1980). In a legal context, motive explains why the offender committed the unlawful act, e.g. murder, rape, or arson. Motive frequently plays a crucial role in determining the cause of a fire, as well as the identity of the person or persons responsible for setting the fire.

In order to establish a motive, the investigator must direct his investigation upon likely suspects who in turn may show symptoms of some behavioral problems. In most instances, the suspect does not

show outward signs of any motive, therefore, the investigator has a difficult time in proving arson.

A very common motive for arson is called "arson-for-profit." Arson-for-profit, according to Canter (1980), is not a significant cause for juvenile arson, but Rider (1980) says that it is a growing crime among juveniles. Canter (1980) does not say anymore on this topic. Rider (1980) states that arson-for-profit occurs because someone will benefit economically from the crime. Juveniles engage in arson-for-profit for two basic reasons. The first and foremost reason for a juvenile to engage in arson-for-profit is that he is hired by an adult to set fire to a building on which the adult is trying to collect insurance. The juvenile is used as the "torch" because he works for less money, is more difficult to apprehend, and if apprehended is more difficult to convict. Secondly, the juvenile engaging in arson-for-profit sets fire to personal property, usually an automobile, to collect insurance because the automobile is no longer of any value or service.

The conscious, unconscious, pathological, and nonpathological are specific motives used to describe the common term of "pyromania" which has become obsolete.* The conscious firesetter sets fire because the excitement of the fire is gratifying (Rider, 1980; Canter, 1980). For the most part the fire being set is an act of

*At this point both Rider and Canter are very similar in their research on juvenile firesetting. The two researchers will be discussed concurrently for the remainder of the discussion.

hostility. An example is the juvenile who sets a sibling's bed on fire because the parents allow the family dog to sleep in the sibling's bedroom and not the other room. The child sets the fire because the fire damage prevents the sibling and the dog from sleeping in the bedroom. At the unconscious level the juvenile set the fire as an act of hostility and at the conscious level the fire is set because the fire is pleasurable. Both the conscious and unconscious motives are always present in this type of firesetting (Canter, 1980; Rider, 1980).

The next motive is pathological firesetting which is characterized by an irrational act. The pathological firesetter typically manifests some degree of mental, emotional, or personality disturbance. The individual frequently sets fire as an act of aggression, hostility, revenge, to gain attention or recognition, to increase self-esteem especially among gang members, and to obtain sensual or sexual satisfaction (Rider, 1980b:12; Canter, 1980:32). This category includes compulsive firesetters, suicidal firesetters, psychotic firesetters, disturbed firesetters, and gang activity. Many juveniles set fires because of the excitement and mischief of starting a fire and the attempt to put it out before the fire gets out of control.

The nonpathological firesetter sets a fire for specific reasons. Any fire set for a specific reason is considered to be a rational act, according to Rider (1980b:12). The fire which is set for a specific reason (arson-for-profit) are premeditatively designed. Examples of rationally set fires are fires set during political protest, riots, sabotage, crime concealment, homicide, and extortion. Rider (1980b:12)

claims that anyone who maliciously sets a fire is abnormal and pathological, however he agrees with the idea of there being non-pathological firesetters.

In its historical past, fire has been associated with love, aggression, hostility, destruction, sadism, revenge, and other psychological factors. Revenge, as the sixth motive, is a motive that has diverse underlying meanings. In fact, revenge seems to run like a thread throughout motivational arson (Rider, 1980:13).

Lewis and Yarnell (in Rider, 1980:13) report that the element of revenge is never totally absent in any type of motivational arson. Revenge is even found in the four types of pyromania even though it is extremely difficult to correlate revenge and pyromania. Arson serves as a tool for an individual to vent aggression and revengeful tendencies.

Motives for firesetting are multiple, overlapping, and often disguised under a false cover of distorted and pathological behavior. In the analysis of revenge as a cause of firesetting in the juvenile, the actions taken by the juvenile are an outlet for vengeful and hostile reactions. One of the most common reasons for firesetting is associated with the fantasy to burn some member of the family who has withheld love or has been a serious rival for parental attention (Canter, 1980:35; Rider, 1980b:13). These fires are most commonly set in the home or in the immediate vicinity (e.g., automobile, playhouse, or garage). These fires are characterized as being symbolic and cause little damage. The juvenile usually extinguishes the blaze.

Psychological characteristics center around some type of mental imbalance and the parents are usually responsible for creating the imbalance (Canter, 1980:36; Rider, 1980b:13).

Closely related to revenge is the motive of jealousy. Canter (1980) and Rider (1980b,c) state that jealousy plays a significant role in both adolescent and adult fire setting. The adolescent is jealous of the sibling who receives more attention from his parents. Out of a jealous reaction the adolescent sets a fire to hurt the sibling, or the parent, or both. In gang activities, adolescents set fires which are targeted towards a higher class. In other words, adolescents from project neighborhoods go into a middle-class business district and set fire to the buildings after burglarizing them. According to Quinney (1972), Shaw (1969), Rider (1980), Canter (1980), and Moll (1974) the adolescents are jealous of the middle-class for having material objects of luxury. The destructive and violent activities that the adolescents engage in enables them to unlawfully gain material objects as they destroy what the middle class values.

Rider (1980) and Canter (1980) maintain that revenge is not necessarily a part of jealousy. A fire which is set during a jealous rage does not mean that the adolescent is thinking of revenge as he sets the fire. In the analysis of an adolescent who sets a fire during a jealous rage it is very difficult to determine if the underlying motive is revenge or if the motive is simply jealousy.

Canter (1980), Rider (1980), and Karchmen (1981) all agree that malicious firesetting (vandalism, solitary firesetting, group

firesetting, and specific targets) are types of firesetting that have multiple motives. Canter (1980:35) states that multiple motives are very common for school fires. The events that lead up to the fire usually involve the juvenile, who as a student, was punished for bad behavior, failing grades, and/or was ridiculed by the faculty. The motives for setting the fire were hostility, revenge, jealousy, and conscious acts. The fire was preceded by stealing, vandalizing, and harassment of the teacher. Therefore, vandalism is added as a motive for the fire. The student maliciously set the fire for the purpose of disrupting and damaging the school.

Solitary firesetting is another type of malicious firesetting in which the juvenile has several motives: revenge, jealousy, and others at the conscious and unconscious levels. The solitary firesetter maliciously sets a fire for purposes of excitement, revenge, irresistible impulses, and out of acts of heroism.

Fires set for excitement are usually small in nature, e.g., a garbage dumpster or garage, in which the juvenile enjoys watching the fire department extinguish the blaze. Fires are also set for revenge in which the juvenile burns someone else's property. These types of fires are also small in nature, e.g., the neighbor's leaves piled by the roadside or the frontyard. The juvenile who sets fires out of irresistible impulses is a type of pyromaniac. The impulse firesetter sets multiple fires over a short period of time, e.g., case #50 who set twenty dumpster fires in a seven day period.

The juvenile solitary firesetter who sets fires out of acts of heroism deserves special attention, as he is a severely disturbed individual. He has psychological problems that are deeply rooted in his past. He comes from a broken family in which a father figure is typically not available. The mother constantly tells the juvenile that he is a failure and will never be successful. The juvenile sets a fire in an occupied residential unit and then rescues the person or persons who are trapped inside. If the juvenile has younger siblings, the fire is usually set in their home. If there are no younger siblings in the home, then the juvenile uses a neighbor's house where there are young children. The fire is set, the juvenile rushes in the house and rescues the child, and finally the juvenile receives special recognition for his "act of heroism." The result is the increase in self-esteem and a chance at gaining approval from the mother.

Group firesetters are characterized by three forces: political fires, vandalism fire, and riot fires (Moll, 1974:23, 32, 43; Rider, 1980b:13, Canter, 1980:34). Political fires are premeditated and set to dramatize an issue or embarrass authorities. The most common motive is revenge and hostility at the conscious level. Usually adults are responsible for these fires, but juveniles play some role, e.g., actually setting the fire.

Vandalism fires are mostly set by adolescent peer groups (gangs). Fires are set for excitement and/or revenge in most instances. Schools and abandoned buildings are the most common targets.

Riot fires are most representative of college-age individuals and older juveniles (sixteen to nineteen). Riot fires are set during tension and social unrest. Motives are revenge, vandalism, jealousy, and hostility at the conscious level.

The last type of firesetting which is motivated by multiple motives is specific targets (Rider, 1980b; Canter, 1980). Specific targets refers to an item or structure that the juvenile has preselected to burn. The most common motive to burn a specific target is revenge. Jealousy and hostility at the conscious level are the next most influential motives. Two different examples will explain this type of motivational arson.

In the first example a juvenile plans revenge on the next door neighbor who previously scolded the juvenile for playing in a leaf pile in the front yard. Later in the same day, usually at dusk, the juvenile sets the pile of leaves on fire. The result is an untidy yard which upsets the neighbor. The juvenile has gotten his revenge.

The second example involves a male adolescent who sets his girlfriend's parents' house on fire because the parents have forbidden the adolescent from seeing his girlfriend. The adolescent is getting revenge on the parents. There are two distinctive motives in this arson crime. The first is revenge and the second of a pathological nature.

Up to this point eleven motives or motive types have been discussed. The last motive which is to be discussed is excitement or fun. Excitement/fun has not been identified until this point for two major reasons. The first reason is that the theorists (Rider, 1980;

Canter, 1980; and Karchmen) do not identify excitement/fun as a motive. The second reason is that many health professionals especially in psychology and psychiatry (Fishbeing, 1969; and Lewis and Yarnell, 1953) state that excitement is a major motive for firesetting. (See Table 2 for further breakdown of motives.)

Rider, Canter, and Karchmen place excitement within the pyromania category when multiple fires are set over a short period of time. When fires are set at a sporadic cycle, excitement/fun is included in four types of firesetting (vandalism, solitary, group, and specific targets). The medical field analysts state that excitement is a sufficient cause for setting a fire and that there are no deeper psychological causes.*

The last work to be reviewed is the "The Government's Executive's Guide to Arson Prevention and Control: A Handbook of Information Systems and Action Programs" prepared by Clifford L. Karchmen, Project Director. This work is treated separately from Rider (1980) and Canter (1980) because the orientation of the work is legislatively rather than sociologically based.

The Handbook identifies two basic motives for firesetting, "malicious motives" and "apparently non-malicious motives." Each basic motive is divided into four subsets:

- A. Malicious Motives
 - 1. Vandalism
 - 2. Arson-for-Profit and Extortion
 - 3. Revenge, Spite, Jealousy
 - 4. Crime Concealment and Diversion

*For the purposes of coding information on the data sheets, excitement was included as a motive when there was insufficient information on the case "face sheet" to make a more exact coding selection.

Table 2
Motives of Juvenile Arsonists Based
on Contemporary Studies

<u>Children</u>	
1. Match Playing	Rascal
2. Mischievous	Nuisance
3. Jealousy	Seeking Attention
4. Revenge	Getting Even
5. Psychological	Doesn't Know Better
<u>Adolescents</u>	
1. Revenge	All Firesetting
2. Vandalism	Malicious Firesetting
3. Group Firesetting	Malicious Firesetting
4. Solitary Firesetting	Malicious or Pyromania
5. Specific Targets	Revenge and Preplanned
6. Conscious-Unconscious ^a	Unconscious or Subliminal Conflict or Pyromania
7. Pathological	Pyromania
8. Non-pathological	Pyromania
9. Arson-for-Profit	Malicious for Profit
10. Enuresis	Bedwetting or Pyromania
11. Excitement	Pyromania = Group Firesetting = Solitary

^aConscious and Unconscious are separate motives but must be treated together as one must have the other. Motives N=12.

B. Apparently Non-Malicious Motives

1. Curiosity and Retardation
2. Drug or Alcohol Abuse
3. Psychiatric Disturbance
4. Non-Malicious Mischief

Also included is a third major category which contains "underlying causes."

Karchmen cites twenty-eight articles and reports in the Handbook in which Rider (1980) and Canter (1980) are the two most commonly cited authors. "This is another clear indication of the limited number of authorities who write on juvenile firesetting."

In the analysis of the maliciously motivated juvenile the Handbook (1981) states that the juvenile regards the potential consequences of their acts. The Handbook (1981:122) states "that vandalism is the most salient motive behind juvenile firesetting." In fact vandalism is the motive for 75 percent of all school fires. However, there is no national data to support the 75 percent figure. In the 1978 HEW Report to the Congress, Violent Schools--Safe Schools, it was estimated that only 2 percent of the schools nationwide experience the 2,000 school fires set in a month that are the result of vandalism.

The Handbook concurs with Rider and Canter that revenge and striking back at the faculty are the primary motivations for setting a school on fire. The second reason for setting a school on fire is the result of vandalism, to be destructive. These juveniles who are destructive show signs of serious emotional problems, often requiring psychotherapeutic treatment.

The second subset is arson-for-profit and extortion. The Handbook concurs with Rider and Canter in that juveniles are hired as paid "torches" to set buildings on fire.

The third subset is revenge, spite, and jealousy. The Handbook (1981:123) states that "revenge-motivated fires are set by youths who have characteristically experienced rejection or failure in peer group, social, family, or other interpersonal settings." This type of fire-setting is seen as a direct expression of aggression against adults who were perceived as depriving and rejecting the youth in society.

The fourth subset is crime concealment and diversion. The Handbook (1981:124) simply states that youths set fires in order to conceal another crime which has been committed, as burglary, or use the fire to divert authorities from other illegal activities.

The second major motive category is non-malicious motives. The first subset is curiosity and retardation. Child firesetters are motivated by curiosity because of their inexperience with fire. Adolescent firesetters, because of psychological or retardation problems, share the younger child's lack of awareness about the dangers of fire.

The second subset is drug and alcohol abuse. This simply means that juveniles who are under the influence of a drug are not responsible for their activities. One such activity is setting a fire.

The third subset is psychiatric disturbances. This category includes the four areas of pyromania (conscious, unconscious, pathological, and nonpathological) that are presented by Rider (1980) and Canter (1980). The Handbook (1981:125) describes the juvenile as one

who "set their fires for no practical reason and receive no material profit from the act, their only motive being able to obtain some sort of sensual satisfaction." The Handbook reports that fourteen percent of all juvenile fires are motivated by psychiatric disturbances.

The fourth subset is non-malicious mischief. The Handbook (1981:126) simply refers to this as "growing pains" and the fire is usually just a one time event for the juvenile. According to Dr. James Breiling, a psychologist with the Center for Research on Crime and Delinquency of the National Institute of Mental Health (in Handbook, 1981:126) the juvenile just needs "a good talking to" from an authoritative source such as a firefighter or police officer in order to cease the firesetting behavior.

The Social-Psychological Background (Underlying Causes) of the Juvenile Firesetter

This second section of the current literature review examines the social-psychological characteristics of the juvenile firesetter, especially as portrayed by Anthony Rider's article, "The Firesetter: A Psychological Profile." Rider's article is selected because Canter and Karchmen use Rider's guidelines and methods in developing their profiles of the juvenile firesetter.

Rider (1980a:8) begins his essay by stating that the following general characteristics are noted among many juvenile firesetters:

They appear to come from disruptive, frustrating, harsh, broken or unstable home environments. Often their families are large and within the lower socioeconomic level; it is not uncommon to find one or both parents frequently absent. Some studies have noted that repetitive child firesetters

are often middle children. It has been frequently noted that firesetting children come from father-absent and mother-dominated environments.

Youthful firesetters share a number of problems other than those associated with home environments, including vandalism, burglary, school hyperactivity and truancy, and aggressive behavior in school and on the street (Vreeland and Waller, 1978:6). One problem that does not appear to beset juvenile firesetters is that of low intelligence: firesetters seem to be of average intelligence or above (Vreeland, 1978:7).

Rider (1980a:8) addresses this issue, noting that:

. . . although a large number of studies have identified intellectual difficulties among firesetters, they have not conclusively demonstrated that intellectual impairment or low basic intelligence is a precursor to firesetting.

J. Fleszar-Szumingajowa (in Lester, 1975:22) reports that 66 percent of all juvenile firesetters have some psychiatric disorder. The most common diagnoses are schizophrenia, mental deficiency, personality disorder, alcoholism, organic psychoses, and other uncommon ailments. Lewis and Yarnell (in Lester, 1975:23; Rider, 1980a:8) report that the average age of the firesetter is seventeen years old. The highest frequency of pathological firesetting is between the ages of fifteen and twenty years. In 1978 the F.B.I. Uniform Crime Report shows that 65.8 percent of all individuals arrested for arson are under twenty years old. It is interesting but horrifying to know that juveniles have the highest rate for firesetting.

Other characteristics of the juvenile firesetter are that 90 percent of the firesetters are male (Lester, 1975:22; Rider 1980:8). Eighty-five percent of the firesetters are Caucasian. Most firesetters are mentally deficient but no correlation has been established between intelligence and firesetting behavior (Rider, 1980:8). The academic performance has consistently been lower for the firesetter. Grade failures and severe scholastic retardation is very common. Rider (1980:8) identifies two causal agents for the high scholastic failure rates. The first is an intellectual impairment and the second is social and personal maladjustment. See Table 3 for further analysis on the psychological profile of the juvenile firesetter.

One characteristic which is found in 25 percent of the pyromaniacs and 10 percent of nonpyromaniacs is enuresis (commonly referred to as bedwetting). Childhood enuresis is very common for pyromaniacs and continues into adulthood.

Conclusion

The current literature review examined the work of three major theorists in the juvenile firesetting field. The three theorists--David Canter (1980), Anthony Rider (1980), and Clifford L. Karchmen (1981) produced significant original research data on juvenile firesetters as well as critical reviews of others.

The theorists made two major contributions to the juvenile firesetting field. First of all they established logical and consistent terminology with clear and precise definitions. Secondly, they developed an indepth profile of the typical juvenile firesetter.

Table 3

A Profile of A Juvenile Firesetter

Age: Highest frequency at age seventeen.

Sex: Ninety percent are male.

Race: Eighty-five percent are white.

Intelligence: Range from mentally defective to genius. Twenty-two percent are rated as mentally defective.

Physical Defects: Are frequently present.

Enuresis: Present in 25 percent.

Mental Disorders: Psychopathy and psychotic disorders are frequently present.

Academic Disorders: Overall poor educational adjustment.

Rearing Environment: Pathological, broken, and harsh rearing environment with inconsistent discipline and parental neglect. An unhappy home life is common.

Social Class Structure: All socioeconomic levels, but highest frequency from working class.

Social Adjustment: Socially maladjusted; severe problems in developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships.

Sexual Adjustment: Sexually maladjusted and limited contact with the opposite sex.

Personality: Feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, low self-esteem, fear of long term relationships, lack of ambition, and aggressiveness.

Criminal History: A long history of delinquency and criminal behavior to include: runaway, burglary, theft, and other property crimes.

Use of Alcohol: Alcohol is frequently abused by the firesetter. Some 70 percent are actually considered alcoholic. Drinking at age twelve is very common.

Table 3 (continued)

Use of other Drugs: Marijuana is the most common. Use of the drug at least five times a week for 40 percent.
Pills and other expensive drugs are less common.

Suicide: About 10 percent attempt suicide after arrest and incarceration.

Motives: 1. Arson-for-Profit 2. Conscious 3. Unconscious
4. Pathological 5. Nonpathological 6. Revenge
7. Jealousy 8. Vandalism 9. Solitary Firesetting
10. Group Firesetting 11. Specific Targets

Canter's (1980) major work involved children playing with matches as well as the adolescent firesetter. Rider (1980) focused on the adolescent firesetter. The task force also focused on the adolescent firesetter in which much of their work was based on Canter and Rider.

The literature review centered on the motives of juvenile firesetting. The motives (arson-for-profit, conscious, unconscious, pathological, nonpathological, revenge, jealousy, vandalism, solitary firesetting, group firesetting, and specific targets) were thoroughly analyzed based on the work by Canter, Rider, and the Task Force. Tables 1 and 2 (pages 12 and 24) present brief overviews of the motives.

CHAPTER II

METHODS OF RESEARCH

The Sample

In order to fully understand the sociological circumstances and the motives of juvenile firesetting, an in-depth case history of each juvenile is needed. In order to collect the necessary data on the juveniles, the author gained clearance from Knox County Juvenile Court Judge Carey E. Garrett to research the case files in Juvenile Court. A complete history was extracted from each file beginning on January 1, 1977, and ending on March 31, 1983. A total of thirty-two files representing fifty separate cases of arson were reviewed in order to collect the data necessary for analysis.

The variables under analysis range from socio-economic-status to the criminal histories of each juvenile. In addition there are variables for the type of counseling the juvenile receives, who counsels the juvenile, and the juvenile's attitude during the counseling. The socio-economic-status (SES) variables are age, sex, race, church, child's rank, father's employment, mother's employment income, address of the juvenile, and the address of the fire. These variables were selected in order to develop a social profile of the juvenile fire-setter. The criminal histories of each juvenile were analyzed by collecting data on the number of arson crimes committed, the number of other major crimes committed, the number of other minor crimes

committed, and a chronological sketch of their criminal history. These variables were selected in order to analyze the juvenile's criminal past and to use the data in preparation of the counselor's curriculum for the counseling program. The counseling variables being analyzed are the length of counseling each juvenile has experienced, the attitude of the juvenile before, during, and after the counseling, who has been the primary counselor, and what comments have been made by the counselor. These variables were selected in order to determine the extent to which counseling reduces the rates of juvenile arson.

Court Procedures

Before a juvenile ever faces the Juvenile Court there is a long series of events that occur. First of all there is the arson crime. Once the fire is extinguished the commanding officer from the fire department investigates the origin of the fire. If he determines the origin of the fire to be suspicious he calls in the Arson Task Force (inside Knoxville city limits) or the Tennessee State Fire Marshal (if outside of Knoxville). About 50 percent of all suspicious fires are actually arson fires for both Knoxville and Knox County. Secondly, the arson investigator begins to build his case by collecting evidence on the scene, researching insurance and ownership records, and talking to witnesses. Thirdly, the investigator identifies a suspect. If the suspect is an adult the investigator takes out a warrant and apprehends the suspect. If the suspect is a juvenile the investigator goes to Juvenile Court and takes out a petition on the juvenile. The petitioner

is actually the property owner of the burned property. Once the petition is prepared the juvenile is apprehended by a Knox County Deputy Sheriff assigned to the Juvenile Court.

Upon apprehension the juvenile is taken to the Knox County Juvenile Detention Center and immediately talks with an intake counselor. Once a case is established, a probation counselor is assigned to the juvenile. Next a hearing date is set before Juvenile Judge Carey Garrett. Many different outcomes of the hearing are possible once a verdict has been reached. One outcome is the juvenile may be placed in the custody of his parents especially when the juvenile has no previous record and the arson crime was small in nature. Second, the juvenile's parents may be ordered to pay restitution to the victim of the arson. Third, the juvenile may be committed to a formal institution especially when there is a long history of crimes committed by the juvenile. Fourth, the juvenile may be placed on probation ranging from six months to two years, especially when the juvenile appears sincere about reforming. Finally, the juvenile may be turned over to another agency (such as the Department of Child and Family Services) when there are deep rooted family problems causing an unstable home environment.

The outcome of the hearing for the most part is based on the seriousness of the arson crime, or the severity of the arson. A continuum of one to eight with one representing own home, two representing an adjacent residence, three representing a neighbor's residence, four representing other residences, five representing schools, six representing churches, seven representing other public properties,

and eight representing businesses, was developed to determine the seriousness of the intention of the juvenile. The amount of the fire loss and the number of injuries and/or deaths as a result of the fire (also considered by the Juvenile Court Judge) were also used as measures of seriousness.

Juveniles in this project are those who were brought into the Juvenile Detention Center for a crime of arson between January 1, 1977, and March 31, 1983. All of the data being analyzed are from the case files in Juvenile Court which unfortunately biases the results of the data toward the lower income juveniles (under \$25,000.00) who reside in Knox County.

The bias toward the lower income juveniles is unfortunate because it points out the inadequacies of the Court System in the United States, both for adults and juveniles. Out of all fifty cases since 1977 only one juvenile came from a family who had an annual income exceeding \$25,000.00. With the one exception the statements "Money buys power and power buys freedom" and "Money buys freedom" hold true for the Juvenile Court System.

According to Larry Gibney, Chief Probation Counselor of the Knox County Juvenile Court, the juveniles who come from wealthy families are able to maintain clear records because their parents are able to settle with the prosecuting party (petitioner) before the Juvenile Court Hearing. Settlement almost always includes restitution and the agreement to send the child to a private counselor for six months to two years. Once the petitioner drops the petition then the juvenile's

case file is destroyed and there are no longer any records available for data collection except a name and address which are transcribed onto a master list when the juvenile is first brought into the Juvenile Detention Center. There are forty more names than files within the records division of the court. Assuming that juveniles from lower income families do not have charges dismissed then most if not all of the forty missing files represent juveniles from wealthy families.

Validation of the Data Collection Instrument

Once the data had been collected it was coded onto a data sheet. The data precodes were developed from the pretest and literature. Once the coding process was completed the data was fed into the University of Tennessee computer at the terminal located with the Sociology Department. See Appendix A for the data sheet.

The Hypotheses

The preliminary hypotheses were proposed by this author in 1980. The hypotheses are now being tested by using the chi square statistical test. There are nine hypotheses which are divided into three groups: SES, Target, and Setting. the SES Hypotheses are:

- 1.1 The lower socioeconomic-status groups do not raise more juvenile firesetters than the middle socioeconomic-status groups.
- 1.2 The lower socioeconomic-status juveniles engage in more serious firesetting than the middle socioeconomic-status juveniles.

- 1.3 As the ecology of a neighborhood decreases, the rates of juvenile arson increase.

The fire target hypotheses are:

- 2.1 If a juvenile sets fire to his home then there is an absent role model figure for the juvenile.
- 2.2 If a juvenile sets fire to his home then the juvenile is probably suffering from severe psychological disturbances.
- 2.3 If a juvenile solitary firesetter sets fire to a specific target then the fire is set for the purposes of self-gratification and self-fulfillment.

The fire setting (circumstances) hypotheses are:

- 3.1 If fires are set by groups of juveniles then revenge and excitement are the two primary motives for the arson.
- 3.2 If an individual juvenile sets a fire then revenge and excitement are two motives which caused the behavior.
- 3.3 If revenge is an underlying motive then revenge is always present in all types of firesetting.

CHAPTER III

JUVENILE RELATED FIRES IN KNOX COUNTY SINCE 1977

In the analysis of the juvenile firesetter who resides in Knox County there is a need to review the numerous fires which were set by juveniles. The review starts with the year 1977 which was selected because the interview data on juvenile firesetters also begins for 1977. Only the fires which had a significant social impact on Knox County are included in this review. Through data collected from five major sources (The Knoxville Fire Department, The Knoxville News-Sentinel, The Knoxville Journal, Knox County Juvenile Court, and first hand experiences) there are eighty-two official cases against juveniles who set fires since 1977. There are an additional 147 fires for which juveniles are suspected of starting but no arrest or official action was taken due to lack of prosecution or evidence.

Of the eighty-two cases only twenty-two were selected for review to avoid excessive repetition. The fires are reviewed in chronological order and only the basic facts and details are discussed.

On January 30, 1977, two male juveniles ages fifteen and sixteen set a barn on fire on Pleasant Ridge Road in Northwest Knoxville. The fire loss was \$10,000.00. Although not considered a major fire loss, the fire required committment of ten hours from the Knoxville Fire Department which in turn severely reduced the available fire service for a large section of the city. The juveniles were not processed through

the juvenile court system. The motive for the fire was excitement and the desire to see something burn.

On February 2, 1977, the largest fire in the history of Knoxville was set by three unidentified juveniles. The Wynn Building on Dale Avenue caught fire after the three juveniles whose ages were estimated to be ten to twelve years set fire to some grass which adjoined the building. The fire loss exceeded ten million dollars and displaced 1500 employees for several weeks. The magnitude of the fire actually set two other structures on fire (a small business one-half mile away and a residence over two miles away) for another fire loss exceeding \$100,000.00. The three juveniles were never apprehended.

On July 16, 1977, a five year old male playing with matches in the closet of an apartment set the apartment and the apartment building on fire at the Capella Apartments on Gleason Road in West Knox County. The fire resulted in \$100,000.00 damages and the destruction of five apartments. Even though the fire was in the County, the Knoxville Fire Department responded to the fire.

At 4:00 p.m. on September 8, 1977, two male juveniles set a mobile home on fire at the Emert's Mobile Home Sales Park on Clinton Highway. Seven hours later eight mobile homes were destroyed. The fire caused \$80,000.00 in damages. The two males were never apprehended.

On March 10, 1978, at 8:30 p.m. a seventeen year old male set a fire in a classroom at Karns High School in Northwest Knox County. The fire burned six classrooms and caused \$300,000.00 in damages. The juvenile was not apprehended until after a second fire.

March 15, 1978, denotes the most serious school fire in the history of Knox County. A fire set in the auditorium at about 8:45 p.m. posed a serious hazard for over 300 spectators at a Junior Pro Basketball Tournament held in the gymnasium of Karns High School. The 300 fans were safely evacuated but the ensuing fire caused over three million dollars in damages. The seventeen year old who set the previous fire at Karns High School confessed to setting both fires. He was committed to Riverbend at Lakeshore Mental Health Institute for five years.

On April 14, 1978, fire completely destroyed the Hardin Valley Elementary School in West Knox County. The fire loss was estimated at \$750,000.00. Although there were no suspects, the physical evidence on the scene indicates that juveniles set the fire.

On Sunday, May 7, 1978, two juvenile males set an office building of the Luttrell Mining Company on Asbury Road in East Knox County on fire. The fire caused \$20,000.00 in damages and put ten people out of work. The juveniles were apprehended and prosecuted through the juvenile court system.

At 1:15 p.m. on Friday, February 2, 1979, an unidentified black juvenile set a roll of toilet paper on fire in the third floor bathroom at Vine Junior High School. There were 326 faculty and students in the school who were all safely evacuated. The fire spread and gutted the bathroom. Damage was \$10,000.00. Although the fire was small there was a serious risk to human life.

On February 24, 25, and March 13, 1979, three houses were burned in Concord Hills Subdivision. The combined square footage of the

houses exceeded 15,000 square feet. The combined fire loss was \$490,000.00. Three juvenile males who were never identified were suspected of setting the three fires.

On July 5, 1979, a four year old female playing with matches accidentally set her home on fire on Texas Avenue in Lonsdale. The fire destroyed the structure. The fire loss was \$15,000.00. No action was taken against the juvenile or her mother.

October 6, 1979, was the date of a fire at the Heiskell Elementary School in North Knox County. The school suffered \$300,000.00 in damages and was deemed unrepairable. Three male juveniles were suspected of setting the fire but they were never apprehended.

On March 19, 1980, a fire was set in the sleeping quarters of a detention cell of the Knox County Juvenile Detention Center on Division Street in West Knoxville. The damage was only \$100.00 but the fire posed considerable danger to the other thirty juveniles who had to be evacuated. The fourteen year old male juvenile was turned over to the Department of Corrections.

On July 2, 1980, a five year old boy and an eight year old girl were playing with smoke bombs on Schofield Avenue in Lonsdale near the Phoenix Textile Company warehouse. One of the smokebombs set some grass and leaves on fire next to the building. A fire broke out resulting in \$100,000.00 in damages. The two children were placed in the custody of their parents and no further action was taken.

On January 2, 1981, the John T. O'Conner Senior Citizens Center on Winona Street was burglarized and set on fire by two male juveniles

age seventeen. The fire caused \$25,000.00 in damages and closed the Center for three weeks resulting in a hardship for many senior citizens who temporarily lost a social center. The juveniles were turned over to the Department of Corrections.

On Friday, October 3, 1981, a Jackson Avenue warehouse was set on fire by two seventeen year old males and one sixteen year old. The fire caused \$200,000.00 in damage and destroyed the building. The sixteen year old was turned over to his parents with no formal action being taken. The two seventeen year olds were turned over to Criminal Court by former Juvenile Court Judge Warren Webster.

The Physical Therapy Center on Executive Park Drive in Cedar Bluff was set on fire by an unknown number of juveniles on Monday, January 5, 1982. The fire resulted in \$200,000.00 in damages and closed the Center for seven weeks.

The Sand R. Grocery Warehouse at 4710 Cleage Street was set on fire by two sixteen year old males. The fire resulted in \$50,000.00 in damages. The fire which was set on Wednesday, January 20, 1982, was the second fire set by the juveniles on that date. The first fire was a garbage dumpster.

The last fire to be mentioned was a fire bombing which occurred at Doyle High School in South Knox County on Saturday, February 10, 1982. Damage was \$10,000.00. The firebomb was thrown at the front entrance of the school. No one was apprehended but the physical evidence (graffiti on the side of the building and the sidewalks) indicated that the firebomb was thrown by students who attended the school.

The twenty-two fires which have been reviewed are the most significant juvenile related fires in Knox County since 1977. These fires caused the most damage and disrupted the lives of the most people. The twenty-two fires caused \$15,660,100.00 in damage which is approximately 85 percent of all juvenile related fire losses in Knox County since 1977. There were also numerous injuries which were inflicted on firefighters but not the general public. None of the injuries were considered serious.

Considering there has been at least \$18,009,115.00 in fire damages since 1977, the problem of juvenile firesetting is indeed a serious problem in Knox County.

CHAPTER IV

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Socioeconomic Status

The frequency run on the data provides much useful information on the topic of juvenile firesetting. In this section the variables are discussed and the frequencies presented for most of the variables. Tables are used to examine the more important variables.

The first variable to review is the age of the juvenile when he or she committed the arson crime. Table 4 shows us that there is one, eleven year old juvenile; three, twelve year old juveniles; three, thirteen year old juveniles; twelve, fifteen year old juveniles; eleven, sixteen year old juveniles; and seventeen, seventeen year old juveniles for a total of fifty juvenile cases.

The second variable is the age difference from the first crime committed by the juvenile and the arson crime under analysis. For ten juveniles the first crime was the arson. For five juveniles the first crime was six months prior to the arson. For six juveniles the first crime was twelve months prior to the arson. For ten juveniles the first crime was twenty-four months prior to the arson crime. For one juvenile the first crime was thirty months prior to the arson crime. For eight juveniles the first crime was thirty-six months prior to the arson crime. For ten juveniles the first crime was forty-eight or more months prior to the arson crime.

Table 4
Age and Sex of Juvenile Arsonists
(Knox County, TN, 1977-83)

Age	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
11	1	0	1
12	3	0	3
13	2	1	3
14	2	1	3
15	11	1	12
16	8	3	11
17	17	0	17
Total	44	6	50

As for the sex of the juveniles, the third variable, there are forty-four males and six females identified in the fifty arson files.

The fourth variable is race. There are forty-seven Whites and only three Blacks in the sample.

The fifth variable is the number of months the juveniles have been counseled for all of their criminal activities. One juvenile had no counseling at all. Nine juveniles have been counseled for six months. Eight juveniles have been counseled for twelve months. Two juveniles have been counseled for eighteen months. Eleven juveniles have been counseled for twenty-four months. One juvenile has been counseled for thirty months. Eight juveniles have been counseled for thirty-six months. And ten juveniles have been counseled for forty-eight or more months.

The sixth variable is church membership. There are fifteen Baptist juveniles. One juvenile is Presbyterian. Two juveniles are Church of God. For thirty-two files the data was missing.

The seventh variable is the juvenile firesetter's rank among his or her siblings. Twenty-eight percent of the juveniles are the oldest child. Fifty percent of the juveniles are middle rank children. Eighteen percent of the juveniles are the youngest child and 4 percent are only children. See Table 5.

The eighth variable is the father's occupation. Four juveniles have fathers who are white-collar employees. Ten juveniles have fathers who are skilled blue-collar workers. Seventeen juveniles have fathers who are semiskilled laborers. Six juveniles have

Table 5

Sibling Position of Juvenile Arsonists
(Knox County, TN, 1977-83)

Sibling Position	<u>n</u>
Youngest	9
Middle	25
Oldest	14
Only	2
Total	50

fathers who are unskilled laborers. Thirteen juveniles have unemployed or deceased fathers.

The ninth variable is the mother's occupation. Five juveniles have mothers who are white-collar employees. One juvenile has a skilled blue-collar mother. Eleven juveniles have mothers who are semi-skilled. Ten juveniles have mothers who work in service occupations. Fifteen juveniles have mothers who are housewives. Eight juveniles have mothers who are unemployed.

The tenth variable is the total family income. Fourteen of the juvenile case files reported a total family income of less than \$5,000.00. Twelve families have an income in the \$5,000.00 to \$9,999.00 range. Fifteen families have an income in the \$10,000.00 to \$14,999.00 range. Five families have an income in the \$15,000.00 to \$19,999.00 range. Three families have an income in the \$20,000.00 to \$24,999.00 range and one family has an income over \$25,000.00.

The eleventh variable is the type of neighborhood the juvenile lives in. Seven juveniles live in project housing. Thirty juveniles

live in working class neighborhoods. And thirteen juveniles live in middle class neighborhoods.

The twelfth variable is the identification of the fire target. Fifteen houses were set on fire. Seven buildings owned by business were set on fire. Five storage sheds were set on fire. Twelve schools had different types of fires. Three trash containers were set on fire. There were three open space fires. One juvenile set some paper on fire. And there were four other fires involving railroad box cars. See Table 6.

The thirteenth variable is a breakdown of the value of fire damage. One fire caused less than \$100.00 in damages. Fourteen fires caused between \$100.00 and \$999.00 in damages. Twelve fires caused \$1,000.00 to \$4,999.99 in damages. Eight fires caused \$5,000.00 to \$9,999.99 in damages. Thirteen fires caused between \$10,000.00 and \$100,000.00 in damages. And two fires caused over \$100,000.00 in damages.

The fourteenth variable is the time that the fire was set. Thirteen fires were set between 0601 and 1000. Six fires were set between 1001 and 1400. Eight fires were set between 1401 and 1800. Fifteen fires were set between 1801 and 2200. Seven fires were set between 2201 and 0200. And one fire was set between 0201 and 0600.

The fifteenth variable is the neighborhood in which the fire was set. Six fires were set in project neighborhoods. Thirty-two fires were set in working class neighborhoods. And twelve fires were set in middle class neighborhoods.

Table 6
Targets of Juvenile Arsonists
(Knox County, TN, 1977-83)

Target	f
House	15
Building	7
Storage Shed	5
School	12
Trash Container	3
Open Space	3
Auto	0
Paper	1
Other	4
Total	50

Up to this point the basic social characteristics of the juvenile firesetter have been discussed. For the most part, the juveniles who have been processed through the juvenile court system are from poor families who live in low income housing.

Counseling

The next area of variables includes the counseling process of the juvenile. In order to counsel the juvenile the counselor must understand what motivated the juvenile to set the fire. Of the fifty cases, fifteen of the juveniles were motivated by excitement. Fourteen juveniles set fires for the purpose of vandalism. Eleven juveniles set fires in order to get revenge. Seven of the juveniles set fires because they were pyromaniacs. Three others set fires for other reasons.

When the parents first learned of the arson that was committed by their child 36 percent were surprised while another 36 percent expected the behavior from their child. Sixteen percent of the parents were upset while 12 percent had no reaction at all.

Eighty percent of the parents took "appropriate action" by giving the Juvenile Court officials the authority to act as they please. Only one set of parents actually hired a private counselor. Sixteen percent of the parents took no action at all. In these cases, the Juvenile Court handled the case. Two percent of the parents were abusive to the child once they regained custody of the child. Another set of parents were abusive to the child when they first learned of the crime, but they finally turned the child over to the Court.

Since all of the juveniles were faced with a formal hearing in Juvenile Court many different outcomes are expected when a verdict is reached. For 56 percent of all the juveniles the verdict meant committment to a formal institution. Twenty-two percent of the juveniles received probation ranging in length from six months to two years. Twelve percent of the juveniles received probation and their parents had to pay restitution. Six percent of the juveniles were turned over to their parents and 4 percent of the juveniles were sent to special educational programs offered by the Department of Child and Family Services.

Even though only 56 percent of the juveniles were committed to a formal institution as a result of the hearing, 76 percent of the juveniles in the sample have at one time or another been committed to a formal institution for other crimes including arson. The State Department of Corrections has handled 34 percent of the juveniles. Knox County Juvenile Court has detained 30 percent of the juveniles. The Knox County Department of Human Services has handled 8 percent of the juveniles as did the Taft Youth Center.

The follow-up reports received by the Knox County Juvenile Court from the counseling agencies shows that during the initial examination of the juvenile 70 percent of the juveniles displayed a negative attitude toward the arson crime, the counselor, and life in general. The juveniles were said to be "disruptive, unruly, and uncaring." However, 30 percent of the juveniles were reported to have displayed a positive attitude during their initial counseling.

At the termination of the counseling for the arson the attitudes reported by the counselors remained the same. Seventy percent of the juveniles still had negative attitudes. These juveniles were repeat offenders and were expected to commit further crimes once they were released from the institution. Three of the juveniles were defined as "lost causes" and the reports recommended permanent removal from society. The other 30 percent were labeled as reformed and were expected to lead normal lives once they were released. Follow-up studies show that 48 percent of the juveniles never committed another arson crime while 18 percent committed one minor arson fire and 32 percent committed more than one arson fire after the counseling.

Regarding crimes in general, only 30 percent of the juveniles did not commit any additional crimes. Thirty-six percent committed multiple major and minor crimes after the counseling. Thirty-four percent committed one major crime and one or two minor crimes.

For the juveniles who committed their first major crime, one juvenile committed rape, two committed assault, one committed assault, one committed armed robbery, nine committed burglary, four committed grand larceny, six committed auto theft, and five committed another major arson crime (over \$1,000.00 in damages). Of the juveniles who committed their second major crime, seven committed rape, eight committed burglary, four committed grand larceny, one committed auto theft, and one committed a major arson crime.

Of the juveniles who committed a third major crime, four committed burglary, three committed grand larceny, and six committed a

major arson crime. Ten juveniles continued to commit additional major crimes. For the juveniles who committed their first minor crime other than the arson crime under investigation, eight committed petit larceny, seven had drug use violations, nine were truant, three violated parole, six were "beyond control" of their parents, two were runaways, three were Absent Without Leave (AWOL), and one committed minor vandalism for a total of thirty-nine different offenses. Twenty-nine juveniles committed a second minor crime, twenty juveniles committed a third minor crime, and thirteen juveniles committed a fourth minor crime. See Table 7.

Table 7
Offenses Committed by Juvenile Arsonists
(Knox County, TN, 1977-83)

Subsequent Offenses	Major <u>n</u>	Minor <u>n</u>
First	28	33
Second	21	29
Third	13	20
Fourth	10	13

Contained within the files on each juvenile is a comment sheet on which the probation counselor at the Knox County Juvenile Detention Center writes a few brief comments (phrases) about each juvenile. The two most common comments are "He is unruly, does not care" and "The child needs psychological help." Each phrase appeared thirteen times on the comment sheets as the first written comment. The most frequent

comment that is written as the second comment is "The child is rejected by his parents," which appeared eleven times. "He cannot judge right from wrong" appears seventeen times as the third comment. Overall it appears that 86 percent of the juveniles are "naturally bad" and are destined to engage in criminal activity for the rest of their lives.

One way of determining how dangerous the arson is to others is to identify the "proximity" of the fire in relation to the juvenile's residence. Proximity is a dichotomous variable in which residential equals one value and public properties equals the other value. Table 8 shows there were twenty fires set in residential properties and thirty fires set in public properties including businesses.

Table 8

Number of Serious Fires Set by Juveniles Based
on the Proximity of the Fire in Relation
to the Juvenile's Residence

Serious Fires	<u>n</u>
Residential	20
Nonresidential	30
Total	50

Up to this point the discussion has focused on the statistical data which was collected from the fifty case files from the Knox County Juvenile Court since January 1, 1977. In order to determine the nature of juvenile firesetting in Knox County the hypotheses presented in

Chapter IV must be tested in order to develop a profile of the typical juvenile firesetter in Knox County.

Findings

Through the application of the chi square (χ^2) statistical test on the nine hypotheses the following findings (results) are presented. The chi square test is used because our data meet its assumptions, and presents a representation of the raw scores and their meanings. Due to the mixture of nominal, ordinate, and interval data the chi square test does not violate the basic assumptions of statistical testing.

The first three hypotheses focus on the SES characteristics of the juvenile firesetters in Knox County.

Hypothesis 1.1

The lower socio-economic-status groups do not raise more juvenile firesetters than the middle socio-economic-status groups.

The null hypothesis is the lower socio-economic-status groups raise more juvenile firesetters than the middle socio-economic-status groups.

The research hypothesis is supported by data comparing income and the number of fires set by juveniles. The two income categories are juveniles who come from families who have a total annual income of less than \$10,000.00 and juveniles who come from families who have a total annual income over \$10,000.00. The number of arson cases

is divided into three categories. The first category represents juveniles who have ceased their firesetting behavior after only one fire. The second category represents juveniles who have set one or two additional fires. The third category represents juveniles who have set three or more fires after the initial fire which brought them into the Juvenile Court System.

In all we find twenty-six juveniles in the under \$10,000.00 income category and twenty-four juveniles in the over \$10,000.00 income category who have set fires. The observed chi square equals 12.35 and the critical value equals 5.991 at the 0.05 level of significance which enables us to reject the null hypothesis (lower SES groups raise more firesetters) and support the research hypothesis (all SES groups raise firesetters). See Table 9.

Table 9
Arson Crimes by Income of Juvenile's Families
(Knox County, TN, 1977-83)

<u>Income</u>	<u>One Arson</u>	<u>One/Two Additional</u>	<u>Three or More</u>	<u>Total</u>
Under \$10,000.00	11	5	10	26
Over \$10,000.00	13	11	0	24

Hypothesis 1.2

The lower socio-economic-status juveniles engage in more serious firesetting than the middle socio-economic-status juveniles.

The null hypothesis is there is no difference between socio-economic status and firesetting.

The first statistical test is a chi square between income and value of fire loss. For the under \$10,000.00 income (from now on referred to as low income) juveniles, fourteen set fires that caused less than \$5,000.00 in damages and twelve set fires that caused more than \$5,000.00 in damages. For the over \$10,000.00 income (hereafter referred to as middle income because only one case exceeded \$25,000.00 in yearly income) juveniles, thirteen set fires which caused less than \$5,000.00 in damages and eleven juveniles set fires which caused more than \$5,000.00 in damages. An observed chi square of 0.00052 and the critical value of 3.841 at the 0.05 level of significance requires that the null hypothesis not be rejected, therefore we must reject the research hypothesis. See Table 10.

Table 10

Property Damage of Arson by Income of Juvenile's Families
(Knox County, TN, 1977-83)

<u>Income</u>	<u>Less \$5,000.00</u>	<u>More \$5,000.00</u>	<u>Total</u>
Under \$10,000.00	14	12	26
Over \$10,000.00	13	11	24

A second chi square test between income and the severity of the fire also fails to reject the null hypothesis. Fifteen low income juveniles set residential properties on fire and eleven low income juveniles set public properties on fire. For the middle income juveniles, five set residential properties on fire and nineteen set public properties on fire.* An observed chi square of 5.61 and a critical value of 6.64 at the 0.01 level of significance enables us to say there is no difference from low to middle income firesetters. Again we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1.3

As the ecology of a neighborhood decreases then the rates of juvenile arson increase.

The null hypothesis is there is no difference between the ecology of a neighborhood and the rates of juvenile arson.

Simple inspection of the data show support for the research hypothesis. We find that 48 percent of the juveniles from working class neighborhoods intentionally set fires, while only 12 percent of the juveniles from project neighborhoods and 22 percent of the juveniles from middle-class neighborhoods intentionally set fires. Forty-eight percent versus 36 percent suggests several other explanations. One explanation is that juveniles from working class neighborhoods are

*It is interesting to note that fifteen of the nineteen middle income juveniles set school fires. Does that mean that the juveniles who are more successful in life are also the same ones who are destroying our schools?

not happy with their lifestyle and neighborhood. Or, perhaps working class juveniles have little to lose if they are caught setting a fire. Finally, being deprived of societal influences (middle class), the working class juveniles use firesetting as a means of gaining attention. (See Table 11 for a breakdown of the percentages.)

Table 11

Juvenile's Neighborhood's SES by Arson Rate
(Knox County, TN, 1977-83)

<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Project	6	12
Working	24	48
Middle	11	22
Total	41	82

The next three hypotheses focus on the fire target selected by the juvenile.

Hypothesis 2.1

If a juvenile sets fire to his home then there is an absent role model figure for the juvenile.

The null hypothesis is the presence or absence of a role model figure has no effect on the rates of arson directed toward one's home.

Due to the low number of cases (N=4) which fit this category it is impossible to subject the hypothesis to any statistical test, rather the listing of the characteristic of the four cases is

sufficient. The first two cases involve male juveniles in which the parents had abandoned the child, in one case the child was six years old and the other case the child was eight years old. Both children were living in foster homes and had not adjusted to their foster parents. There was constant arguing and disagreements in both households.

The third case involved a Black female, age thirteen who set fire to her bed. For the previous three years she had been living with her grandmother. Her father had been killed when she was eight years old and her mother abandoned her soon afterwards. She was rebellious and unruly toward her grandmother. She set the fire in an attempt to lure her mother back to her. She told the Court she needed her mother, but her mother never came back.

The fourth case involves a fifteen year old male who set his uncle's house on fire after living there for the previous fourteen years. The boy had been abandoned at birth by his parents and was taken in by his uncle. The uncle and nephew never got along. The boy was hurt very deeply and displayed signs of extreme depression. He set the fire out of the dislike for his uncle and the feelings of rejection he suffered from his being rejected by his parents.

Although the four cases are extreme incidents (no parents present) they indicate that fires set in the home are the result of depression, psychological disturbances, rejection by parents, and lack of role models (Canter, 1980; Rider, 1980). By using these four cases to examine homebound firesetters, the probability is high that the majority of all homebound firesetters have one or more of the symptoms of

depression, psychological disturbances, rejection, and role model deprivation.

Hypothesis 2.2

If a juvenile sets fire to his home then the juvenile is probably suffering from severe psychological disturbances.

The null hypothesis is juveniles who set fires in their home do not differ from other juvenile arsonists.

Again due to the low number of cases (N=4) it is impossible to subject this to statistical tests. Instead a simple inspection of the "comment sheet" on each juvenile in their case file allows us to draw some inferences. The first comment "the child needs psychological help" appeared as the first comment on all four case file's comment sheet. Secondly, the comment "the child is rejected by his parents" appeared on all comment sheets as did "he/she cannot judge right from wrong." A fourth comment that appeared twice was "the child has a low I.Q." All of these comments are good indicators that homebound juvenile firesetters have psychological problems.

Hypothesis 2.3

If a juvenile solitary firesetter sets fire to a specific target then the fire is set for the purpose of self-gratification and self-fulfillment.

The null hypothesis is there is no relationship between solitary firesetting practices and self-gratification self-fulfillment.

Of the fifty cases in the sample, thirty-five involve solitary firesetting. Of the thirty-five, fourteen fires were set for vandalism purposes (fire set after acts of vandalism), nine fires were set for sheer excitement and fun, six were set to satisfy sexual desires, three were set out of acts of revenge, and three were set out of other psychological disturbances. It must be noted that fires which are set after an act of vandalism are usually set for pleasure, excitement, and especially as a way to celebrate a successful criminal act. Therefore, of the thirty-five fires, twenty-nine fires were set for gratification and fulfillment while only six fires were set for other reasons.

Upon computation of the chi square we get an observed chi square of 15.12 and the critical value is 3.84 at the 0.05 level of significance. Since the observed chi square exceeds the critical value of 3.84, we conclude that solitary firesetters do set fires for self-gratification and self-fulfillment.

The last three hypotheses focus on the circumstances behind a fire. Specifically the motive of the juvenile is under investigation.

Hypothesis 3.1

If fires are set by groups of juveniles then revenge and excitement are two primary motives for the fire.

The null hypothesis is there is no relationship between revenge and excitement and group firesetting.

Inspection of the data shows that eight fires were set with revenge in mind, six were set for excitement, and one out of jealousy.

The arguments presented about jealousy in Chapter II linked jealousy to revenge, in fact, jealousy is considered an extension of revenge. With that thought in mind we find 100% of all group fire setters display both revenge and excitement when setting fires.

For example, on February 26 and 27, 1982, two white males ages twelve and fifteen set one fire on each date. The first fire was set on Friday morning when school was dismissed due to bad weather. The two juveniles told the probation counselor at the Knox County Juvenile Court that they set the fires due to boredom and they wanted some excitement. During the next two months of counseling the twelve year old also stated he set the fires because he was angry with his mother. The counselor stated the fire was an act of revenge against the mother because she refused to take the boy to a video arcade for something to do during the day. In these cases, as well as the others in the sample, revenge was always present as well as with excitement as the motive.

As for the boxcar fires, excitement was the primary motive and revenge was a secondary motive. In four other cases in which residential properties were the target, revenge was the primary motive and excitement was a secondary motive.

As it stands hypothesis 3.1 is valid for the sample and is supported by the data. Revenge and excitement are salient motives for group firesetters. (See Tables 12 and 13.)

Table 12
Motive for Juvenile Arson in Knox County
(1977-83)

<u>Motive</u>	<u>n</u>
Vandalism	14
Excitement/fun	9
Revenge	3
Sexual	6
Other	3
Total	35

Table 13
Motives for Group Firesetting in Knox County
(1977-83)

<u>Motive</u>	<u>n</u>
Revenge	8
Excitement	6
Jealousy	1
Total	15

Hypothesis 3.2

If an individual juvenile sets a fire then revenge and excitement are two circumstances which caused the behavior.

The null hypothesis is there is no relationship between revenge and excitement and individual firesetting.

Of the thirty-five cases previously discussed, nine cases involve psychological and sexual disturbances. The three psychological cases are immediately removed from the excitement and revenge list. However, the six sexual gratification cases are included in excitement because to that individual firesetter the act of setting and watching a fire are both pleasurable and exciting. Therefore thirty-two cases are labeled with excitement as either the primary or secondary motive. Since revenge is an underlying motive for all motivational firesetting, it too is a part of the thirty-two cases. A chi square value of 24.02 compared to a critical value of 2.84 at the 0.05 level of significance supports the research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3.3

If revenge is an underlying motive (circumstance) then revenge is always present in all types of firesetting.

The null hypothesis is there is no relationship between revenge and firesetting. Of the fifty separate incidents of arson, forty-three of the cases allow for revenge to be identified as either a primary or secondary motive. In four other cases revenge can be detected as an underlying motive, therefore forty-seven of the fifty cases display revenge as a primary, secondary, or an underlying motive.

For statistical purposes we will use an N of forty-three to equal revenge motivated and an N of seven for no revenge present. The chi square value is 25.92 and the critical value is 3.841 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, we conclude that the research hypothesis is significant as we reject the null hypothesis. (See Table 14.)

Table 14
Revenge as an Underlying Motive for Juvenile Arsonists
in Knox County (1977 to 1983)

<u>Motive</u>	<u>Fires</u>	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Revenge (Primary, Secondary, or Subliminal)	43	83
Other	7	14
Total	50	100

Conclusions

Based on the sample of the fifty arson cases obtained from the Knox County Juvenile Court certain conclusions can be reached about the hypotheses and the subsequent testing of the hypotheses.

First of all, juveniles from all incomes are potential firesetters. Based upon the motive of revenge, excitement, and curiosity, 94 percent of all firesetting is explained. Curiosity is the most common motive for firesetting for the children who are under twelve years of age. Excitement and revenge lie hand in hand for the juveniles who are

twelve years of age and older. Excitement when poised with vandalism accounts for 40 percent and more of all arson cases. Revenge when paired with excitement accounts for 54 percent of all arson.

The second finding is there is no difference in the consequences of intentionally set fires when low income juveniles are compared with middle income juveniles. However, it was noted that fifteen of the nineteen school fires under analysis were set by middle income juveniles. With the exception of two fires (both at Karns High School) all of the fires were of a minor nature with less than \$5,000.00 in damages per fire.

The third finding is the ecology of a neighborhood does affect the firesetting rates of juveniles. The working class juvenile has a deprived self-concept because he or she lives in a neighborhood of poor, dilapidated housing for which renting the property rather than owning the property is the norm. Due to the low self-concept the juvenile uses arson as a way to vent hostility, aggression, and frustration.

The fourth finding is juveniles who set fires in their home suffer from severe psychological disturbances, low I.Q., and the absence of one or both parents as role models. These juveniles tend to be introverted and suicidal. Only competent psychiatric help will help relieve the juvenile of his or her psychological problems.

The fifth finding is the homebound firesetter develops psychological disturbances due to mistreatment of the child by parents, a missing parent(s) who would have acted as a role model for the child, or a

parent who neglected or rejected the child. In the event of rejection by his or her parents the child is destined to suffer from psychological problems for the most part if not all of the rest of his or her lifetime.

The sixth finding is juveniles who set fires on an individual basis do so for self-gratification and self-fulfillment, especially the pyromaniacs who receive sexual pleasure from setting and watching the fire while engaging in masturbation.

The seventh finding is revenge and excitement are definitely associated with group firesetting practices. When a group of kids are bored they can set a fire in order to see some action (the fun of setting the fire and watching the fire department arrive on the scene and extinguish the blaze). Revenge is always present because at the subliminal level the juveniles are striking back at society, because society is not providing them with the "better things" in life.

The eighth finding is revenge and excitement are also present in solitary firesetters with the exception of the juveniles who display psychological disturbances. Fires are set to relieve boredom, for the fun of it, to get back at someone, and/or any combination of the three reasons.

Finally, revenge is an always present motive for firesetting behaviors, whether it is a primary motive, a secondary motive, or a subliminal motive. As Rider (1980) said revenge runs like a thread through all types of motivational firesetting.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The first section of this chapter summarizes both the literature review and the results of the data collection. The second section discusses class consciousness and arson through the use of delinquency theory, and the last section looks at the limitations of this study and the future concerns for additional research.

Summary

In Chapter I we discussed the issues involved in juvenile arson and why it is a serious social problem. Senator Sam Nunn (D-Georgia) estimates that arson losses average two billion dollars a year and are growing at an annual rate of 25 percent. The Arson-For-Hire Hearings before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations estimates the total costs of arson averages ten billion dollars a year when taxes, insurance, medical costs, and other expenses are included.

In 1978 there were 557,000 suspicious fires in the United States and it is estimated that juveniles were responsible for 30 percent to 50 percent of those fires. In 1979 43 percent of all arson arrestees were between thirteen years and nineteen years of age. Within Knox County during 1978, 53 percent of those arrested for arson were juveniles.

Chapter I examined the literature on juvenile firesetting. The discussion focuses on two issues, motive and a social-psychological profile of the typical juvenile arsonist.

There are five basic motives for children (under twelve years old) who set fires: matchplaying, mischievousness and excitement, jealousy, revenge, and psychological disturbances.

By contrast, the adolescent firesetter (twelve years and older) is held by the authorities to act on twelve motives which drive the juvenile to firesetting. Rider (1980) in his analysis states that revenge is the underlying motive for all motivational firesetting which in turn makes revenge the first motive. Other motives (identified by Canter (1980), Rider (1980), and Karchmen (1981) are vandalism, conscious firesetting, unconscious firesetting, pathological firesetting, nonpathological firesetting, arson-for-profit, excitement, enuresis, and jealousy. Solitary firesetting, group firesetting, and specific targets are types of firesetting consisting of multiple motives for each one.

The social-psychological profile of the juvenile arsonist includes the following: seventeen years of age, 90 percent are male, 85 percent are White, most have physical defects, most are sexually maladjusted, alcohol is frequently abused, most have low self-esteem and a poor self-concept, and 10 percent attempt suicide after their arrest.

Chapter II discussed the methods of data collection, the court procedures of the juvenile system, and the hypotheses. A complete history of each juvenile was collected by using a data sheet which was filled in by the author by inspecting the files on the juveniles who have come to the attention of the Knox County Juvenile Court. The

second section examined the juvenile court system by analysis of the court process from the time the crime occurred up to and including the counseling of the delinquent. The last section presents the three sets of hypotheses for this study.

Chapter III reviewed the history of some of the major fires set by juveniles in Knox County since 1977. Twenty-two fires of the known eighty-seven fires were examined. There were an additional 147 fires for which juveniles are suspected of setting during the same period of time. The twenty-two fires account for \$15,660,100.00 in fire losses since 1977. During the same time frame a total of \$18,009,115.00 in fire losses has been attributed to juveniles in Knox County.

Chapter IV contained an overview of the data, the testing of the hypotheses, and the basic conclusions reached through data analysis. Overall the data show that the typical juvenile comes from a low income family, lives in a working class neighborhood, 94 percent are White, 88 percent are male, 50 percent are middle rank children, and schools are the most common target for arson. Twenty-four of the juveniles committed only one arson crime, twenty-eight committed other major crimes and thirty-three juveniles committed other minor crimes.

Overall, of the nine hypotheses, eight were supported by the data. The second hypotheses (The lower socio-economic-status juveniles engage in more serious firesetting than the middle socio-economic-status juveniles) was not supported--rather an even distribution was found to exist between low and middle income firesetters.

The third section discussed some of the general conclusions that were reached about the juvenile firesetter in Knox County. Basically the juvenile comes from a family within the \$5,000.00 to \$20,000.00 annual income range. Excitement and revenge are very common motives as is vandalism and malicious firesetting. The ecology of the neighborhood appears to have an effect on the rates of firesetting. The juvenile who comes from a poor and dilapidated neighborhood has a low self-concept and uses fire as a defense mechanism. Juveniles who set fires in their home suffer from severe psychological disturbances. These kids need qualified psychiatric help on a continuing basis. The psychological disturbances originate from home environment problems ranging from one or both parents who are missing to parents who are abusive to the child. Types of abuse are physical/sexual and verbal. Also the parents can just ignore the child by not interacting with the child during his or her development.

Most of the solitary firesetters set fires for personal satisfaction and self-fulfillment. These are the pyromaniacs who use fire as their means of entertainment. Excitement is also a means for the solitary firesetter to go out and set a fire. The thrill of the fire department arriving on the scene, the crowds of people who come to see the fire, and the coverage given by the press (media) excite the solitary firesetter.

Finally revenge is considered to always be present in all types of firesetting except those with deep psychological disturbances. Revenge runs like a thread through all motivational arson according to Rider (1980).

The Implications: Arson and Class Consciousness

Why do juveniles set fires? That is one of the most basic questions that this paper is trying to answer. In order to answer the question you must know who the most frequent firesetters are. The most frequent firesetters in Knox County come from the \$5,000.00 to \$20,000.00 family income range. In order to answer the question, we need to briefly review sociological theory about class consciousness.

Karl Marx (1973:1) defines society as the product of men's reciprocal activity. A particular state of development in the productive forces of man determines a certain form of commerce and consumption which in turn determines the organization of the family, the ranks, and the classes. Therefore, since one item determines another and its vice-versa it is a reciprocal activity.

The mode of production of the material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life processes (Marx, 1973:5). The social being of man determines their consciousness. During the development of the material productive forces in society, conflict develops when the social being becomes aware of his environment by realizing that the forces of production, the political, and the economic systems are unfairly balanced in favor of the capitalists. The social being who is a member of the working classes begins to develop consciousness about his position in society when he realizes he is being exploited by the middle class. The middle class coerces the working class by controlling the means of production and the economy.

The extensive use of machinery and the division of labor causes the working class individual to lose his character. The working person becomes an extension of the producing machine. The skill level of the worker decreases dramatically, resulting in the loss of his job. Also the unskilled laborer replaces the skilled laborer for lower wages and monotonous working conditions. The modern working class laborer sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class rather than rising with the progress of industry (Marx, 1973:85). The result is that the individual is a pawn of the middle class. The working class is trapped in a bottomless pit in which escape seems unlikely unless some form of revolution occurs. But any major revolution becomes more unlikely as the nation becomes more advanced and the working class continues to abide by the rules and regulations of the middle class.

It is at this point that arson and class consciousness merge into a descriptive essay about why juveniles engage in arson. Working class juveniles set approximately 55 percent of all juvenile related fires. Of the fires set by the working class approximately 24 percent are targeted toward the middle class. Although the nature of the arson is minor at this point in time the arson is symbolic of the working class juvenile's level of consciousness. The norms, sanctions, and other legal constraints prevent the rates of arson from increasing because the juvenile becomes aware of the sanctions against arson. However, the sanctions do not stop the juvenile from being jealous of the middle class who have better housing, more money, and enjoy the luxuries of life.

Most of the juveniles who engage in arson are doing so because of peer pressure or "the mood of fatalism" (Matza, 1964:188). The mood of fatalism simply means that most of the juveniles are pushed around by a few juveniles and most of the juveniles have no control over the circumstances surrounding the crime. The "pushed-around" juveniles develop a sense of desperation in which one juvenile believes that the next juvenile is equally motivated to engage in subcultural deviance. Since most of the juveniles are a victim of the mood of fatalism and the sense of desperation then they are in a "definition of situation" which means that most of the juveniles engage in arson because only a few of the juveniles are instigating the behavior and the majority are blindly led into engaging in arson as well. The few juveniles define the situation in terms of the middle class taking advantage of the working class, the working class live in dilapidated housing, the working class has fewer opportunities for a successful life, and the working class is the oppressed. The few are pushing around the majority of the working class juveniles by forcing them to engage in arson as a means of protesting their life style.

Therefore, since only a few juveniles are actually protesting their oppression by using arson, they are also making the other working class juveniles engage in the protest by using the mood of fatalism as a tactic. The rates of arson by the working class are not high enough to instill fear in the middle class as of yet but when the level of consciousness among the working class juveniles increases then the middle class will begin to fear the usage of arson which will be directed toward them at growing rates.

The Limitations of This Study and Future Concerns
for Additional Research

The first and foremost limitation of this study is due to the fact of the "lost cases" and the inability to obtain data on juvenile firesetters who come from wealthy families because of patient-client confidentiality. The second limitation of this study is that the population sample came from Knox County which is not a random sample in order for generalizations to be stated about all juvenile firesetters in the United States. If there had been sufficient funds for further study then numerous cities, towns, and rural areas would have been selected in order to draw a random sample. The last limitation of this study was the lack of information in the case files about family composition and family history. If more data had been available then this study would have been able to place more emphasis on SES, family ties and kinships and what, if any, influence the parents have on their children.

Finally, regarding future concerns of additional research on juvenile firesetting there are two points of interest. First of all, the data and the findings in this research project are available for probation officers and counselors who work with juvenile firesetters in order for them to be able to better understand why juveniles set fires. In addition the counselors should be able to help reduce the rates of arson by being able to think like the juvenile firesetter; therefore, the counselor is better able to reason with the juvenile and make the juvenile understand why arson is such a serious crime.

The second point of interest is that whoever in the future decides to study juvenile firesetting will be able to take this document and pick out some of the interesting relationships for further and more thorough analysis. For this author the relationship between different classes and their targets (working class burn their neighborhood houses and middle class burn public schools) is of such interest. The statement "working class burn their neighborhood houses and middle class burn public schools" is a generalization which holds validity for juveniles in Knox County. To discover the reasons and motives for this type of firesetting behavior would be interesting and informative.

The relationship between different classes and different targets is only one of the many interesting phenomena on juvenile firesetting. Further research on the topic is needed in order to reduce the rates of juvenile arson.

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APPENDIX

FACT SHEET

I-1	Interviewer # _____	C1: _____
I-2	Case # _____	C2-3: _____
I-3	Age _____	C4-5: _____
I-3a	Age difference from first crime and the arson crime? _____	C6: _____
I-4	Sex _____	C7: _____
I-5	Race _____	C8: _____
I-6	Years Counseled _____	C9: _____
I-7	Church _____	C10: _____
I-8	Child's rank among siblings? _____	C11: _____
I-9	Father's Occupation _____	C12: _____
I-10	Mother's Occupation _____	C13: _____
I-11	Total Household Income _____	C14: _____
I-12	Address of the Juvenile _____	C15: _____
I-13	Fire Target _____	C16: _____
I-14	Fire Value (loss) _____	C17: _____
I-15	Time of the Fire _____	C18: _____
I-16	Address of the Fire _____	C19: _____
I-17	Motive of the juvenile for setting the fire? _____	C20: _____
I-18	What was the formal action taken against the juvenile? _____	C21: _____
I-19	How did the parents react to the initial arson charge? _____	C22: _____
I-20	What type of action did the parents take toward the juvenile? _____	C23-25: _____

- I-21 Who has been the primary counseling agency for the juvenile? _____ C26: _____
- I-22 During the counseling of the juvenile, what was his/her attitude toward you and the problem? _____ C27: _____
C28: _____
C29: _____
- I-23 How did the juvenile respond to the counseling? _____ C30: _____
- I-24 How many arson crimes have been committed after the initial counseling of the juvenile? _____ C31: _____
- I-25 How many non-arson crimes has the juvenile committed? _____ C32-33: _____
- I-26 Has the juvenile been sent to other correctional facilities? _____ C34: _____
- I-27 Do you have any additional comments about this juvenile? _____ C35: _____
C36: _____
C37: _____
C38: _____
- I-28 Is there a problem of juvenile firesetting in Knox County? _____ C39: _____
C40: _____
C41: _____
C42: _____
- I-29 What is the most common problem that you see in juveniles and how does it relate to their firesetting problem? _____ C43: _____
- I-30 What was the severity of the arson crime based on the intent of the juvenile when the fire was set? _____ C44: _____
- I-31 What was the severity of the arson crime based on the consequences of the fire which was set by the juvenile? _____ C45: _____
- I-32 What was the juvenile's first major crime? _____ C46: _____

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|-------|
| I-33 | What was the juvenile's second major crime? _____ | C:47 | _____ |
| I-34 | What was the juvenile's third major crime? _____ | C:48 | _____ |
| I-35 | How many more major crimes has the juvenile committed? _____ | C:49 | _____ |
| I-36 | What was the juvenile's first minor crime? _____ | C:50 | _____ |
| I-37 | What was the juvenile's second minor crime? _____ | C:51 | _____ |
| I-38 | What was the juvenile's third minor crime? _____ | C:52 | _____ |
| I-39 | How many more minor crimes has the juvenile committed? _____ | C:53 | _____ |

VITA

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