

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

PRIORITIZING THE BURGLARY CALL

A LEARNING CONTRACT  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
MODULE I

By  
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Dallas Police Department  
Dallas, Texas  
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#82

Protect life and property. No police manager across the nation would deny that the main goal of his/her department is to protect life and property. In this study let's look at one-half of this duty and examine the protection of property; more explicitly the burglary. What can be done to ensure that police managers are effectively handling the burglary call?

Burglaries are classified as either residential or business, with residential being a more serious offense than a business burglary. Let's first look at a typical business burglary call.

An alarm call is received by a central dispatcher or an owner that returns to his place of business in the morning, realizes that his place has been broken into, so he calls the Police for a report to be made. The Police arrive, talk with the owner, determine the point of entry and exit and call for an Evidence Technician. The officer continues to talk with the owner getting his name, address, phone number, and basic information for his report. The officer then attempts to find out what was taken. The owner doesn't know at first, but decides to walk around the business with the officer. As they walk around the business, the owner can tell there were items taken, but, asked how many, he usually replies, "I won't know exactly until I take inventory." So for the sake of his report, the officer can only put down an approximation and a vague description.

Next, and probably the most important, are the serial numbers. Again, the owner won't know until he takes an inventory. The officer then explains to the owner some information on crime prevention and tells him that someone will be getting in touch with

him to follow up on his case. He then gives the owner the report number so the owner can give it to his insurance company, and leaves the location to return to his station to write up his report.

A residential burglary scenario is basically the same, although a little different. A residential burglary victim feels more pain than a business burglary victim. Someone has been in their abode, has taken items that they have worked hard to obtain, that cannot be replaced or that are very sentimental to them. They describe their pain in terms that are strikingly similar to those used by victims of rape, and in a symbolic sense these type of burglary victims have been violated.<sup>1</sup>

An officer taking a report from a residential burglary victim experiences much the same problem as mentioned in a business burglary, with a few exceptions. A residential burglary victim rarely has the information on the items taken, such as brand name and serial numbers, and will not be able to find the paperwork on the property at a later time for the detective assigned to the case. The officer is again forced to complete his report with a vague description of the property and no way to identify it. He further explains to the victim some crime prevention techniques, gives the report number to the victim (if they are fortunate to have insurance), and leaves location to complete his report.

Let's look at some examples of this problem to clarify what was said. The examples on the following pages are actual burglary reports made by officers of the Dallas Police Department. The officer makes his report by calling it in to a Direct Entry Clerk, who types it into the computer and the report is printed through the

computer to the proper investigative division that handles the follow-up.

Examples 1 through 3 are of actual business burglaries. In example number 1, there is a vague description of what was taken, such as an undetermined amount of clothes. No color or brand names. The owner probably couldn't determine until after an inventory was taken.

In example number two, there is no serial number listed of the computer and, from the narrative, one might not even be found. Example number 3 has the brand name of the items taken, but again no serial numbers and the narrative states the property was not marked.

Examples 4 through 6 are reports of actual residential burglaries. In example number 4, there are no serial numbers listed and, on one item, the victim does not even know the brand name of the VCR. The narrative states that the complainant will attempt to find the serial numbers, in example number 5, again there are no serial numbers listed and no brand name for the stolen televisions. Example 6 has the brand names on all but one of the items taken but no serial numbers for anything. In all of the burglary examples there is no suspect information.

How much time is spent on an actual burglary call? From past experience and from talking with supervisors in the Communications Division, the actual time spent from the time the officer receives the call, drives to the location, interviews the victim or complainant, calls the report in then clears, is approximately two hours. This time can vary from jurisdictions and of course depends on the land size of the community and whether the report is handwritten or called in to a central computer clerk.

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12/01/89 0341

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01 SCP TCB - 0219 DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT SERVICE #0845898-X  
TCE - 0224 OFFENSE INCIDENT REPORT DATE REPORTED 12/01/89

DISPATCHED TO: [REDACTED] IRVINGBLVD AT:0127 AS SIG:12

BEAT: 521 WATCH: 1 ELEMENT: 0523

COMP. NAME: [REDACTED] R/S/A/DOB: / / /  
HOME ADDR: [REDACTED] IRVINGBLVD BUSN. ADDR.  
DALLAS TX [REDACTED] N/A

OFF. LOC: [REDACTED] IRVINGBLVD APT. DATES OF OCCURRENCE  
PREMISES: CLOTHING APPAREL MRT PROP. ATT. CODE: 105 FRI, DEC 01, 1989 0120  
INV. ASSGN: 0130

OFFENSE/INCIDENT: BURGLARY UCR CODE 1:05121

M/O:  
UNK SUSPECT SMASHED FRONT DOOR W/BRICK, TOOK PROPERTY

STATUS: 0 UCR DISP:P SPECIAL REPORT: FOLLOW UP:8 REVIEWED BY:35891

SR CODE:5 RELATED REPORTS: WEATHER COND: CLEAR, COOL

FAMILY VIOLENCE: N GANG ACTIVITY CRIME: U

INV. DIV. NOTIFIED:

REPT. OFF: FOSTER, TOMMY A 5254 OTHER OFF:

-PROPERTY INFORMATION 1

CD	QTY	DESCRIPTION	SERIAL NO.	VALUE	CLASS
S	1	UNDETERMINED AMOUNT OF WOMANS			
S	1	" CHILDRENS CLOTH			
D	1	FRONT DOOR		350.	

-NARRATIVE

ON ABOVE LISTED DATE AND TIME, UNKNOWN SUSPECT THREW A BRICK THROUGH THE FRONT GLASS DOOR OF COMPLAINANT'S BUSINESS. SUSPECT THEN ENTERED THE BUSINESS AND GRABBED AN UNDETERMINE AMOUNT OF WOMAN AND CHILDREN ITEMS FROM DISPLAY RACKS. SUSPECT THEN EXITED THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR AND FLED. NO PHYSICAL EVIDENCE AVAILABLE. NFI.

EXAMPLE #1

*Coop*

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11/30/89 1648

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OID SGP TCB - 1512 DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT SERVICE #0844513-X  
TCE - 1518 OFFENSE INCIDENT REPORT DATE REPORTED 11/30/89

DISPATCHED TO: [REDACTED] JOHNCARPENTERF AT:1254 AS SIG:11/05

BEAT: 524 WATCH: U ELEMENT: 1393

COMP. NAME: \* [REDACTED] R/S/A/DOB: / / /  
HOME ADDR: [REDACTED] JOHNCARPENTERF BUSN. ADDR.  
DALLAS 75247 [REDACTED]

OFF. LOC: [REDACTED] JOHNCARPENTERF APT. 203 DATES OF OCCURRENCE  
PREMISES: SCHOOL OFFICE PROP. ATT. CODE: 710 WED, NOV 22, 1989 2345  
INV. ASSGN: MON, NOV 27, 1989 0630

OFFENSE/INCIDENT: BURGLARY UCR CODE 1:05332

M/O:  
PRIED LOCK OFF METAL DOOR: ENTERED TO REMOVE PROPERTY

STATUS: 0 UCR DISP: P SPECIAL REPORT: FOLLOW UP: 8 REVIEWED BY: 48605

SR CODE: 5 RELATED REPORTS: WEATHER COND: COLD

FAMILY VIOLENCE: N GANG ACTIVITY CRIME: U

INV. DIV. NOTIFIED:

REPT. OFF: POAGE, SHERI G 71162 OTHER OFF:

-PROPERTY INFORMATION 1

CD	QTY	DESCRIPTION	SERIAL NO.	VALUE	CLASS
D	1	DEADBOLT LOCK		20.00	
S	1	COMMODORE COMPUTER		1000.00	90

VALUE PROP. STOLEN: 1000.00

-NARRATIVE

REPORTING PERSON [REDACTED] IS THE DIRECTOR OF [REDACTED]. REPORTING  
PERSON [REDACTED] STATED UNKNOWN PERSON(S) PRIED OFF THE DEADBOLT LOCK ON THE  
METAL DOOR IN THE REAR OF THE BUILDING. REPORTING PERSON [REDACTED] STATED  
WHEN SHE CHECKED THE OFFICE, THE COMPUTER WAS MISSING. THERE IS NO  
SERIAL NUMBER FOR THE COMPUTER AT THIS TIME.

EXAMPLE # 2

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12/05/89 1316

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OIL ZLP TCB - 1243 DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT SERVICE #0855982-X  
TCE - 1303 OFFENSE INCIDENT REPORT DATE REPORTED 12/05/89

DISPATCHED TO: [REDACTED] STUTZDR AT:1049 AS SIG:11/05

BEAT: 534 WATCH: 1 ELEMENT: 1393

COMP. NAME: [REDACTED] R/S/A/DOB: / / /

HOME ADDR: [REDACTED] STUTZDR BUSN. ADDR.

DALLAS TX 75235 [REDACTED] OCC:OWNER HRS:0800-1630

OFF. LOC: [REDACTED] STUTZDR APT. DATES OF OCCURRENCE  
PREMISES:STUDIO PROP.ATT.CODE:913 MON, DEC 04, 1989 1815  
INV.ASSGN: TUE, DEC 05, 1989 0800

OFFENSE/INCIDENT: BURGLARY UCR CODE 1:05336

M/O:  
BROKE EAST SIDE WINDOW OF BUSINESS TO ENTER.

STATUS: 0 UCR DISP:P SPECIAL REPORT: FOLLOW UP:8 REVIEWED BY:47276

SR CODE:5 RELATED REPORTS: WEATHER COND:COLD

FAMILY VIOLENCE: N GANG ACTIVITY CRIME: U

INV.DIV.NOTIFIED:

REPT.OFF:PAYNE,ZELMA L 69558 OTHER OFF:

-PROPERTY INFORMATION 1

CD	QTY	DESCRIPTION	SERIAL NO.	VALUE	CLASS
D	1	SIDE WINDOW OF BUILDING BROKEN		75.	
S	3	DEVILBISS,MCB SPRAY GUNS	UNK	900.	T9
S	1	EGA TOUCH-UP SPRAY GUN	UNK	200.	T9
S	1	DEVILBISS PRESSURE POT/2 GALLON	UNK	500.	T9

VALUE PROP.STOLEN: 1600.00

-NARRATIVE

REPORTER [REDACTED] STATED BETWEEN LISTED DATES AND TIMES, THE EAST SIDE WINDOW OF THE STUDIO WAS BROKEN WITH A ROCK FOUND INSIDE BY THE WINDOW. REPORTER [REDACTED] STATED THE SUSPECT(S) ENTERED THROUGH THE 15 1/2 X 20 WINDOW AND POSSIBLY EXITED THROUGH THE SAME. REPORTER [REDACTED] STATED ANOTHER WINDOW IN THE BUILDING THAT'S A LITTLE HIGHER COULD HAVE BEEN USED TO PASS THE LISTED PROPERTY THROUGH TO THE OUTSIDE. REPORTER [REDACTED] STATED THE PROPERTY TAKEN WAS VERY OLD AND WORN. THE COLOR WAS ALUMINUM WITH BRASS TRIGGERS. THE PROPERTY WAS NOT MARKED FOR OID PURPOSES. NFI

EXAMPLE #3

Coop

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12/02/89 0011

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PK CKJ TCB - 2335 DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT SERVICE #0847765-X  
TCE - 2339 OFFENSE INCIDENT REPORT DATE REPORTED 12/01/89

DISPATCHED TO: [REDACTED] TYREEST AT: 2140 AS SIG: 11/02

BEAT: 544 WATCH: 3 ELEMENT: 0532

COMP. NAME: [REDACTED] R/S/A/DOB: B/F/28/[REDACTED]  
HOME ADDR: [REDACTED] TYREEST BUSN. ADDR [REDACTED] WALNUT  
DALLAS TX 75235 [REDACTED] GARLAND [REDACTED]  
OCC: CLERK HRS: VARY-

OFF. LOC: [REDACTED] TYREEST APT. DATES OF OCCURRENCE  
PREMISES: RESIDENCE PROP. ATT. CODE: 501 FRI, DEC 01, 1989 1855  
INV. ASSGN: 2120

OFFENSE/INCIDENT: BURGLARY UCR CODE 1: 05422

M/O:  
UNKNOWN SUSPECT KICKED IN REAR DOOR, ENTERED TOOK PROPERTY, EXIT THE SAME

STATUS: 0 UCR DISP: P SPECIAL REPORT: FOLLOW UP: 8 REVIEWED BY: 10826

SR CODE: 5 RELATED REPORTS: WEATHER COND: CLEAR AND COOL

FAMILY VIOLENCE: N GANG ACTIVITY CRIME: N

INV. DIV. NOTIFIED:

REPT. OFF: ELWONGER, RICHAR 4697 OTHER OFF:

-PROPERTY INFORMATION 1

CD	QTY	DESCRIPTION	SERIAL NO.	VALUE	CLASS
S	1	EMERSON 19" COLOR T.V.		370.	G0
S	1	UNKNOWN BRAND VCR		300.	G1
D	1	REAR DOOR		50.	

VALUE PROP. STOLEN: 670.00

-NARRATIVE

BETWEEN THE LISTED TIMES AN UNKNOWN SUSPECT KICKED IN THE REAR DOOR,  
ENTERED TAKING PROPERTY AND LEAVING THROUGH THE SAME REAR DOOR.  
COMPLAINANT WILL ATTEMPT TO FIND THE SERIAL NUMBERS FOR THE ABOVE  
PROPERTY. NFI

EXAMPLE #4

Coop



12/03/89 1507

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OIL PJB TCB - 1459 DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT SERVICE #0850802-X  
TCE - 1506 OFFENSE INCIDENT REPORT DATE REPORTED 12/03/89

DISPATCHED TO: [REDACTED] RECORDCROSSING AT: 2354 AS SIG: 11

BEAT: 535 WATCH: 3 ELEMENT: 0546

COMP. NAME: [REDACTED] R/S/A/DOB: B/M/39 [REDACTED]  
HOME ADDR: [REDACTED] RECORDCROSSING BUSN. ADDR 1201 [REDACTED]  
DALLAS TX 75235 634-1291 DALLAS  
OCC: TECHNICIAN HRS: VARY-

OFF. LOC: [REDACTED] RECORDCROSSING APT. DATES OF OCCURRENCE  
PREMISES: RESIDENCE PROP. ATT. CODE: 501 SAT, DEC 02, 1989 2320  
INV. ASSGN:

OFFENSE/INCIDENT: BURGLARY UCR CODE 1:05431

M/O:  
UNK SUSPECT PRIED OPEN FRONT DOOR W/UNK TOOL

STATUS: 0 UCR DISP:P SPECIAL REPORT: FOLLOW UP: 8 REVIEWED BY: 57122

SR CODE: 5 RELATED REPORTS: WEATHER COND: CLEAR AND COLD

FAMILY VIOLENCE: N GANG ACTIVITY CRIME: U

INV. DIV. NOTIFIED:

REPT. OFF: ROBINSON, SHELIA 5391 OTHER OFF:

-PROPERTY INFORMATION 1					
CD	QTY	DESCRIPTION	SERIAL NO.	VALUE	CLASS
S	1	19" COLOR T.V.		400.	G0
S	1	13" COLOR T.V.		280.	G0
S	1	NINETENDO		150.	G9
S	1	ATARI		85.	G9
S	1	BLACK LEATHER COAT			
D	1	FRONT DOOR			
D	1	DOOR DOUBLE BOLT LOCK			

VALUE PROP. STOLEN: 915.00

-NARRATIVE

ON ABOVE DATE AND TIME COMPLAINANT RETURNED HOME AND NOTICED DAMAGES ON THE FRONT LIVINGROOM DOOR, ALONG WITH THE DOUBLE BOLT LOCK LYING ON THE FLOOR. UNKNOWN SUSPECT(S) PRIED OPENED FRONT LIVINGROOM DOOR WITH UNKNOWN TOOL, ENTERED, TOOK ABOVE PROPERTY AND EXITED THE SAME. NO SUSPECT INFORMATION AT THIS TIME. NO FURTHER INFORMATION

EXAMPLE # 5

*Trammell*

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12/01/89 0330

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OID AGR TCB - 0152 DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT SERVICE #0845932-X  
TCE - 0208 OFFENSE INCIDENT REPORT DATE REPORTED 12/01/89

DISPATCHED TO: [REDACTED] CEDARSPRINGSRD AT:0149 AS SIG:11/05

BEAT: 543 WATCH: 3 ELEMENT: 1393

COMP. NAME: [REDACTED] R/S/A/DOB: L/M/29/[REDACTED]  
HOME ADDR: [REDACTED] CEDARSPRINGSRD BUSN. ADDR [REDACTED] N PEARL  
DALLAS TX 75235 DALLAS  
APT. 513 OCC:CAPTBUSBOY HRS:VARY-

OFF.LOC: [REDACTED] CEDARSPRINGSRD APT. 513 DATES OF OCCURRENCE  
PREMISES:APT RESIDENCE PROP.ATT.CODE:503 THR, NOV 30, 1989 1400  
INV.ASSGN: FRI, DEC 01, 1989 0140

OFFENSE/INCIDENT: BURGLARY OF APT RESIDENCE UCR CODE 1:05624

M/O:  
UNK SUSPS BROKE INTO APT AND TOOK ITEMS

STATUS: 0 UCR DISP:P SPECIAL REPORT: FOLLOW UP:8 REVIEWED BY:35891

SR CODE:5 RELATED REPORTS: WEATHER COND:COLD

FAMILY VIOLENCE: N GANG ACTIVITY CRIME: N

INV.DIV.NOTIFIED:

REPT.OFF:RUIZ,ARTHUR G 76142 OTHER OFF:

-PROPERTY INFORMATION 1

CD	QTY	DESCRIPTION	SERIAL NO.	VALUE	CLASS
S	1	RCA COLOR TV		370.	G0
S	1	RCA VCR		220.	G1
S	1	MAGNAVOX RECORDER		90.	C0
S	1	ELECTRIC GUITAR		70.	M2

VALUE PROP.STOLEN: 750.00

-NARRATIVE

COMPLAINANT [REDACTED] STATES THAT ON LISTED DATES AND TIMES UNKNOWN SUSPECTS BROKE INTO APARTMENT THROUGH FRONT WINDOW, AND EXITED THROUGH FRONT DOOR, AND TOOK LISTED ITEMS BY UNKNOWN MEANS.

NFI

EXAMPLE #6

*Trammell*

What has the officer found out from taking this report at the scene of the offense? From the preceding examples of the report, not much, other than a burglary has actually occurred. Even if the officers of the division would later stop an individual that had some of the items in his possession, it would be difficult to arrest the suspect. Based on information in the report, there is no suspect information and no way to identify the property. The officers have spent one fourth of their watch merely reporting a crime, and having no information to help them catch the individual responsible for that crime.

As stated before, an officer receives a burglary call either through an alarm call or a citizen returning home or an owner returning to his place of business to resume his work day. Homes, generally in the more affluent parts of the community have burglar alarms while the majority of businesses, especially ones with a large scale operation, all have burglar alarms. Few Police Departments can respond to alarm calls in less than three to five minutes, even if the alarm signal is transferred directly to the police car.<sup>2</sup> Only an amateur will stay long enough at a crime scene to be apprehended by the police responding to the silent alarm.

The police rarely come upon a crime in progress. They depend on the public for knowledge that a crime has been committed or information pertaining to a particular crime that may help them solve the crime. In the case of burglary, it involves an offender who is not known nor seen by the victims and generally no witnesses to the crime.

Let's focus now on statistics concerning burglary. We'll first examine some national statistics, then pinpoint our statistics

closer using the City of Dallas occurrences of burglary along with clearance rates. In January the U. S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) issued a report on a 10-year study from 1973 to 1982 on household burglaries. During this time frame, approximately 73 million incidents of forcible entry, attempted forcible entry and unlawful entry took place.<sup>3</sup> An attempted forcible entry for purposes of reporting in the State of Texas would be classified as an attempt burglary or a criminal mischief.<sup>4</sup> According to Texas Penal Code a smashed window with no loss of property could be reported as a criminal mischief unless the officer showed in his investigation that there was an intent to commit a felony or a theft.<sup>5</sup> The same holds true for unlawful entry.

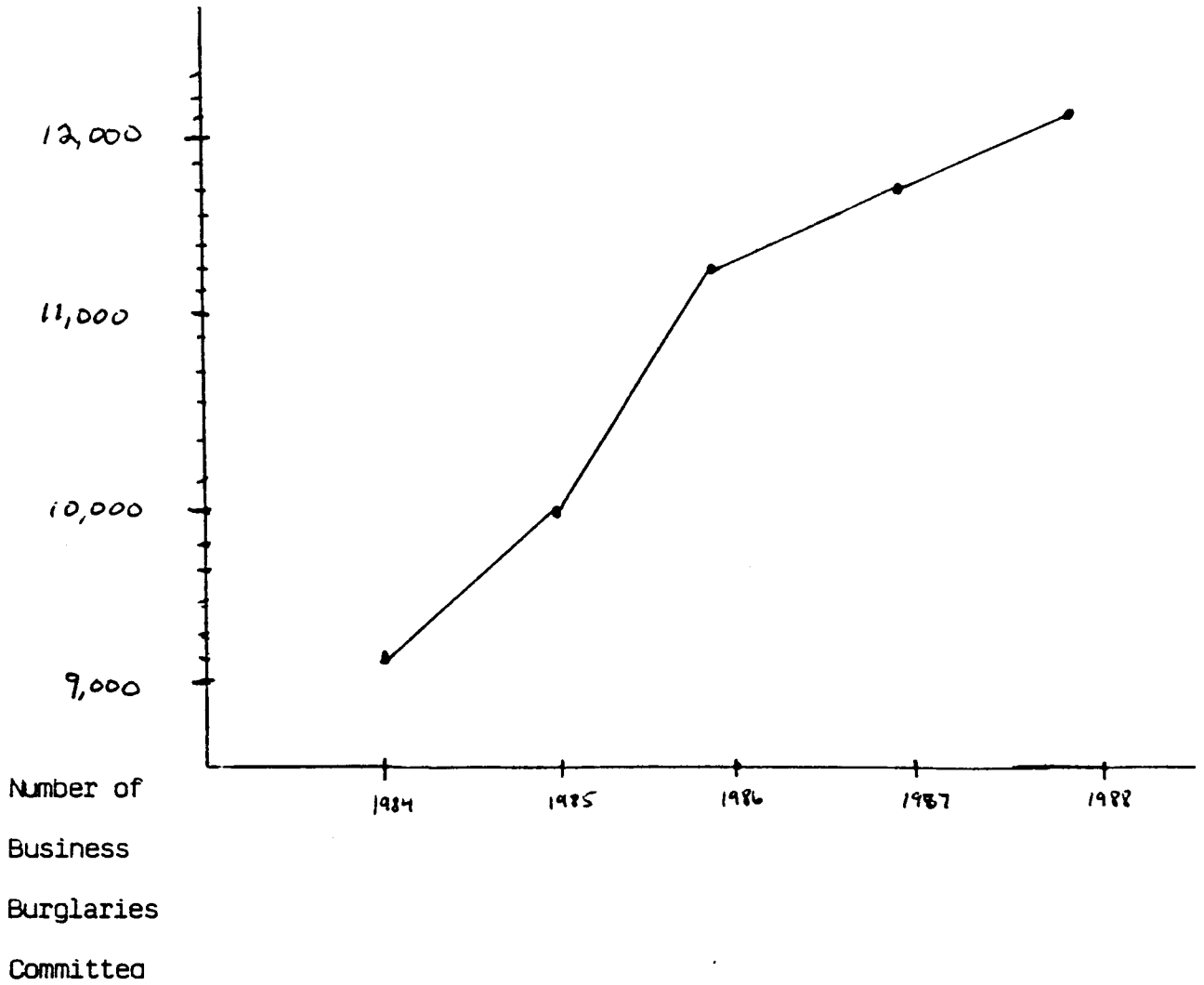
Unless you show the intent to commit a felony or theft, an unlawful entry into a building or habitation could be considered a criminal trespass.<sup>6</sup> Different states have different adaptations of the burglary statute, in their respective penal codes.

The report further points out some characteristics of households victimized by burglary. Black households were forcibly entered much more frequently than white households, and families with income under \$7,500.00 a year had the highest overall burglary rates during this 10-year period.<sup>7</sup> Urban households had the highest rates of forcible entry while rural households the lowest.

From this report we can conclude the obvious that the lower economic areas of the community are more susceptible to burglaries than our middle or upper class areas. Why is this? First, an amateur burglar will generally burglarize in his own neighborhood and sell the stolen goods locally to an unscrupulous dealer otherwise known as a fence.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, most drug addicts are

burglars.9 No one will argue the point of the drug problem that is occurring today is extremely severe in the lower income parts of the communities across the nation. The following scenario might help to explain this. An individual in a poor section of the community gets addicted to drugs out of peer pressure, escape, boredom, or whatever reason. The demand for narcotics becomes great in these areas so the dealers spring up. The individual addicted needs money for the drugs and needs it quick. Because he knows the area, he steals locally and sells it locally. He can get his stolen property, money, and drugs without ever leaving his neighborhood.

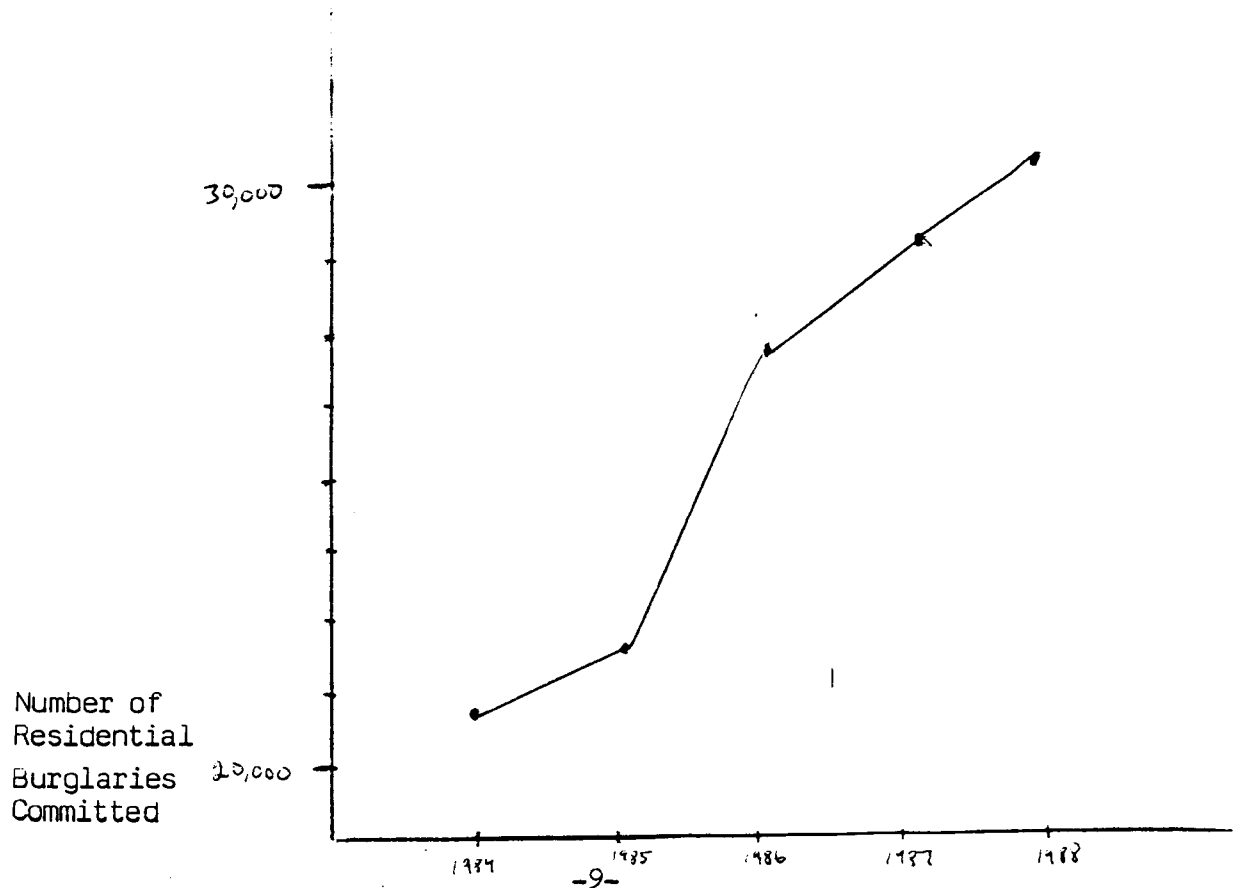
Let's focus our attention locally to the City of Dallas. In 1988 there were 12,258 business burglaries committed. This category of burglary accounted for 28.8% of all burglary offenses (the rest being residential). Since 1984 the yearly changes in the occurrence of business burglaries are as follows: In 1984 there were 9,173 business burglaries committed. In 1985 there were 9,925 cases, an increase of 8.2%. Between 1985 and 1986 there was a substantial increase of 19.3% with 11,349 burglaries. The year 1987 was a good year with only a 1.6% increase, showing 11,526 burglaries committed. And in 1988 there was a 6.4% increase with 12,258 cases reported. The following graph will illustrate the increases over the last 5 years.



During 1988, the value of property stolen in business burglaries amounted to \$19,032,238.00. The value of property recovered was \$1,649,369.00, approximately 8.7% of the total stolen.

The clearance rate for business burglaries during 1988 was 9.3% compared to 13.2% for 1987. Both rates are somewhat lower than the national clearance of 14% for all burglaries. There was a total of 1,136 individuals arrested for business burglary in 1988.<sup>10</sup>

Residential burglaries accounted for 71.2% of all the burglaries committed in 1988 in the City of Dallas, with a total of 30,282. Since 1984 the yearly changes are as follows: In 1984 there were 20,681 residential burglaries. In 1985 there were 21,535 an increase of 4.1%. In 1986 there was a substantial increase of 22.4% with 26,354 residential burglaries committed. There were 27,661 committed in 1987, a 5% increase and a 9.5% increase from 1987 to 1988 with 30,282. The following graph will illustrate the increase.



The value of property stolen in residential burglaries during 1988 totaled \$47,175,107.00. The amount recovered was \$3,839,411, approximately 8.1% of the total amount stolen. A total of 1,312 people were arrested for the commission of this crime which resulted in a 14.1% clearance rate, which is the same as 1987. This is the same rate as the national rate for all burglaries at 14%.<sup>11</sup>

In summary, there were a total of 42,543 offenses of burglary in 1988, with \$66,207,345.00 worth of property stolen and \$5,488,780 of property recovered--an 8.3% recovery. An interesting fact that bears a significant light in this research is that in 1988 there were a total of 81,167 burglary calls made to the Communications Division. Subtracting this number from our total number of burglary offenses (42,543), we find that 38,627 burglary calls were not actually burglary offenses; only 52% of the calls were. As said before, according to the Texas Penal Code, when a burglary occurs there has to be an intent to commit a felony or theft. Broken doors or windows could be reported as criminal mischiefs, and entering businesses or residences could be reported as criminal trespasses. After investigating the offenses the burglary detectives could also file them as thefts, or any of the above offenses. So we can see from this summary that the offense of burglary is an offense that has little chance of being solved and little chance of the property being returned to the owner.

We already know what a burglary costs in losses to businesses and property owners, but what does it cost the taxpayers? In this case the taxpayers in the City of Dallas. What does it cost in monetary terms to report this offense? This can be



found by using a simple formula of: actual number of burglary offenses X average time (man-hours) spent on a burglary call X average hourly wage of Police in your community. Let's work this through using City of Dallas figures. There were 42,543 offenses of burglary that were filed in 1988. As said before it takes approximately 2 hours for an officer to complete a burglary call from time received to time report was made. An average hourly wage for the City of Dallas Police Officer would be approximately \$15.00/hour. This is not an exact hourly wage due to the size of the Police Department, step increases, and service and educational pay. For our research in this matter, it is again a conservative amount. The figure arrived at would be:  $42,543 \times 2 \times \$15.00 = \$1,276,290.00$ . It cost the citizens of Dallas over 1.4 million dollars in 1988 just for a burglary to be reported. We are spending a lot of money on reporting an offense that has little chance of being solved. This figure is just for offenses that are actual burglaries. Don't forget officers were sent on burglary calls 81,167 times and in 48% of the time there was no burglary or a different offense, so our monetary figure could actually be a lot higher.

Why are we spending so much time and money reporting an offense with so little results? Insurance companies need these reports. When an insurance company gets a claim for loss of property, the first thing the insurance investigator looks at is did it actually occur and therefore was a police report made. An insurance company would be very reluctant to pay a claim if a burglary was never reported to the Police.<sup>12</sup>

When a citizen is burglarized, they have to report it for insurance purposes and to make sure a crime does not go unnoticed. What can be done to see that not only a felony crime does not go unnoticed but is also reported in a time efficient manner that also allows a Police Department to utilize its manpower to combat this crime?

In 1987, Dallas United was formed to reorganize the Dallas Police Department and find ways to efficiently use our manpower. Dallas United was a group formed by volunteers through businesses that are members of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce. These individuals that were part of Dallas United went into the department and studied and observed each and every aspect of it and made a final report that was presented to the Chief of Police. One of their recommendations was to have burglary calls handled by an alternative to patrol officer response. They cited a study done by Stanley L. Knee and Lynn G. Harwood (Different Police Response to Citizen-Initiated Calls for Service, Executive Summary, Part II, February, 1984, p. 158), in it they quote, "In order to properly implement innovative procedures in today's economic climate, an organization must develop Differential Police Response (DPR) techniques. It is only through the introduction of Differential Police Response that sufficient amounts of time can be captured leading to the successful implementation of other programs." By implementing DPR through a uniform call classification system, (along with increasing other alternative responses), the rate of non-critical calls presently handled by dispatching a patrol car can be reduced.<sup>13</sup>

Increased demand for police service, along with an increasing crime rate and budget restrictions for most law enforcement agencies, have created a need for innovative techniques and alternatives to traditional police practices. Although precise measurement of the rise in property offenses is not possible, virtually all analyses agree that most forms of crime, and especially property crime, are increasing considerably faster than the population.<sup>14</sup> It is because of all the above factors that all police managers need to develop some type of DPR.

Most Police Departments have some type of call prioritizing, when a citizen requests some type of police service. Three response categories that Police Departments should have are immediate mobile, delayed mobile, and non-mobile.<sup>15</sup> An immediate mobile call would be considered as something that is life threatening crimes; especially felonies in progress, and calls where the potential for injury or property damage exists. The mobile delay would be calls that would be delayed until all of the immediate mobile calls are dispatched. A non-mobile call would be of the type in which the crime is not in progress, there are no suspects or witnesses to the crime, but there was a crime committed that needs to be reported. A burglary that is not recent, with no witnesses other than the owner, and no suspect information, should be prioritized as non-mobile.

A burglary call received by the telephone operator would be handled in this manner: The operator would first ascertain that the crime is not in progress. After this information is found, the operator would ask if there were any witnesses and or suspect

information. If the questions are answered as a no, then the operator would advise the citizen that their call will be transferred to the Telephone Reporting Unit or the operator could take the information and advise the citizen that someone from the T.R.U. will call them back shortly. Individuals staffing the T.R.U. would then take the call directly or call the citizen back. Those staffing these units can either be civilian clerks or sworn officers on light duty.

It is essential in all reports to get the precise information so that the investigator who handles the case has all the information on hand. The first item a Telephone Report Unit staff officer needs to find out is, was this offense an actual burglary. Did the suspect show intent by actually stealing something or stacking items to be taken, but not actually completing the burglary or ransacking the area. Once intent has been shown the report taker needs to get basic information such as location and phone numbers. Next a modus operandi needs to be established. This will help us determine a pattern as to a suspect. A point of entry, point of exit and method of breaking needs to be found out in the modus operandi. A list of items stolen would be the next major item reported to the T.R.U. operator, with emphasis placed on brand name, serial number, value, and description. The narrative will probably be the last item for the report. The operator will have to condense most of the statements given by the complainant, however, attention should be given as to when complainant was away from the business or residence to give a time frame on a possible pattern. The decision on when to send a Physical Evidence Officer to the scene will be

determined from conversation between the operator and complainant. When in doubt, and for good public relations, an Evidence Officer should be sent.

The successful operation of a telephone report unit appears to rest on two primary factors: 1) the ability of telephone operators to correctly classify calls as appropriate for non-mobile response, and 2) citizen satisfaction with the service provided by the individual who takes the complaint.<sup>16</sup> With proper training of individuals that take the reports and proper education to the public on why there doesn't need to be an officer there, a telephone reporting unit can be an effective tool and a tremendous financial and man-hour savings to most police departments.

What happens when an officer comes upon a burglary either through a burglar alarm call or routine patrol? The first thing an officer should do is to make sure the burglar is no longer in the business or residence. After that is accomplished then an owner or someone in charge of the property should be summoned. If the officer has checked the area properly and has determined that there is no suspect information and no witnesses then he's back in the same scenario as before. Should he take up valuable patrol time and do a report? This is where the matter of mail-ins can be used. A mail-in is a fill-in-the-blank type of report that the citizen can fill out and mail to the Investigative Unit. This form should be simple enough for everyone. Depending on your community, it should be written in Spanish and English. An officer should explain the form to the citizen, pointing out the major items to be filled in and showing the complainant where to mail the report. If your

community has a centralized investigative unit, then only one address can be printed on the form. However, if your department is such that it has decentralized investigative units, especially for burglary and theft, then for cost efficiency the area on the report that would have the mailing address would be blank allowing for each patrol division to rubber stamp the address on the reports. The reports in this way can be mass produced without the typeset being changed, hence cost savings passed onto the consumer, in this case the department.

Before giving the report to the complainant, the officer should assign a number to the report; in most departments this is given through dispatch. For proper crime analysis, this report number should be coded in such a way that it shows that a burglary was committed at the address, but the final report is forthcoming. In this way we can develop our pattern on the beat maps to readily allow officers information on where burglaries are occurring. Also, with this program the officer will have more time to do preventive patrol, along with the Crime Analysis Unit plotting grid maps or using a computer system database to direct field personnel toward the problem.

The overall benefit to this type of program, i.e., non-police response, is cost. They save money from the standpoint that a department can hire two clerks to take reports over the phone for the same price as it would cost to hire one officer. An additional cost-saving avenue is that it will allow a department to efficiently place officers that are on sick time or light duty.

Virtually all Police Departments at one point and time will have an officer injured or sick to the point that medically he can

only do light officer work. If a department does not have a place to put this officer in the organization then he will be out on sick time. A different study could be done showing the millions of dollars of man-hour time lost each year due to officers being out sick or injured. Put these officers in a Telephone Reporting Unit to efficiently use their expertise and knowledge in taking reports and at the same time you are saving money not only in Patrol but in keeping your sick time budget low.

A telephone reporting unit can also be used to get an officer off the streets, either for discipline purposes or "burnout." If you have officers that are on the edge or have shown to be a discipline problem through abuse or laziness, then it is up to the manager to pull this officer from his environment that may draw lawsuits from his action and place him in a situation where physical confrontations do not exist.

Through this study, I feel that I have shown that answering a burglary call costs an exorbitant amount of money with little return on your investment. Clearance rates are low, 14% average, and property recovery is also low, approximately 8%. With an alternative to answering a burglary call, a department can save time which is measured in man-hours which means saving money. The biggest obstacle to get through will be the citizens. Citizens pay their tax dollars and want police service. With a proper educational system either through the media or through police-citizen contact this should not be a long term problem. Let them know why you are attempting this program. Too many managers attempt to hide information by not making it available to their

consumers, which in the field of public safety are the citizens. The next obstacle to hurdle will be the traditionalists. Some administrators and even line personnel refuse to believe in new, innovative approaches to police service and refuse to accept modern technology. The police manager must be sold on this idea and he has to sell it to the local government entities and his officers in his command before he sells it to the public. It takes everyone's commitment and loyalty for a plan to be truly successful.

If a police manager prioritizes the call as mentioned in this study, then he will not only save money but have more time to concentrate on his main goal of protecting life and property, and in this case additional time and resources to protect property.



FOOTNOTES

- 1 Charles E. Silberman, Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice (New York: Vintage Books, 1980) p. 25
- 2 A. George Rengert and Wasilchick, John, Suburban Burglary: A Time and Place for Everything (Springfield, Illinois: Thomas, Charles C., 1985) p. 20
- 3 U. S. Bureau of Justice Report on Burglary. Police and Security Bulletin, April, 1985, p. 5
- 4 Texas Penal Code, 1987-1988, Title 7, Chapter 28, Sec. 28.03, p. 48
- 5 Texas Penal Code, 1987-1988, Title 7, Chapter 30, Sec. 30.02(3), p. 51
- 6 IBID, Sec. 30.05, p. 52
- 7 U. S. Bureau of Justice Report on Burglary Police and Security Bulletin, April, 1985, pg. 6
- 8 Bob Curtis, Security Control: External Theft, (New York: Lebhar-Friedman, 1978), p. 260
- 9 Donald T. Shanahan and Whisenand, Paul, The Dimensions of Criminal Justice Planning, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1980), p. 155
- 10 All City of Dallas statistics are taken from The Dallas Police Department 1988 Statistical Summary, Publication Number 88/89-47
- 11 IBID
- 12 McGurn, Thomas P. and Kelly, Christine N., The Woman's Bible for Survival in a Violent Society, (New York: Stein and Day, 1984), p. 80
- 13 Dallas United, Dallas Police Department Task Force Report of Findings, July, 1988, p. 158
- 14 Glauser, Michael J. and Tullan, William L., "Communicator Style of Police Officers and Citizen Satisfaction with Officer/Citizen Telephone Conversation." Journal of Police Science and Administration, (March, 1985 Vol. 13, 1), p. 70
- 15 IBID, p. 70
- 16 IBID, p. 72

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