

MILITARY DEPENDENT JUVENILE RUNAWAYS  
AT FORT HOOD, TEXAS: A DESCRIPTIVE PROFILE

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Institute of Contemporary Corrections  
and the Behavioral Sciences

Sam Houston State University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Criminal Justice

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by

August P. Ciriello

August, 1974

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is indebted to the staff members of all the agencies involved in the conduct of this study. Particular thanks are in order for Alice Pinson of the Central Texas Youth Services Bureau, and Julie Arizola of Lebe Hoch Child-Care Center, both of whom were of invaluable assistance in the data gathering effort. Victor Eissler, a Doctoral Assistant at the Institute of Contemporary Corrections and the Behavioral Sciences, Sam Houston State University, assisted in the areas of computer utilization and data analysis.

This thesis is dedicated to the young people who took part in the study and to my parents, who provided me with a home environment from which I never felt the need to run away.

## ABSTRACT

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### Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to obtain a descriptive profile of runaway juveniles from Fort Hood, Texas. This profile included basic data such as age, sex, and education level of the juvenile. Information describing basic interaction patterns between the juvenile, his parents and additional family members was also obtained. Emphasis was placed on the actions taken by the juvenile during the runaway episode.

It was anticipated that through the design and implementation of this study, information would be gained regarding the following aspects of runaway behavior at Fort Hood, Texas:

1. Who is the Fort Hood runaway, what does he look like insofar as age, sex, race and education level are concerned?
2. To what extent, if any, does he differ from the non-military dependent juvenile runaway described in previous research?
3. Is there any discernable pattern of events peculiar to the runaway episode itself?

## Methodology

The data gathered in this study were obtained by interviewing fifty Fort Hood, Texas military dependent juvenile runaways. Juveniles were defined as being any young person between the ages of six and seventeen. All interviews were structured through the use of a questionnaire form. Interviews were conducted by the author and staff members from youth-related agencies cooperating in the data gathering effort. Selection of juveniles to be included in the sample was convenience-oriented in that the cooperating agencies were requested to obtain data from all appropriate juveniles currently and subsequently included on their caseloads. To insure accurate recall, the sample was limited to juveniles whose last runaway episode had occurred less than twelve months prior to the interview. All data obtained were analyzed by means of frequency distribution through utilization of the Sam Houston State University's computer.

## Findings

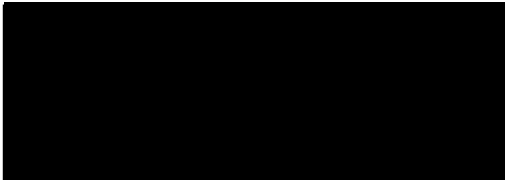
1. The typical Fort Hood military dependent juvenile runaway is a female between fourteen and sixteen years of age. She is Caucasian. She is most likely to be a sophomore in high school, but can be found in any grade in the range encompassing the eighth-grade to the junior year in high school. There is almost a 50-50 chance that she has repeated at least one grade in school.

2. Juveniles in this study were more likely to plan ahead of time the details of the runaway episode, than juveniles studied in previous research. They were also more inclined to stay gone longer and travel further from home.

3. The home, school, and peer group activities were the most likely starting points for runaway episodes. Juveniles were more likely to run away by themselves than with another juvenile. Juveniles usually stayed at the dwelling of a friend or other "sympathetic party" during the episode. An atmosphere of indifference and/or dissatisfaction, on the part of the juvenile and his parents, usually characterized the juvenile's return home.

4. The most common responses given by juveniles when asked, "Why do you think you ran away?" were:

(a) Excessive drinking by either or both parents, (b) Strict or authoritarian discipline measures enforced by the parents, (c) Unwillingness of parents to compromise with the juveniles on matters such as the subject's hair length, clothing style, and choice of friends, (d) Failure of the parents to recognize the juvenile as a person with individual feelings and rights.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

#### Nature of the Problem

The disclosure of the mass slaying of twenty-seven teenage boys in the Houston area in the summer of 1973 has resulted in an increased concern over the problem of runaway juveniles in America.

Juvenile runaways, particularly males, have traditionally been viewed in a romanticized vein by most casual observers. The idea of the sixteen-year-old boy eager to take to the road and discover the world on his own resulted in a sympathetic, almost wistful response from most adults. Ambrosino (1971,a) alluded to the myths that have been created depicting the brave traveler and the respectable runaway. Notable examples are Paul Bunyan, Tom Sawyer, and recently the two motorcycle-riding life seekers in the film Easy Rider. Balser (1939) conducted a study of 89 runaway boys and girls in New York State. He concluded that most of the individuals who ran away found that their problem was solved either during or because of the runaway episode. Kanner (1950) observed that "there are numerous individuals whose escapades have remained comparatively harmless episodes to which they look back with a certain feeling of amusement."

In recent years, the nature of the runaway problem has changed considerably from the idealized vision of the

young adventurer. Most researchers now view the juvenile runaway as being motivated by either psychopathological or situational factors. The difference between these two perspectives has been primarily a function of methodological diversity related to selection of study samples. After a runaway episode an individual is usually referred to one of the following types of agencies: criminal justice, mental health or welfare. The type of agency an individual has been referred to and studied in has had a major influence in how the cause of the runaway act has been interpreted. Burt (1944, p. 81) conducted a study of British delinquents in the juvenile justice and corrections system in England. He observed that running away "is usually the first step on the downward stairway to crime." Leventhal's (1963, p. 127) remarks are indicative of the psychopathological or mental health oriented studies. After a study conducted at the Worcester (Massachusetts) Youth Guidance Center, Leventhal concluded:

In contrast with lay and even many professional notions concerning the seemingly benign nature of running away, the findings here suggest severe pathology. On the basis of the marked overconcern with loss of control and with ego surrender, and some degree of reality distortion, prepsychotic functioning is suggested.

Leventhal's conclusions have been disputed by subsequent studies that focused on the role of situational factors as a cause of most runaway episodes. Shellow, Schamp, Liebow and Unger (1967) conducted a longitudinal study of over 1000 adolescents. Runaway episodes were viewed as being caused by one or a combination of several of the following

factors: conflict with either or both parents, broken homes, difficulties adjusting in school, geographic relocation of the family. A significant portion (84%) of the study subjects did not have a history of delinquency. After data analysis, Shellow, et al dichotomized their sample into two groups: a minority whose running away was directly related to individual and/or family pathology, and a majority whose behavioral and environmental situations were more similar to the non-runaway population.

The study conducted by Beyer, Holt, Reid, and Quinban (1973) stressed the significance of changes in residence and family structure as factors involved in increasing both the likelihood and length of future runaway acts.

#### Extent of the Problem

In 1972, 221,000 young people under the age of eighteen were arrested for runaway offenses.<sup>1</sup> Health, Education and Welfare Department researchers estimate the number of runaways between the ages of twelve and seventeen may be 600,000 to one million each year, although they admit statistics are inaccurate due to unexplained fluctuations between cities in reported cases.<sup>2</sup>

An intensive search conducted by this writer over a period of nine months failed to result in even a gross estimate of the extent of the runaway problem in Texas. Among those agencies contacted were: the Texas Youth Council, the Texas Criminal Justice Council, and the Texas Office of the National

Council on Crime and Delinquency. In addition, several welfare and criminal justice related city and county agencies were contacted. Given the estimated extent of the problem nationally, the fact that Texas does not have any form of statewide uniform reporting procedures may well be significant in itself.

Bell County, Texas was the primary geographic region in which this study was conducted. Juvenile Probation officials in Bell County estimated that between 300 and 350 runaway episodes occur each year in their county.<sup>3</sup> Only a small portion of these episodes ever come to the attention of youth-related agencies within the county. It was estimated that one-third of the runaway episodes involved Fort Hood military dependents.<sup>4</sup>

#### Description of Agencies Utilized

The following agencies were utilized for the dual purpose of aiding in the data collection effort and providing information as to the nature and extent of the runaway problem in the Fort Hood area:

- .Central Texas Youth Services Bureau, Killeen, Texas
- .Kinsolving Canyon Lodge, Belton, Texas
- .Bell County Juvenile Probation, Killeen and Belton, Texas
- .Lebe Hoch Adolescent Residential Facility, Fredericksberg, Texas
- .Army Community Services, Fort Hood, Texas

The Central Texas Youth Services Bureau's Bell County offices were located in Temple and Killeen. The Temple office was staffed by two full-time counselors, a secretary, and various part-time and volunteer workers. The Killeen office was staffed by one full-time caseworker, a full-time secretary,

and various individuals functioning in a voluntary capacity. The Youth Services Bureau also maintained a counselor in Copperas Cove, Texas. Copperas Cove is a community of approximately 15,000 people located on the western boundary of the Fort Hood military reservation, fifteen miles west of Killeen. The general goal of the Central Texas Youth Services Bureau has been specified as the diversion of troubled youths from the criminal justice system.<sup>5</sup>

Kinsolving Canyon Lodge is a temporary crisis center for pre-delinquent, dependent and neglected and abused children, located twenty miles east of the Killeen-Fort Hood area. At the time of this study, Kinsolving Lodge was staffed by four caseworkers whose primary responsibility was to provide a diagnostic and evaluation program facilitative to the needs of the children on their caseload.<sup>6</sup>

The main office of the Bell County Juvenile Probation Department is located twenty-three miles east of Killeen in Belton, Texas. The Department maintains an office in Killeen. This office is staffed by two Assistant Probation Officers. The general purpose of the Department is to maintain supervision over juveniles placed on probation by the County Juvenile Judge.<sup>7</sup> The Department is also responsible for recommending and implementing the referral of juveniles to State and private residential facilities.<sup>8</sup>

Lebe Hoch child-care facility is located in Fredericksberg, Texas, approximately 125 miles south of Killeen. Lebe Hoch offers a coordinated program of psychiatric,



social, educational, and vocational services suited to the individual needs of the child.<sup>9</sup> Due to the nature and extent of services offered, many Fort Hood dependents deemed in need of one or more of these services are referred to Lebe Hoch. In addition to regular administrative personnel, the staff at Lebe Hoch consists of a psychiatrist, psychologists, social workers, teachers, and registered nurses.

Fort Hood U.S. Army reservation takes in 340 square miles of Central Texas hill country.<sup>10</sup> The reservation became prominent during World War II as a training center for the tactical implementation of tank warfare. Major Army units currently headquartered at Fort Hood include: U.S. Army III Corps Headquarters, the Second Armored Division and the First Cavalry Division.<sup>11</sup> The military population of Fort Hood as of June 30, 1973 was 41,739 officers and enlisted men.<sup>12</sup> As of June 30, 1973 there were 12,105 dependents of military or Fort Hood civilian employees enrolled in the Killeen and Copperas Cove Independent School Districts.<sup>13</sup> The extreme southern portion of the reservation is bounded on the west by Copperas Cove and on the east by Killeen.

The primary social services agency at Fort Hood, or any other major Army reservation is the Army Community Services office. The purpose of the Fort Hood Army Community Services' office is to provide information and assistance to members of the Army community in meeting personal and family problems through interviews, counseling, and referral services.<sup>14</sup> The staff and volunteers working for the office offer a variety

of services to the family. Personal counseling is provided, if needed, in the area of financial and personal problems.<sup>15</sup> The staff at the Fort Hood Community Services office normally consists of one officer trained in social services, two enlisted assistants, a full-time civilian supervisor, and several part-time volunteer workers.

#### Specific Function of Community Agencies in Regard to Runaway Military Dependents

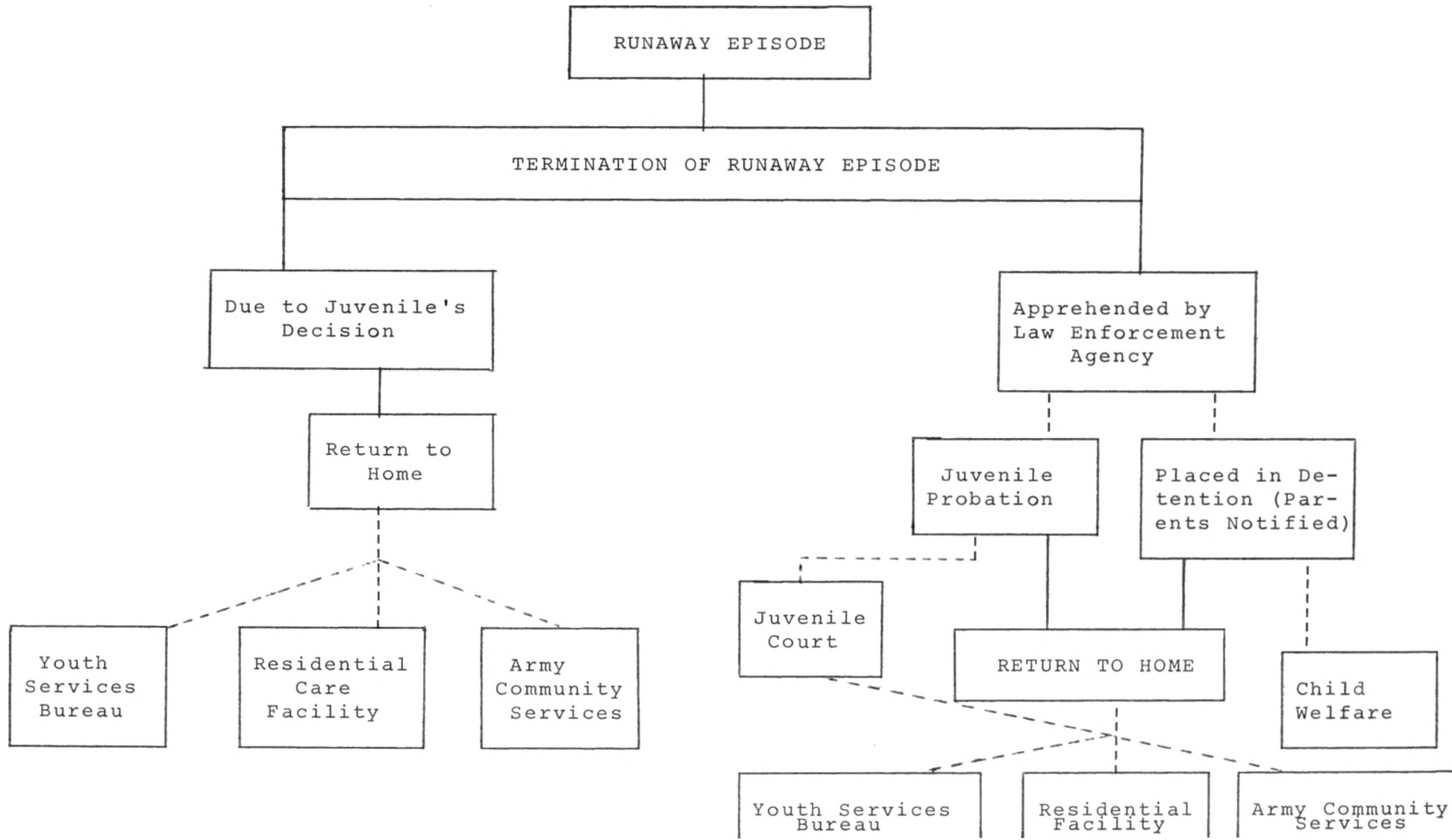
The initial intake and referral procedures taken regarding juvenile runaways in Bell County is a function of how the runaway episode was terminated (Refer to Figure 1).

If the juvenile decided to return home of his own volition, his parents had four options at their disposal. The juvenile could be referred to either Army Community Services or a residential facility such as Kinsolving Lodge. The juvenile could also be referred to the Youth Services Bureau. As a final option, the parents could choose to try to improve conditions at home without involving any outside agencies.

When the runaway episode was terminated due to the juvenile being apprehended by the police or other law enforcement personnel, two immediate options existed. If the police believed the juvenile to be guilty of an offense, the juvenile would be referred to the Juvenile Probation Department. In all other cases the police would attempt to notify the juvenile's parents and arrange for the juvenile

FIGURE 1

Referral Procedures for Fort Hood Dependent Runaways



to be returned to his home. At this point if the juvenile was less than ten years old, officers usually contacted the county child welfare unit, which handled the case from that point on. In instances where parents could not be located, or if for any other reason the child could not be returned to his home, he would remain in detention until alternate placement could be found.

The Central Texas Youth Services Bureau received juvenile runaway referrals from four primary sources: the juvenile himself, the school, the Juvenile Probation Department, or from another youth-related agency, such as the County Child Welfare Department.<sup>16</sup> Once a referral was received, a Bureau counselor would obtain needed biographical information and get to know the juvenile better. Some form of flexible counseling schedule would be established but the juvenile would be told to feel free to call on the counselor at any time. After the counseling relationship had been established, the counselor would attempt to determine the cause of the runaway incident and try to help the juvenile find an alternate solution to his problem. More often than not, any attempt at finding the cause and/or solution to the problem would involve establishing two-way communication with the juvenile's parents. In many cases, efforts to arrive at a long-term solution to the problem were thwarted by unresponsive, hostile, or suspicious parents. In those cases where it was obvious that there was little chance of the parent's attitude changing, the juvenile would be

encouraged to call his counselor whenever he felt like conditions at home were unbearable. This crisis intervention counseling was utilized for the purpose of aiding the juvenile to view his home situation in a more rational fashion. The primary intent of these crisis sessions was to determine if running away from home was, in fact, the only means of dealing with the home situation. In the majority of instances the problem was temporarily solved and an immediate runaway prevented.<sup>17</sup> However, if the family problems persisted and the juvenile did not choose to call a counselor during the next crisis period, another runaway episode usually resulted.<sup>18</sup>

During the intake phase the Bureau determined if any supportive services were needed. The Bureau had an excellent working relationship with the schools, particularly in Killeen and Copperas Cove. Teachers and counselors would contact the Bureau if they observed any noticeable and strongly negative changes in a juvenile's behavior, attendance or school work. Information of this nature was important since juveniles periodically began their runaway episodes while attending school. School teachers and counselors were often consulted to help determine the probability of a particular juvenile engaging in a future runaway episode.

If the determination was made through mutual consent of the parent and the juvenile, that psychiatric help was needed, the counselor would make the necessary arrangements with the Bell County Mental Health Unit. Family and/or

individual therapy sessions would be scheduled. In cases of this nature, the Bureau functioned primarily in a supportive role.

The primary responsibility for working with non-delinquent runaways had always rested with the Bureau, since its inception in 1971. Title 3 of the Texas Family Code became effective September 1, 1973, distinguishing between delinquent conduct and conduct indicating a need for supervision. Section 51.03(b), subdivision 3, specifically defines conduct indicating a need for supervision as "the voluntary absence of a child from his home without the consent of his parents or guardian for a substantial length of time or without intent to return."<sup>19</sup> After the passage of Title 3, local probation officers became reluctant to place a juvenile on their caseload for solely the offense of running away.<sup>20</sup> As a result, the vast majority of runaway juvenile cases reported to the Bell County Juvenile Probation Department were referred to the Youth Services Bureau.

Bell County Juvenile Probation received the bulk of their runaway referrals from local law enforcement officials. Often a juvenile, after being picked up by the sheriff's deputies, would refuse to give out any information regarding the identity or location of his parents. If definite determination could be made that the juvenile was a runaway, he would be placed in detention until his parents could be contacted or until other placement arrangements could be

made. Runaway juveniles on probation's caseload were usually being supervised for more serious offenses such as drug possession or theft. Finding the cause and solution of the runaway behavior seldom was the main goal of the probation officer. The rationale for this policy was that the cause of the runaway behavior was probably closely related, if not identical to the cause of the more delinquent behavior. Consequently, modifying the delinquent behavior was often viewed as the most appropriate means of modifying the runaway behavior.

As a rule, most juveniles being supervised by the Probation Department were given diagnostic evaluations by the County Mental Health Unit. If it was determined that therapy would be appropriate, the juvenile would be notified of the time and location of the sessions. Mental Health and Probation would then begin a cooperative liaison on the case, keeping each other aware of any unexpected developments. Basically the same relationship existed between Juvenile Probation and Fort Hood Mental Hygiene Office.

In some cases a juvenile on the caseload of either the Youth Services Bureau or Juvenile Probation would be referred for an indefinite period to a residential facility. The facilities receiving the bulk of these referrals were Kinsolving Canyon Lodge and Lebe Hoch. A juvenile would be sent to either of these facilities when the referring agency decided that the juvenile was in need of additional external control and/or more intensive counseling. Juveniles

on Youth Services Bureau's caseload were referred through the consent of their parents. Juveniles on the Probation caseload were referred by either parental consent or by means of judicial disposition.

A runaway referred to Kinsolving Canyon Lodge was handled identically to any other juvenile during the intake process. He would be assigned a caseworker who would show him around the facility and introduce him to some of the other juvenile residents. He would be given a bed, have linens issued to him, and be placed on the duty roster so he could take his turn washing the dishes, sweeping floors, and performing other necessary chores.

After the first few days, a juvenile referred because of runaway behavior would be observed closely by the staff for any indication that he might runaway again. Experience had taught the staff that there was little cause to expect a runaway episode during the juvenile's first three or four days at Kinsolving. During this time he was usually pre-occupied with meeting his fellow residents and learning about the facility. When an appropriate length of time (usually two to four weeks) passed without any runaway episodes, the staff attempted to find out what dynamics were operating to inhibit the runaway behavior. Since all Kinsolving residents attended public school in Belton, strong external control was usually not considered to be a factor in preventing runaway episodes. Once the staff drew a definite conclusion as to the cause or causes of the non-runaway



behavior, meetings were held with the juvenile's parents and staff members from other agencies in order to determine to what extent these factors had been present in the juvenile's home environment. During these meetings the nature and extent of the current family conflict would be determined. At this time, sessions would be held with the juvenile to find out his feelings toward the possibility of returning home. Based on the results of these meetings, and an appraisal of the juvenile's individual needs, a decision would be made whether to return the child to his home or place him in a more permanent residential facility.

All juveniles referred to Lebe Hoch underwent a three-week intake period, during which they were isolated to one wing in the main part of the facility. At this time a series of psychological tests and evaluations were administered by a staff psychiatrist for the purpose of attaining a diagnosis and prognosis on each new juvenile. Every juvenile was also given a thorough physical examination. One of the main purposes of the intake process was to aid the juvenile in making the transition to an institutional environment.

The resident population at Lebe Hoch was divided into four levels, each with increasing privileges and responsibilities. All new residents began at level one, or the lowest level. A resident's assignment to a higher level was a function of the staff's assessment of his overall progress in the different programs at the facility. An

assignment to a higher level was not permanent. For example, if a resident at a level two began to habitually create disturbances in his living area and had been unresponsive to all attempts at altering his behavior, he would be reassigned to a level one, where he would remain until his behavior warranted reassignment to level two. Level three was viewed by the staff as a critical phase in the adjustment of a runaway juvenile due to the increased opportunity afforded the juvenile to run away.<sup>21</sup> Whether or not a juvenile was reclassified to a lower level after a runaway episode was largely dependent on the circumstances surrounding the runaway and the juvenile's progress prior to the episode.<sup>22</sup> Locating runaway juveniles was a particular problem for the staff at Lebe Hoch due to the facility's close proximity (70 miles) to Austin. If a juvenile could catch one ride and make it in to Austin, the chances of locating him were sharply reduced.<sup>23</sup>

After allowing for an initial adjustment period on the part of the juvenile, the staff began to assess the juvenile's progress at Lebe Hoch and the feasibility of returning him to his parents. If it was decided that the juvenile and his parents were ready for him to return home, he would be released. For those juveniles and their parents who were not ready to handle living together permanently again, a sort of flexible pass system was established. Under this system a juvenile would divide his time between

home and Lebe Hoch. Ideally, the intervals at home would gradually increase with the end result being a successful readjustment in the home. If a child continued to run away when sent home on pass, but did not run away while at Lebe Hoch, indefinite placement at Lebe Hoch would be considered.

### Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to obtain a descriptive profile of runaway juveniles from Fort Hood, Texas. This profile included basic data such as age, sex, and education level of the juvenile. Information describing basic interaction patterns between the juvenile, his parents, and additional family members was also obtained. Emphasis was placed on the actions taken by the juvenile during the runaway episode.

It was anticipated that through the design and implementation of the study, information would be gained regarding the following aspects of runaway behavior at Fort Hood:

1. Who is the Fort Hood runaway, what does he look like insofar as age, sex, race, and education level are concerned?
2. To what extent, if any, does he differ from the non-military dependent juvenile runaway described in previous research?
3. Is there any discernable pattern of events peculiar to the runaway episode itself? Several factors are

integral to this question. Foremost among them are:

- a. How long did the juvenile consider the prospect of running away?
- b. Did he ever tell either of his parents that he might run away? What was their reaction?
- c. Where did he stay during the runaway episode? If he stayed at the dwelling of a sympathetic party, how did he find out about these people?

For the purpose of this study a runaway juvenile was defined as any person under the age of eighteen who willingly and without the consent of those adults responsible for his supervision and welfare, absents himself from his legal residence and/or from general knowledge as to his whereabouts for a period greater than 48 hours.

The main significance of this study is its concentration on military dependent runaways. Career military life with its constant (usually every three to four years) changing of family residence and occasional required absence of the father (usually at least three years absence from the family during a twenty year enlistment) places stresses on a family that are not ordinarily encountered in civilian life. No previous research has examined the role these stresses play, from the juvenile's viewpoint, in his decision to run away from home.

Apart from being the only study at the present time devoted to military dependent runaways, this study will supplement previous research by describing in greater detail the amount and type of communication that exists between these juveniles and their parents.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to obtain a descriptive profile of military dependent juvenile runaways from Fort Hood, Texas. This chapter will be divided into two parts with the first part depicting the procedures involved in the selection and design of the data collection instrument. The second portion of the chapter will address itself to the sampling and data gathering procedures utilized in the study.

#### Selection and Design of Data Collection Instrument

After deciding the purpose of the study, preliminary liaison visits were made to youth-related agencies in Fort Hood and Bell County to determine the utility and feasibility of conducting the study. The assistance of these agencies was vital in the areas of deciding the type of data that should be obtained and in the data gathering effort itself. During these visits the relevancy of the proposed study in relation to the agencies operation was discussed. Each agency contacted agreed to assist in the implementation of the study and to provide background information regarding the nature and extent of the problem locally.

It was determined that the most appropriate means of gathering data would be to interview the runaway juveniles. It was further determined that the interviews should be

structured through the utilization of a questionnaire (See Appendix). In addition to providing structure, use of a questionnaire assured collection of relevant data from each juvenile interviewed. The questionnaire itself was divided into six general categories: data concerning the juvenile, his parents, family interaction patterns, the runaway episode, adjustment in school, and the juvenile's interaction patterns with his parents. The primary purpose of dividing the questionnaire into these categories was to facilitate data classification for the purpose of obtaining a descriptive profile. It was decided that all data obtained would be analyzed by means of frequency distribution.

After consulting with individuals at each agency cooperating in the study, a tentative draft of the questionnaire was formulated and administered to fifteen military dependent runaways at Kinsolving Lodge. There were several reasons for deciding to administer a draft questionnaire. The approximate length of time needed for each interview needed to be determined. Vague or inappropriate questions needed to be located, then modified or eliminated. There were many items on the questionnaire that had simple responses such as grade in school and military rank of the father. "Yes" or "no" responses were appropriate for certain items such as, "Was your father overseas when you ran away?" For other items it was decided that multi-dimensional responses would be necessary. Questionnaire

items concerned with specific lengths or proportions of time required multi-dimensional responses; likewise, items describing the frequency of a specific event such as, "How often does your family attend church?" It was determined that increasing the choice and specificity of available responses would improve the reliability of the responses actually made by the juveniles. Certain items in the tentative questionnaire called for a response describing (based on the juvenile's perception) a specific condition or situation. Initially, questions of this nature were left open-ended. A pattern of responses to these items emerged as a result of administering the tentative questionnaire. The most common verbal responses were then adapted for use as multi-dimensional responses on the finalized questionnaire. As a result, the item "Why don't you talk to your parents more often about your problems?", --open-ended on the tentative questionnaire, had the following response items listed on the finalized questionnaire: "they don't listen", "it usually ends in an argument", "I'm scared to", "other reasons". Finally, the juveniles themselves proved to be of valuable assistance in determining the appropriateness of adding additional items to the questionnaire. As an example, in the tentative questionnaire, the juveniles were asked if their family usually ate together at least once daily. Most juveniles who responded affirmatively to this question also related that conversation between family

members was virtually non-existent during meals. Mealtime was perceived by these juveniles as something to be endured rather than enjoyed. After receiving this information, an item relating to the frequency and type of family conversation was included in the finalized questionnaire.

After making necessary adjustments, the questionnaire was finalized. It was then necessary to establish procedures for the selection of subjects and administration of the questionnaire.

### Sampling and Data Gathering Procedures

The following assumptions were inherent in the design and implementation of this study:

1. Each juvenile interviewed gave an honest, accurate response to any question directed toward him.
2. The individuals who administered the questionnaire endeavored to function in a non-threatening objective manner.
3. At no time during the course of this study was a juvenile's name recorded for any purpose. There were three different agencies cooperating in the data gathering effort. There was a possibility that a juvenile would respond to the same questionnaire two or three times, once at each agency. It was therefore assumed that each juvenile would answer honestly when asked if he or she had previously responded to the questionnaire.

Officials from youth-related agencies who cooperated



in the study agreed that approximately 100 juvenile military dependents ran away from their homes in the Fort Hood area each year. This estimate was the basis for the decision to obtain fifty responses to the questionnaire. It was concluded that obtaining data from one-half of the estimated population would be sufficient for the purpose of generalization. In the interest of time and expense, it was decided not to interview over fifty juveniles. It was also decided, through mutual agreement, that Kinsolving Canyon Lodge, Lebe Hoch, and the Youth Services Bureau would assist in the data collection effort. It was agreed that counselors from the Youth Services Bureau would conduct interviews with the juveniles on their caseload. Arrangements were made with officials at Kinsolving and Lebe Hoch for this writer to conduct interviews with the juveniles at their respective facilities. Members of the casework staff at Lebe Hoch conducted approximately twelve interviews. Selection of juveniles to be included in the sample was convenience-oriented in that the cooperating agencies were requested to obtain data from all appropriate juveniles currently and subsequently included on their caseloads. To insure accurate recall, the sample was limited to juveniles whose last runaway episode had occurred less than twelve months prior to the interview. The agencies were notified when an adequate sample had been obtained. The data gathering effort began in September, 1973, and concluded in February, 1974.

Guidelines were established concerning the administration of the questionnaire itself. As an aid in insuring accurate data collection, it was decided that the individual administering the questionnaire would fill out the majority of the questionnaire form, after obtaining the appropriate response from the juvenile. The only exceptions to this procedure were the four open-ended questions listed at the conclusion of the questionnaire form. Juveniles were informed that their names would not be used under any circumstances and that all information obtained would be kept confidential and would be utilized strictly for the purpose of obtaining "average" responses. The juveniles were told that they could refuse to answer any of the questions and were free to terminate the interview at any time. In some instances, where severe family conflict existed, juveniles had to be assured that none of the information obtained would be given to their parents. Data gathering was initiated after all individuals to be involved in conducting interviews, familiarized themselves with the procedures to follow before and during the interviews.

## CHAPTER III

### DATA ANALYSIS

During the period September, 1973 through February, 1974, data were collected from fifty interviews conducted with Fort Hood military dependent runaway juveniles. The initial portion of this chapter will provide a description of the actual sample that comprised the study. Subsequent portions will consist of comparison responses between male and female subjects on certain questionnaire items, data concerning the subject's parents and family activity patterns. The primary portion of this chapter will concern itself with data describing the runaway episode and a brief description of the conditions immediately preceding and following it. This section will also contain a diagram of a typical runaway episode. The chapter will conclude with a section describing the juvenile's perceptions of his parents and his interaction with them.

#### Description of Sample

Prior to initiating the data gathering effort, it was decided that selection of subjects to be included in the sample would be limited to juveniles between six and seventeen years of age. The actual sample consisted of juveniles between the ages of twelve and seventeen, with 90 percent of the subjects appearing in the fourteen to

sixteen-year-old age bracket (Table 1). The case referral

TABLE 1  
Age of Subjects

Age	f	%
12 years	1	2.00
13 years	2	4.00
14 years	11	22.00
15 years	11	22.00
16 years	23	46.00
17 years	2	4.00
Total	50	100.00

system for runaway juveniles mentioned in Chapter 1 (Figure 1), was the primary factor operating to limit the age range of subjects included in the sample. A juvenile under the age of ten, alone on the streets at night, was more likely to be noticed and apprehended by law enforcement officers than an older juvenile. As mentioned in Chapter 1, law enforcement officers usually referred these juveniles to the County Child Welfare Department. Since the Bell County Child Welfare Department was not one of the agencies assisting in the data gathering effort, it was highly unlikely that any juvenile under the age of ten would appear in the study sample. A check of the runaway report files at the Bell

County Sheriff's Office and the Killeen Police Department, the two law enforcement agencies most likely to encounter Fort Hood dependent runaway juveniles, revealed that juveniles in the six to eleven-year-old age bracket accounted for .08 percent of the total runaway cases handled by these agencies from December, 1972 to May, 1973.

Slightly over two-thirds (68%) of the sample subjects were female (Table 2). It was expected that females would

TABLE 2  
Sex of Subjects

Sex	f	%
Male	16	32.00
Female	34	68.00
Total	50	100.00

make up over half of the sample. Females have an easier time finding a means of transportation and support during a runaway episode than do males. This is particularly true in the Fort Hood area due to the great amount of unmarried Fort Hood enlisted personnel residing off-post in the Killeen vicinity.

The vast majority of sample subjects were white (Table 3). No Mexican-Americans appeared in the sample. Sample subjects appearing in the "other" category in Table 3

TABLE 3  
Race of Subjects

Race	f	%
White	44	88.00
Black	1	2.00
Mexican-American	0	0.00
Other	5	10.00
Total	50	100.00

were of mixed parentage with the mother usually being Oriental.

The most common grade in school among sample subjects at the time of the interviews was the tenth grade (Table 4).

TABLE 4  
Grade in School at Time of Interview

Grade	f	%
6th Grade	1	2.00
7th Grade	1	2.00
8th Grade	10	20.00
9th Grade	9	18.00
10th Grade	17	34.00
11th Grade	10	20.00
12th Grade	1	2.00
13th Grade	1	2.00
Total	50	100.00

The tenth grade is also the first high school grade level in the Killeen area. Almost half of the sample had repeated at least one grade (Table 5).

TABLE 5  
Number of Grades Repeated

Number	f	%
0	27	54.00
1	16	32.00
2	6	12.00
3	1	2.00
Total	50	100.00

#### Comparison Between Male and Female Subjects

There was little difference between male and female subjects regarding the frequency of runaway episodes (Table 6). Approximately 70 percent of the female subjects ran away more than twice. Males were slightly more prone than females to run away alone (Table 7). Males were prone to give several days consideration in deciding to run away, while almost half (44%) of the females decided to run away the same day the runaway episode began (Table 8). Males were also more inclined to have a destination chosen and arrangements for lodging made prior to the runaway

TABLE 6

Frequency Distribution - Total Number of Runaway Episodes  
Males and Females

Number of Episodes	Males		Females	
	f	%	f	%
1	1	6.25	3	9.09
2	2	12.50	7	21.21
3	4	25.00	5	15.15
4	1	6.25	5	15.15
5	2	12.50	2	6.06
6	2	12.50	3	9.09
7	0	.00	2	6.06
8	0	.00	2	6.06
10	1	6.25	1	3.03
11	0	.00	1	3.03
12	1	6.25	1	3.03
15	1	6.25	1	3.03
16	1	6.25	1	3.03
Total	16	100.00	33	100.00



TABLE 7

Frequency Distribution of Subjects Committing Runaway  
Episodes Alone or with Others

Response	Males		Females	
	f	%	f	%
Alone	11	68.75	17	50.00
With Others	5	31.25	17	50.00
Total	16	100.00	34	100.00

TABLE 8

Frequency Distribution - Length of Prior Consideration  
Given to Decision to Run Away

Length of Consideration	Males		Females	
	f	%	f	%
Same Day	6	37.50	15	44.11
Less than one week	7	43.75	8	23.52
More than one week	3	18.75	11	32.35
Total	16	100.00	34	100.00

episode than were females (Table 9). Males were also more likely to stay gone longer during a runaway episode than were females. Twice as many males than females reported

TABLE 9  
Frequency Distribution - Planned Destination Prior  
to Runaway Episode

Response	Males		Females	
	f	%	f	%
Planned Destination	9	56.25	15	44.11
No Planned Destination	7	43.75	19	55.88
Total	16	100.00	34	100.00

runaway episodes lasting longer than a month in length (Table 10). Approximately the same percentage of males and females stayed within fifty miles of the Fort Hood area during their runaway episodes (Table 11). Both males and females indicated a tendency to either stay close to home or to get as far away as possible, with few subjects electing to stay within 100 miles of home. Males had a stronger tendency than females to run further than 100 miles from home.

TABLE 10

Frequency Distribution - Length of Time of Runaway Episodes  
Males and Females

Length of Time	Males		Females	
	f	%	f	%
Less than Week	5	31.25	13	38.23
Less than Month	7	43.75	17	50.00
Less than Six Months	3	18.75	3	8.82
More than Six Months	1	6.25	1	2.94
Total	16	100.00	34	100.00

TABLE 11

Frequency Distribution - Distance of Runaway Episodes  
Males and Females

Distance	Males		Females	
	f	%	f	%
Less than 50 Miles	7	43.75	15	44.11
Less than 100 Miles	1	6.25	6	17.64
Over 100 Miles	8	50.00	13	38.23
Total	16	100.00	34	100.00

### Data Concerning Parents and Family Activities

The most common military ranks held by the subject's fathers were Staff Sergeant and Sergeant First Class. Fathers possessing either of these ranks accounted for 60 percent of the sample. Since 90 percent of the fathers in the sample had been in the Army ten years or longer, the rank distribution is not as skewed as might appear at first glance. If a non-commissioned officer (Sergeant) has been promoted along with his contemporaries, he will have attained the rank of Staff Sergeant by the time he has been in the Army ten years. The ranks of Staff Sergeant and Sergeant First Class are by far the most common held by non-commissioned officers with ten to twenty years of service. Commissioned officers accounted for 12 percent of the sample's fathers (Table 12). No subjects reported having fathers with the rank of Sergeant or lower. A possible reason for this could be that the vast majority of Sergeants and enlisted men in the Army are in their late to early twenties, age wise, and would be unlikely to have a child over eight years old. No subjects reported fathers with the rank of General. This fact is not surprising in view of the fact that at any given time there are less than four General Officers stationed at Fort Hood. Almost four-fifths (78%) of the subjects indicated that their fathers had spent two or more unaccompanied (overseas) tours. This proportion is

TABLE 12

Frequency Distribution - Military Rank Held  
by Subject's Fathers

Rank	f	%
Sergeant	6	12.00
Staff Sergeant	18	36.00
Sergeant First Class	12	24.00
Master/First Sergeant	7	14.00
Sergeant Major	1	2.00
Major	2	4.00
Lieutenant Colonel	1	2.00
Colonel	1	2.00
Warrant Officer	2	4.00
Total	50	100.00

in keeping with the normal pattern of assignments for career military personnel. One-fourth of the subjects indicated that their fathers had been reduced in rank at least once. While it was not possible to obtain data regarding the percentage of all Fort Hood personnel, Fort Hood personnel officials estimated the percentage of subject's fathers who had been reduced in rank to be at least three times larger than that of all Fort Hood personnel. One-third of the subjects indicated that their

"father" was, in reality, their step-father. Approximately one-third of the subjects indicated that their fathers held part-time jobs in addition to their Army duties. The most common educational level attained by the fathers was completion of high school or General Educational Development equivalency.

During the interview, subjects were asked to describe how often they noticed their fathers drinking some form of alcohol. Drinking was further defined to the subjects to be more than one or two drinks. Time interval response items were operationalized as completely as possible. As indicated in Table 13, the reported incidence of alcohol

TABLE 13

Frequency Distribution - Frequency of Fathers and Mothers Drinking (More than One or Two Drinks)

Response	Father		Mother	
	f	%	f	%
Never	12	24.00	34	68.00
Once/Twice Monthly	13	26.00	6	12.00
Once/Twice Weekly	11	22.00	5	10.00
Almost Daily	14	28.00	5	10.00
Total	50	100.00	50	100.00

consumption was fairly even distributed between all response options.

The natural mother was still in the nuclear family of four-fifths of the sample subjects. Almost two-thirds (64%) of the subjects indicated that their mothers worked full or part-time. As with the fathers, the most common educational level attained by the mother was high school or its equivalency. The mothers differed from the fathers regarding the frequency of alcohol consumption. As indicated in Table 13, slightly over two-thirds of the subjects reported that they never observed their mother having more than a couple of drinks.

The most common sibling position held by sample subjects was that of the middle child, with the oldest child appearing next in frequency. The least common sibling position appearing in the sample was that of the youngest child (Table 14).

In order to derive a loose estimate of how often all the family members were together each day, subjects were asked if their family usually ate together once a day. Approximately two-thirds (68%) responded affirmatively. However, when asked how often family members conversed during mealtime, 22 percent indicated that family members conversed less than half of the time and 34 percent indicated that family members hardly ever conversed. Many subjects, in responding to this question, indicated their

TABLE 14  
Frequency Distribution - Sibling Position Held  
by Sample Subjects

Position	f	%
Oldest	16	32.00
Middle	19	38.00
Youngest	6	12.00
Other	9	18.00
Total	50	100.00

dislike for attending the evening meal with their parents due to the likelihood of an argument or some other kind of "hassle" occurring. One female subject, age sixteen, seemed to speak for the majority of her fellow subjects: "Yes, we eat together but all us kids hate it. My parents are usually arguing with each other or with one of us kids. When they're not arguing, no one talks and its like a funeral home. Us kids usually eat as quick as we can and get away."<sup>24</sup> Data regarding basic family activity patterns were gathered by asking questions regarding the frequency of family church attendance, vacations, and other family activities such as trips to the movies or local lakes. Two-thirds of the subjects indicated that their families attended church less than twice yearly, while 52 percent



indicated that it had been over two years since their families last took a vacation together. The lack of family vacations is interesting in that all Army personnel are entitled to thirty days leave each year. Exactly one-half of the subjects further indicated that other family activities such as short outings or weekend trips occurred less than twice yearly.

### The Runaway Episode

#### Conditions Preceding Runaway Episode

During the process of obtaining data relevant to the conditions in the home prior to the runaway episode, subjects were asked if their father had been overseas during any of their runaway episodes. In responding to this question, 90 percent of the subjects stated that their father was not overseas at any time during their runaway episodes. The cutback of Army personnel in Vietnam probably accounted for the high amount of negative responses, since interviews with subjects were not initiated until September, 1973, eight months after all Army personnel had left Vietnam. When asked if they had ever mentioned to either of their parents that they might run away from home, 66 percent responded affirmatively. Subjects responding affirmatively were asked to describe how their parents reacted to this statement. Possible parental reactions were classified into three categories: concerned, angry, and

indifferent. Less than one-third of the subjects described their parents' reaction to be one of concern. The most common parental reaction described was "indifference" (Table 15).

TABLE 15

Frequency Distribution - Subjects Who Told Parents  
They were Considering Running Away from Home:  
Parental Reaction

Parental Reaction	f	%
Concerned	10	30.30
Angry	8	24.24
Indifferent	15	45.45
Total	33	99.99

Less than one-half (42%) of the subjects indicated that they decided to run away from home the same day the episode began. The remainder had decided several days ahead of time the date and approximate time they were to begin the actual runaway episode. Males were more inclined than females to plan the details of the runaway episode prior to actually running away (Table 8). This inclination towards prior planning was further substantiated when more males than females reported having a destination selected prior to actually running away (Table 9).

Data Describing Runaway Episode

The amount of runaway episodes claimed by the subjects ranged from a minimum of one to a maximum of twenty. The most frequent amount of claimed episodes was two, with over one-half of the sample appearing in the range of one to four episodes (Table 16).

TABLE 16

Frequency Distribution - Runaway Episodes  
Claimed by Subjects (Verified)

Amount of Episodes	f	%
1	5	10.00
2	12	24.00
3	7	14.00
4	7	14.00
5	3	6.00
6	3	6.00
7	2	4.00
8	3	6.00
10	2	4.00
11	1	2.00
12	1	2.00
15	2	4.00
16	1	2.00
20	1	2.00
Total	50	100.00

Police and probation reports, as well as agency social history files, were utilized to confirm the accuracy of episodes claimed by subjects. Prior to initiating the study, it was anticipated that runaway episodes would occur most commonly in October and November, due to disenchantment with school and the possibility that school adjustment difficulties, when coupled with family conflict, might result in a juvenile deciding that running away is the easiest solution. Past researchers, most notably Ambrosino (1971,b), had indicated that many juveniles elect to run away during December in order to inflict maximum pain on their parents by being absent during the Christmas holidays. The resultant data supported neither of these assumptions (Table 17). Although over one-third of the subjects did indicate that their last runaway episode had taken place during one of the last three months of the year, the data also indicated that subjects were equally inclined to run away during June and July.

Subjects were inclined to run away by themselves as opposed to making a group effort. Those who indicated they had run away with other juveniles stated that they usually ran away with friends whom they knew prior to the runaway episode. The most commonly cited reasons given for running away with others were: emotional support (sort of a "I'll go if you'll go", agreement), and the pooling of resources, particularly money and clothing.

TABLE 17  
Frequency Distribution -  
Month of Last Reported Runaway Episode

Month	f	%
January	3	6.00
February	3	6.00
March	4	8.00
April	1	2.00
May	2	4.00
June	8	16.00
July	6	12.00
August	1	2.00
September	3	6.00
October	8	16.00
November	5	10.00
December	6	12.00
Total	50	100.00

The majority of the subjects (72%) indicated that they stayed at another person's house or apartment for the majority of the runaway episode. The persons the subjects stayed with had usually known the subjects for some time prior to the runaway episode and were also usually aware that the subjects were running away from home. When

unable to utilize a friend's home for shelter, most subjects stated that they stayed on the road. Staying on the road meant sleeping in fields, under trees, bridges, and other forms of shelter. Vacant houses were also a desirable shelter, particularly in the late fall and early winter. Most of the runaway episodes lasted less than a month, with only two subjects reporting episodes greater than six months in length (Table 10). As indicated in an earlier portion of the chapter, subjects demonstrated a tendency to either stay close to home during the runaway episode or get as far away as possible (Table 11).

During the process of conducting interviews, a pattern descriptive of a typical runaway episode began to emerge (Figure 2). The vast majority of episodes were initiated from three locations: the school, the home itself, or social activities such as dances and movies. Occasionally, when an episode was initiated directly from the home, various forms of subterfuge, such as sneaking out a window, were utilized. More often than not, such subtleties were not necessary. As one subject stated: "My folks are never home so when I decide to boogie (run away), I just pack a few things in a sack and take off."<sup>25</sup> When either or both parents were likely to be home during the evenings, and if school was in session, the school itself seemed to be a common starting point for runaway episodes.

The time the juveniles actually left the school seemed to

depend on the mood he was in and whether or not he wanted to try to persuade another juvenile to join him in running away. In any case, the juvenile would usually wait until after lunch to leave school in order to lessen the likelihood of the school officials calling his parents to inquire about his absence. Some subjects indicated that their runaway episodes were initiated during some form of peer group social activity, such as a school extracurricular event or dance. In these cases the actual decision to run away was made prior to leaving home to attend the event or while attending the event itself. The local hamburger stand or bowling alley (particularly in Killeen), also seemed to be likely spots for potential runaway juveniles to congregate. One of the most frequently mentioned occasions which served as a starting point for runaway episodes was the local high school football game. As one subject put it: "Everybody goes but nobody watches the game. We always walk around to see what's happening around the stands and in the parking lot. There are usually two or three parties to go to ... there's usually so many far out things going on after the game that it just doesn't make sense to go home. If I stay out all night I usually don't go home for a few days because I don't want to hassle with my 'folks."<sup>26</sup> As with the school, football games, trips to the hamburger stand, and the like also served the purpose of aiding the juvenile in deciding whether to run away by himself or with another

juvenile. If the juveniles were friends and if the other juvenile had access to lodging that could be utilized by both juveniles, it was likely that they would run away together.

Once initiated, the time and distance encompassed by the runaway episode appeared to be a function of the following conditions: (1) Availability of transportation, (2) Availability of food and money, (3) Availability of lodging, and (4) Whether continuing the episode represented usefulness or futility in the opinion of the juvenile.

The role played by the availability of transportation, food, money, and lodging in determining the time and distance encompassed by the episode was quite simple. Subjects frequently indicated that their return home was due primarily to the difficulties they encountered in obtaining lodging, money, and food. For other subjects, the decision to continue or terminate the runaway episode depended upon their current perception of the condition or conditions which caused them to run away. For instance, if a juvenile ran away for a specific purpose, e.g., to hurt his parents or prove to himself and/or his parents that he actually would run away, he would be inclined to return home as soon as he believed he had accomplished his purpose. Some subjects indicated that they ran away due to their dissatisfaction with certain aspects of their parents' behavior or attitudes, such as excessive drinking or



unwillingness on the part of the parents to compromise with the juvenile on certain problem areas. For these juveniles, the decision to return home was usually due to their arriving at the conclusion that it was futile to believe that continuing the episode would result in any long-term changes on the part of their parents. These juveniles usually returned home with an attitude of indifference. A few subjects indicated that they ran away in order to be on their own in the world. These subjects usually succeeded in obtaining part or full-time employment. As a result, they were prepared to continue their runaway episode indefinitely. For subjects in this category, the episode was usually terminated because they lost their job and were unable to find another, or because they were apprehended by law enforcement officials.

Subjects were asked to relate their opinion regarding the attitude their parents displayed towards them when they returned home. Subjects were given four responses to choose from with positive attitudes, such as "glad" and "relieved", classified under the category of "happy". Most subjects classified their parents' attitude in negative categories such as "indifference" or "refusal" (Table 18). Relatively few subjects (28%) described themselves as "being happy to return home" (Table 19).

#### Subject's Interaction with Parents

The majority of the subjects in the sample appeared

TABLE 18

Frequency Distribution - Parental Attitude  
toward Subject's Return to Home  
(Subject's Opinion)

Attitudinal Category	f	%
Happy	19	38.00
Indifferent	16	32.00
Refusal	9	18.00
Unknown	6	12.00
Total	50	100.00

TABLE 19

Frequency Distribution - Subject's Description  
of their Attitude upon Returning Home

Attitudinal Category	f	%
Happy	14	28.00
Indifferent	16	32.00
Unhappy	20	40.00
Total	50	100.00

to have difficulty in discussing their problems with either of their parents. Seventy-four percent of the subjects indicated that they rarely, if ever, talked to their

fathers when they had a problem that they needed to discuss with someone. Sixty-two percent of the subjects indicated a likewise response concerning their mothers. When asked why they did not talk to their parents more often, the most common response was that discussions with parents usually "ended in an argument".

During the latter portion of each interview, each subject was asked if there was anything about either of their parents that they would like to change. Most subjects indicated that they would like to see their fathers drink less and be more patient. The most common complaint concerning mothers was that they gave in too frequently to fathers during arguments concerning the juveniles. Virtually all subjects indicated a desire for both parents to be more willing to listen to the subject's side of a discussion or problem. At the conclusion of each interview, subjects were asked to explain in their own words why they ran away. An analysis of Table 20 reveals that 78 percent of the subjects ran away due to some type of conflict with either or both of their parents.

The following conditions, listed in order of response frequency, were categorized as parental conflict: excessive drinking by either or both parents; strict or authoritarian discipline measures enforced by parents; unwillingness of parents to compromise with subjects on matters such as the subject's hair length, clothing style, and choice of

TABLE 20

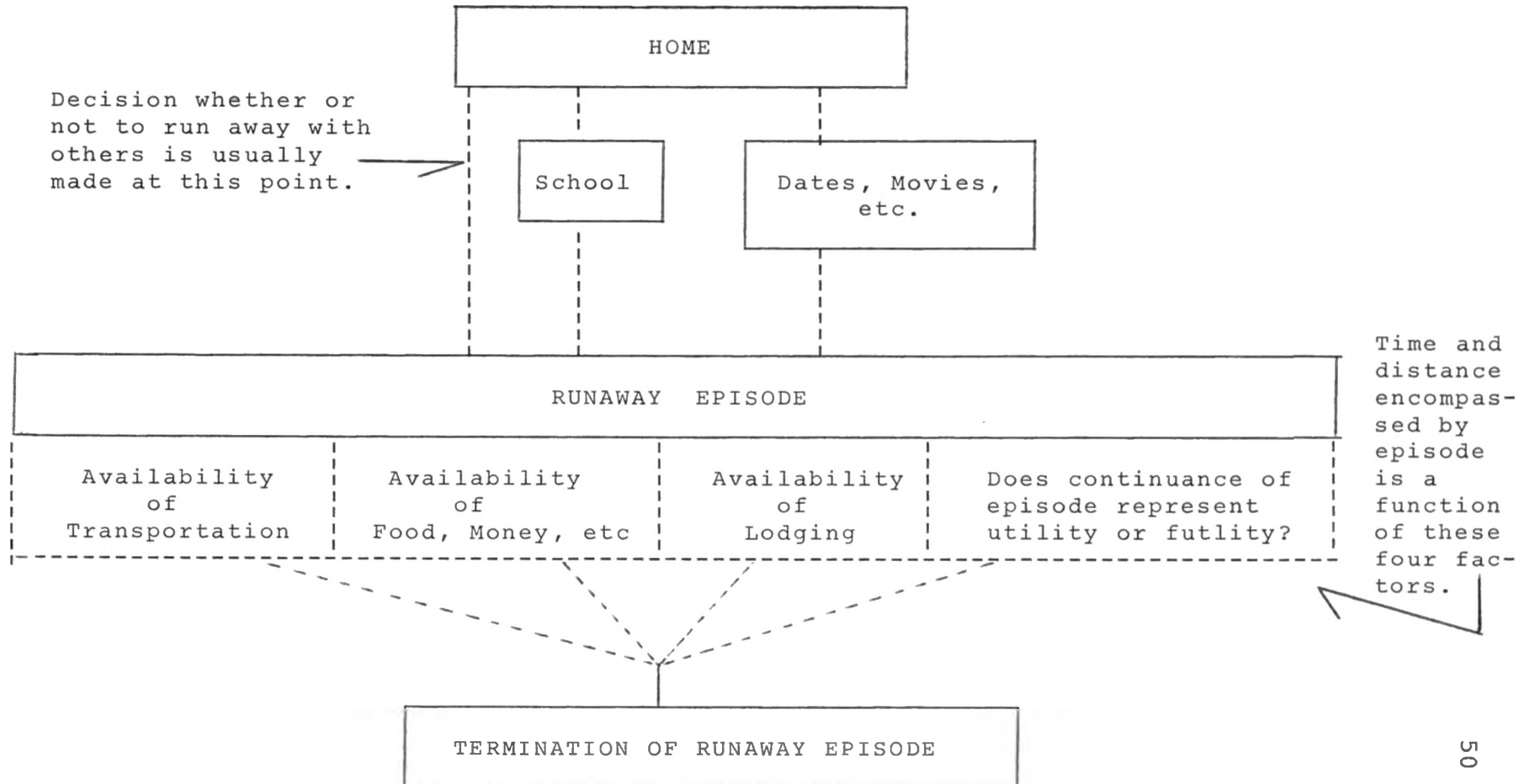
Frequency Distribution - Causes Given by Subjects  
for Runaway Episode

Causal Condition	f	%
Parental Conflict	39	78.00
Desire for Independence	2	4.00
No Apparent Cause	3	6.00
Miscellaneous Causes	6	12.00
Total	50	100.00

friends; and failure of the parents to recognize the subject as a person with feelings and rights. Six subjects ran away for miscellaneous reasons such as: a desire to spend more time with a boyfriend, or an unwillingness to continue attending school. Three subjects indicated that they had no particular reason for running away, other than perhaps for a lack of anything else better to do. A fifteen-year-old female summed up the motivation of the subjects in this category stating: "I guess I did it because I just had truckin' (runaway) fever."<sup>27</sup> None of the subjects in this category ran away from home more than once. A desire for complete independence from the home induced 4 percent of the subjects to run away. Subjects in this category also stated that they intended to run away again as soon as the proper opportunity presented itself.

FIGURE 2

Diagram of Typical Runaway Episode as Described by Juveniles Included in Study Sample



## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to describe the military dependent who runs away from home while his father is stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. In beginning the study, specific questions were asked which pertained to the military dependent runaways and the circumstances involved in their runaway episodes. Significant portions of the findings resulting from the study will be reviewed in the initial portion of this chapter in order to determine the extent to which these questions were answered. The latter portion of the chapter will consist of some conclusions resulting from an analysis of the data gathered in the study.

In response to the first question, "Who is the Fort Hood runaway and what does he look like insofar as age, sex, race, and educational level are concerned?", the data suggest the following profile: "She" is usually between fourteen and sixteen years of age, most likely to be sixteen. She is Caucasian. She is most likely to be a sophomore in high school, but can be found in any grade in the range encompassing the eighth grade to the junior year in high school. There is almost a 50-50 chance that she has repeated at least one grade in school.

The second question asked was "To what extent does

he differ from the non-military juvenile runaway described in previous research?" In order to answer this question, it was necessary to compare the study findings with those of a similar study. It was decided to utilize the study conducted by Shellow et al in Prince Georges County, Maryland, during the period August, 1963 through July, 1964.<sup>28</sup> A review of the literature indicated this study as being the longest in terms of study length, and the largest in terms of sample size (1,327). It also appeared to be the soundest from the standpoint of methodology and data analysis.

The Maryland study reported a boy-girl ratio of 40:60.<sup>29</sup> This did not differ greatly from the 32:68 ratio reported in this study. The median age for subjects in both studies was between fifteen and sixteen. Data collected in the Maryland study suggested that the runaway episodes were impulsive and poorly planned.<sup>30</sup> Over one-half of the subjects in this study indicated that they made prior arrangements for a place to stay during the episode and that they made a definite decision to run away at least three days prior to beginning the runaway episode. Most of the subjects in the Maryland study "traveled a short distance, stayed away only briefly (less than four days), and returned frequently of their own volition."<sup>31</sup> In this study, almost two-thirds of the subjects (64%) were away from home for over a week, and slightly less than one-half (44%) of the subjects

traveled over 100 miles during the runaway episode. The difference in population density between the two study areas could partially account for the dissimilarity in data concerning these aspects of the runaway episode. Prince Georges County, Maryland, is part of the East Coast Megapolis. A juvenile who runs away in this area would not have to go far to "blend in with the crowd." Killeen, Texas, is situated in a semi-rural area of Central Texas. For this reason, any juvenile who wanted to lessen the chances of being apprehended by the police had to travel at least as far as Austin, Texas, almost 100 miles south of Killeen. Data from both studies suggests that juveniles ran away with companions about one-half of the time, and that girls ran away with someone else more often than did boys. Neither study indicated a relationship between the sibling position of the child in the family and the likelihood of runaway behavior.

The final question asked in the initial portion of the study was: "Is there any discernable pattern of events peculiar to the runaway episode itself?" The responses to this question suggest several distinct patterns concerning the juvenile before, during, and after the runaway episode. Juveniles in the study were quite likely to tell either or both of their parents that they had been considering running away from home if the situation there did not improve. Parents were just as likely to respond to this question with



anger or indifference. The home, school, and peer group activities were the most likely starting points for runaway episodes. Juveniles usually stayed at the dwelling of a friend or other "sympathetic party" during the episode. From the moment of their arrival, the juveniles usually made it quite clear that they had run away from home and were in need of a place to stay. When adequate lodging was not available, the juvenile runaway could be found "hustling" to support himself in downtown areas usually frequented by alcoholics, dope-peddlers, and other potentially troublesome individuals, or on the highway trying to get a ride. An atmosphere of indifference and unhappiness, on the part of the juvenile and his parents, usually characterized the juveniles return home.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the data collected in this study. Foremost among these conclusions is the fact that the Fort Hood juvenile dependent appears to be no more likely to run away from home than his Central Texas civilian counterpart. An analysis of the local police and juvenile agencies' runaway reports, when compared to the population of the school districts in Bell County, Texas, revealed that 1.2 percent of the civilian school district population ran away from home during the period July 1 through December 31, 1973. During the same time frame, one percent of the military dependent school district population ran away from home. The fact that

25 percent of the subject's fathers had been reduced in rank raises an interesting point. As stated in Chapter 3, Fort Hood personnel officials estimated this percentage to be at least three times larger than that of all Fort Hood personnel. Since the vast majority of reductions in rank are caused by improper conduct or habitual inefficiency, it could be concluded that a man who experiences extreme difficulties in handling his Army responsibilities also has problems in managing his duties as the "head of the household". The difficulties and frustrations experienced by these fathers during their daily military duties could partially explain their tendency to drink excessively.

In specific regard to the subjects themselves, the finding that males were more prone than females to plan the details of the runaway episode ahead of time might be due, in part, to the difficulties anticipated by males in obtaining food, lodging, and transportation during the runaway episode. Females could usually rely on a boyfriend or other male acquaintance to provide them with a means of support if they ran away. This condition could also partially account for the high percentage (68%) of females contained in the sample. It could well be that one of the reasons more females than males ran away from home was that it was simply easier for them to do so. The tendency for local high school football games to be viewed by most of

the study sample as an opportunity to "see where the action is" rather than a "normal" peer group activity, might explain, in part, the high incidence of runaway episodes occurring in October and November. The percentage (46%) of subjects reporting having to repeat at least one grade in school could be due in part to the frequent family relocations required of military personnel, particularly for juveniles in junior high school or their first year in high school. Family relocations, in and of themselves, do not necessarily mean a juvenile is going to encounter academic difficulties in school. The vast majority of military dependents probably never have to repeat a grade in school. However, when the problems of adjusting to a new school are coupled with a non-supportive home environment, the probability of academic difficulty is increased.

The main limitation in a study of this type is the total lack of interview data obtained from the parents themselves. For this reason, it was impossible to arrive at any defenseable conclusion concerning the degree to which the juvenile was a factor in causing the family conditions which precipitated his runaway episode. Some parents were contacted by cooperating agency officials to determine if they wished to be interviewed. Only three parents consented, and these parents, coincidentally, were mothers and fathers of subjects who had indicated that they had no real reason to run away from home. Had

the author been able to interview more parents, it would have been possible, on an admittedly crude basis, to ascertain whether some of the parents were, in fact, the "totally unreasonably old folks" that their sons and daughters described them as being.

The problem of determining the causality and prevention of runaway behavior does not have a simple solution. The nature of the problem does not lend itself to the formulation of a few basic recommendations, which, if followed, would result in its elimination. The average juvenile runaway is not a retardate who could be aided by a specific vocational training program. Nor is he usually a delinquent in need of rehabilitation, or an emotionally disturbed young person in need of psychiatric help. What he is, in most cases, is simply a young person in need of basic emotional support, firm, but fair, discipline, positive direction, and, most importantly of all, someone to listen to when he has a genuine problem or complaint. During a fifteen month period as a caseworker at Kinsolving Canyon Lodge, the author had the opportunity to observe, on a client-case-worker basis, approximately 100 parents' of juvenile runaways. While each case had its unique causal factors, one condition seemed to be common to the vast majority of the families. It seemed that most parents, military and civilian alike, were either unwilling or unable to devote sufficient time and attention to their children.

When speaking of time devoted to children, reference is made to the "quality" of the social interaction transpiring when the family is together and not to the "quantity" of time spent together with family members doing little more in the way of social interaction than occupying the same house. The cause for this lack of parental attention is probably due to a combination of values, social objectives, and several other variables, with some variables having more of a bearing on the problem than others, depending on the family situation. In any case, the dilemma of finding a solution to this particular aspect of the runaway problem is well outside the limits of this study.

As mentioned previously, one of the primary needs expressed by juveniles in the study was that of having someone available to talk to when they were trying to decide whether or not running away from home was the best solution to their particular problem. Toward this end, the author viewed with great interest two events which transpired in Bell County in recent months. In January of 1974, Kinsolving Canyon Lodge ceased to function as a public residential facility for juveniles. In May of 1974, the Central Texas Youth Services Bureau, which served juveniles in Bell and Coryell Counties, ceased to exist for all intensive purposes. Both of these facilities were placed in this status due to a lack of financial support from the counties involved. The impact of these events, in relation to the extent of the

runaway problem locally, is undetermined as of this writing. It is hoped that an analysis regarding this impact will be made as soon as possible. Such an analysis could result in implications for individuals attempting to formulate a coordinated community program of social and criminal justice services.

## FOOTNOTES

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>F.B.I., Uniform Crime Report, 1973.

<sup>2</sup>Killeen Daily Herald, Editorial, August 21, 1973.

<sup>3</sup>Walter Minica and Thomas Schweizer, Juvenile Probation Officers, Bell County, personal interview, May 22, 1973.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Central Texas Youth Services Bureau, Grant Application, 1972-73.

<sup>6</sup>Don Minor, Executive Director, Kinsolving Canyon Lodge, personal interview, May 21, 1973.

<sup>7</sup>Walter Minica and Thomas Schweizer, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Joe Birdwell, Assistant Director, Lebe Hoch, personal interview, May 21, 1973.

<sup>10</sup>Fort Hood Statistics, prepared by Comptrollers Office, July 20, 1973.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>III Corps and Fort Hood pamphlet 360-28, 18 July, 1972.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Alice Pinson, Counselor, Central Texas Youth Services Bureau, personal interview, May 24, 1973.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Vernon's Texas Codes Annotated, Section 54.04-9.

<sup>20</sup>Walter Minica, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Bell County, personal interview, May 22, 1973.

<sup>21</sup>Julie Arizola, Supervisor, Lebe Hoch, personal interview, January 26, 1974.



<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Interview with female subject. Lebe Hoch, January 26, 1974.

<sup>25</sup>Interview with male subject. Kinsolving Canyon Lodge, September 8, 1973.

<sup>26</sup>Interview with female subject. Killeen, Texas. October 19, 1973.

<sup>27</sup>Interview with female subject. Kinsolving Canyon Lodge. August 21, 1973.

<sup>28</sup>Shellow, Schamp, Liebow and Unger. "Suburban Run-aways of the 1960's." Monograph of the Society for Research in Child Development. XXXII (1967).

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid. pg. 14.

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## APPENDIX

DIRECTIONS: Circle correct response number and enter in column marked DATA. For those responses requiring actual numbers (Age, I.Q., etc.), enter actual number in "DATA" column.

Col. No.	DATA	Q.No.	Question
DATA CONCERNING CHILD (Questions 1-4)			
1-2		1	Age in actual years
3		2	Sex: 1. Male 2. Female
4		3	Race: 1. White 2. Black 3. Mex.Am. 4. Other
5-7		4	I.Q. (if known)
DATA CONCERNING FATHER (Questions 5-12)			
8-9		5	Military Rank: 1. Sp4 2. Sgt. 3. SSg 4. SFC 5. E-8 6. E-9 7. CPT 8. MAJ. 9. LtCol. 10. Col. 11. Wo
10-11		6	Length of service
12		7	Number of unaccompanied tours
13		8	Has your father ever been reduced in rank? 1. Yes 2. No
14		9	Does he have another job in addition to the Army? 1. Yes 2. No
15		10	Father figures relation to subject 1. Natural father 2. Step-father 3. Relative 4. Other
16		11	How often does your father drink (more than one or two drinks)? 1. Never 2. Once/twice monthly 3. Once/twice weekly 4. Almost daily
17-18		12	Education level of father in years (GED=12 years)
DATA CONCERNING MOTHER (Questions 13-17)			

Col. No.	DATA	Q.No.	Question
			DATA CONCERNING MOTHER (continued)
19		13	Mother figures relation to subject 1. Natural mother 2. Step-mother 3. Re- lative 4. Other
20		14	Does she work? 1. Yes 2. No
21		15	How often does your mother work? 1. Everyday 2. Part-time 3. Does not work
22		16	How often does mother drink (more than one or two drinks)? 1. Never 2. Once/twice monthly 3. Once/ twice weekly 4. Daily
23-24		17	Mother's educational level in years
			DESCRIPTIVE FAMILY DATA (Questions 18-29)
25		18	Have your parents ever been separated, other than by the Army? 1. Yes 2. No
26		19	Do you think your parents argue too much? 1. Yes 2. No
27		20	Do your parents ever argue about you? 1. Yes 2. No
28		21	Do you feel that your parents show favoritism for any particular child in your family? 1. Yes 2. No
29-30		22	Number of brothers and sisters
31		23	Sibling position of subject 1. Oldest child 2. Middle child 3. Youngest child 4. Other
32		24	Does your family usually eat together once a day? 1. Yes 2. No
33		25	How often do family members talk to each other during meals? 1. More than half the time 2. Less than half the time 3. Hardly ever

Col. No.	DATA	Q.No.	Question
34		26	How often does your family attend church? 1. Hardly ever 2. Monthly 3. Usually every week
35		27	Have any of your brothers or sisters ever run away? 1. Yes 2. No
36		28	When was the last time your family took a vacation together? 1. Within the last two years 2. More than two years ago 3. Cannot remember
37		29	How often does your family have activities together (picnics, movies, etc.)? 1. Hardly ever 2. Two/three times yearly 3. Monthly
			DATA CONCERNING RUNAWAY (Questions 30-47)
38-39		30	Total number of runaways
40-41		31	Month of runaways
42		32	Was your father overseas when you ran away? 1. Yes 2. No
43		33	If not overseas, how long had your father been back from overseas when you ran away? 1. Less than a month 2. Between 1 and 6 months 3. More than 6 months
44		34	How long did you think about running away before you actually did it? 1. Same day 2. Less than a week 3. More than a week
45		35	Did you ever mention to either of your parents that you might run away? 1. Yes 2. No



Col. No.	DATA	Q.No.	Question
46		36	If yes, how did your parents react? 1. Concerned 2. Angry 3. Indifferent
47		37	Did you run away by yourself or with others? 1. Alone 2. With others
48		38	If with others, were they people that you knew before you ran away? 1. Yes 2. No
49		39	Did you know ahead of time where you were going? 1. Yes 2. No
50		40	Did you stay at another person's house during the runaway? 1. Yes 2. No
51		41	Did they know you were on the run? 1. Yes 2. No
52		42	How did you find out about these people? 1. Mutual friend 2. Met them during runaway 3. Referred by a third party
53		43	If you did not stay at another person's house, where did you stay? 1. Parks 2. Motel/rooming house, etc. 3. Bus/Air terminal 4. "On the road"
54		44	How long were you gone? 1. Less than a week 2. Less than a month 3. Less than six months 4. More than six months
55		45	How far had you gotten when you returned? 1. Less than 50 miles 2. Less than 100 miles 3. Over 100 miles
56		46	Parental attitude toward subject's return to home (subject's opinion) 1. Happy 2. Indifferent 3. Refusal 4. Unknown
57		47	Subject's attitude toward return to home 1. Happy 2. Indifferent 3. Unhappy 4. Unknown

Col. No.	DATA	Q.No.	Question
SCHOOL DATA (Questions 48-52)			
58-59		48	Present grade in school
60		49	Number of grades repeated
61		50	Relationship with teachers 1. Good 2. Average 3. Bad
62		51	Attendance 1. Good 2. Average 3. Bad
63		52	Did you participate in clubs and/or sports in school? 1. Yes 2. No
SUBJECT'S INTERACTION WITH PARENTS (Questions 53-63)			
64		53	Hair (boys only) 1. Approves 2. Disapproves 3. Indif- ferent
65		54	Clothes 1. Approves 2. Disapproves 3. Indif- ferent
66		55	Friends 1. Approves 2. Disapproves 3. Indif- ferent
67		56	How often did you talk to your father when you had a problem? 1. Almost never 2. About half the time 3. Usually
68		57	How often did you talk to your mother when you had a problem? 1. Almost never 2. About half the time 3. Usually
69		58	Why don't you talk to your parents more often about your problems? 1. They don't listen 2. Usually ends in an argument 3. Scared to 4. Other

Col. No.	DATA	Q.No.	Question
N/A		59	<p>Would you change anything about your father, if you could? If so, what would you change?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
N/A		60	<p>Would you change anything about your mother, if you could? If so, what would you change?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
70		61	<p>Did your father ever try to explain to you why he had to go overseas?</p> <p>1. Yes 2. No</p>
71		62	<p>Do your parents ever listen to you when you try to explain your behavior to them?</p> <p>1. Almost never</p> <p>2. Less than half the time</p> <p>3. Usually</p>
N/A		63	<p>Is there anything about yourself that you would like to change?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
N/A		64	<p>Why do you think you ran away?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Vita redacted during scanning.