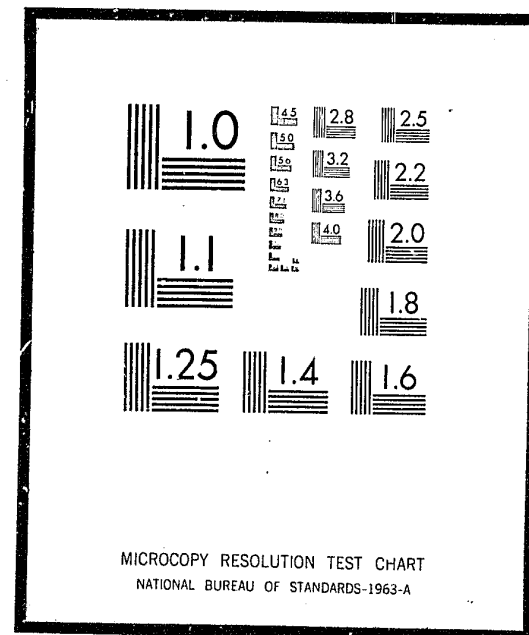


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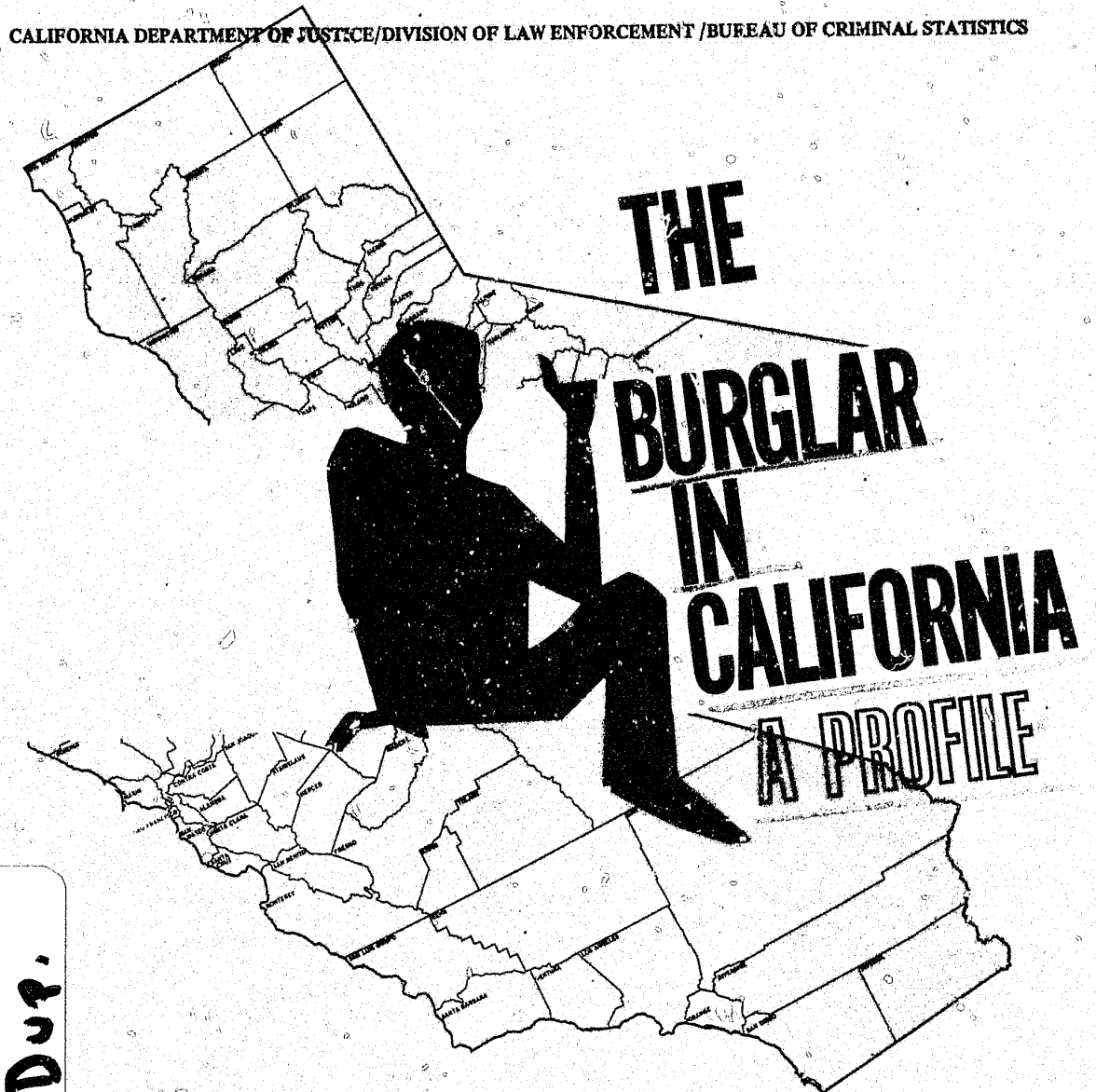
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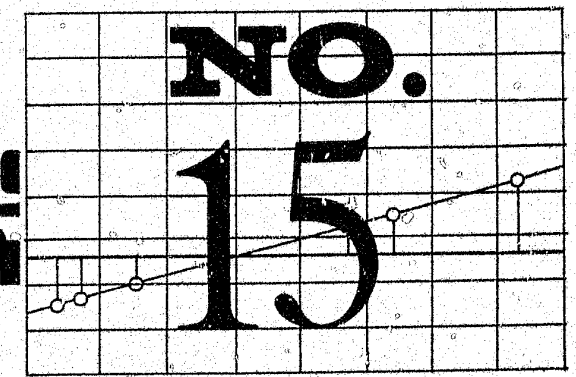
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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE/DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT/BUREAU OF CRIMINAL STATISTICS



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SEARCH REPORT



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THE BURGLAR IN CALIFORNIA- A PROFILE

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THE BURGLAR IN CALIFORNIA
A PROFILE

FOREWORD

In its continuing effort to better describe the nature of crime and the criminal, the Bureau of Criminal Statistics (BCS) initiated this study to draw a profile of the average burglar in California.

The primary focus is on offender data collected in the 1972 Crime Specific-Burglary Program and related studies. However, to present as much information as possible on burglars, data collected by BCS through its ongoing Police, Court and Juvenile Probation reporting programs are included as appendices.

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INTRODUCTION

Burglary is the most prevalent felony crime reported in California each year. Because of the volume and the surreptitious nature of the crime and the criminal, it is difficult for the police to solve more than a nominal proportion of burglaries. It is reasonable to assume they concentrate their major efforts on crimes in which large property values are involved and those which appear to be the work of professionals. (The professional is defined as the persistent thief who makes his living primarily by committing burglaries.)

Professionals are certainly one part of the burglary picture, but their overall impact is questionable. In 1970 and 1971 the Bureau of Criminal Statistics took a close look at what is generally considered the professionally committed burglary and the professional burglar in the publications, "Safe Burglaries In California" and "Safe Burglars Part II." In these studies the crime of safe burglary was probed. It was found that this particular offense is only the top of the iceberg, comprising about 1 percent of the total burglaries reported. It appeared, from the conclusions of the studies, that there was a gradual decline in this offense in relation to other property crimes. Assuming this would apply to all, professionals then would seem to account for only a small proportion of the burglaries committed in California.

The question of who is committing the burglaries needs to be answered in order for any anti-burglary program to have the proper focus.

SUMMARY

The average person arrested for burglary is probably an amateur committing a crime of opportunity.

Patterns of burglary arrests since 1960 have changed from predominately adult arrests to present ratios of about half adults and half juveniles.

The average burglar is white, a male and under 30 years old.

Most burglars apprehended worked in groups of two or more rather than alone.

Most burglaries occurred within three miles of the residence of the burglar.

BURGLARY AND BURGLARS -- GENERAL

The crime of burglary, (defined in Appendix A) no matter where, when, or how it occurs, has one consistent element, the burglar. But who is the burglar? Is he young, middle aged, old? Does he operate alone or in groups? Does he make his living by committing burglaries or is he just a sometime offender? Does he operate generally in his own neighborhood or does he range more widely? These questions need to be answered to adequately describe the average burglar.

Burglary offenses in California have occurred at an increasing rate over the past few years (Appendix B); from 881.4 per 100,000 population in 1960 to 1941.5 in 1972. Arrests for burglary have also risen over the same period of time (Appendix C), from 38,307 in 1960 to 71,348 in 1972. While these figures indicate the problem, they do not say much about the offender. The problem of describing him cannot be answered looking at these gross figures.

Figures are available from summary police reporting (Appendix D) on numbers of adults and juveniles apprehended and the police disposition, but this information still is not adequate to describe the average burglar.

The superior court and juvenile justice data on offenders (Appendices E and F) received routinely by BCS can describe the offender to some degree. This information, however, is somewhat biased because only the more severe offenders graduate into superior court or into the juvenile justice system and excludes those dismissed early in the prosecution process.

An adequate description of the average burglar must begin with those apprehended initially by the police, as was done in this study. The following section describes the methodology for obtaining the basic data.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

BCS has been collecting and developing in-depth information on burglary offenses and offenders since January 1972. Beginning with a special study of burglary in one jurisdiction for an entire year, 1971, and continuing into the first Crime Specific-Burglary Program starting in April 1972, information has been collected which describes both the offense and the offender in terms of data elements normally available in police crime, arrest and supplemental reports.

Seven California agencies contributed the data used in this report. Initially the Culver City Police Department submitted all burglary crime and arrest reports for 1971 from their jurisdiction. San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles and San Diego Police Departments and the Los Angeles and Orange County Sheriffs' Offices participated in the Crime Specific-Burglary Program and submitted crime and arrest reports from selected target areas of their jurisdictions from April 1972 until June 1973.

Each agency submitted to BCS all burglary crime, arrest and supplemental reports. Each document was edited and those selected data elements were coded and keypunched which were considered to best describe the offense and the offender.

In this report only the offender will be considered. Each offender was linked back to the actual offense for which he was responsible by agency crime report number. The unit of count shown here is one individual for a specific burglary.

Each agency participating contributed offender arrest reports as shown in Table I.

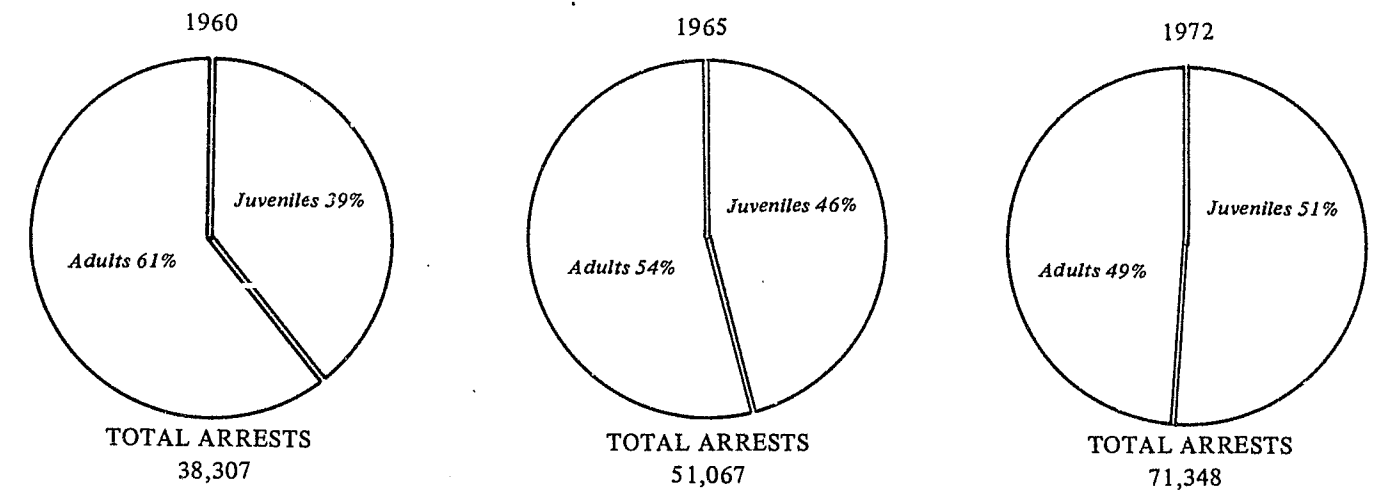
TABLE I

BURGLARY OFFENDERS

By Arresting Agency

	Number	Percent
Total	1,242	100.0
Sheriff's department		
Los Angeles County ..	175	14.1
Orange County	176	14.1
Police department		
Culver City	122	9.9
Los Angeles	61	4.9
Oakland	259	21.0
San Diego	278	22.3
San Francisco	171	13.7

FIGURE I
BURGLARY ARRESTS IN CALIFORNIA



DISCUSSION

Figure I shows a noticeable change which occurred over the past 12 years in the patterns of arrests for burglary in California. From a statewide ratio of 61 percent adults to 39 percent juveniles in 1960 the ratio shifted to 49 percent adults and 51 percent juveniles in 1972. The present picture, then, is that of a crime where half those arrested are 17 years of age or younger.

TABLE II

BURGLARY OFFENDERS

By Age

	Number	Percent
Total	1,242	100.0
17 and under .	613	49.4
18-19	165	13.3
20-24	243	19.6
25-29	116	9.3
30-34	35	2.8
35-39	33	2.7
40-44	17	1.4
45-49	12	0.9
50 and over ..	8	0.6

Table II shows that 49.4 percent of the offenders selected for this special study are 17 years old and under, 62.7 percent are 19 and under, 82.3 percent are 24 and under and 91.6 percent are 29 and under. Only eight of each 100 offenders were 30 or older. These age groupings indicate burglary is definitely a crime of the young offender.

The offender's age is the most obvious factor in the arrest pattern changes over the past 12 years. A simplified age distribution - juveniles under 18, adults 18-29 and adults 30 and over - will form the basis for analysis in the following special study section.

TABLE III
BURGLARY OFFENDERS

Sex by Age Group

	Total	Percent	Juvenile	Percent	Adult			
					18-29	Percent	30 and over	Percent
Total ...	1,242	100.0	613	100.0	524	100.0	105	100.0
Males ...	1,138	91.6	566	92.3	474	90.5	98	93.3
Females .	104	8.4	47	7.7	50	9.5	7	6.7

Sex

Burglars are predominantly male as shown in Table III. There are no outstanding percentage differences for the various age groups by sex, males make up over 90 percent in all age categories.

TABLE IV
BURGLARY OFFENDERS

Race by Age Group

	Total	Percent	Juvenile	Percent	Adult			
					18-29	Percent	30 and over	Percent
Total	1,242	100.0	613	100.0	524	100.0	105	100.0
White	799	64.3	413	67.4	321	61.3	65	61.9
Mexican-American .	78	6.3	23	3.8	42	8.0	13	12.4
Negro	355	28.6	175	28.5	154	29.4	26	24.8
Other	10	0.8	2	0.3	7	1.3	1	0.9

Table IV shows whites constituted 64.3 percent of burglars apprehended in the study jurisdictions. Ratios of juveniles to adults in the race grouping show whites are 51.7 percent juveniles to 48.3 percent adults; Mexican-Americans 29.5 percent juveniles to 70.5 percent adults and Negroes 49.3 percent juveniles to 50.7 percent adults. White and Negro burglars are equivalent in regard to the juvenile and adult mix, while Mexican-American burglars are primarily (70.5 percent) adults.

TABLE V
BURGLARY OFFENDERS
Prior Record by Age Group

	Total	Percent	Juvenile	Percent	Adult			
					18-29	Percent	30 and over	Percent
Total ..	1,242	100.0	613	100.0	524	100.0	105	100.0
None ..	692	55.8	561	91.5	121	23.1	10	9.5
Minor ..	229	18.4	45	7.4	169	32.2	15	14.3
Major ..	229	18.4	7	1.1	189	36.1	33	31.4
Prison ..	92	7.4	-	-	45	8.6	47	44.8

The burglar is primarily white, a male and under 30 years. He has been arrested at least one time for the present burglary offense. Prior criminal records for all those arrested (Table V) show that 55.8 percent had no prior records and 18.4 percent had minor records. The remaining 25.8 percent had either major prior records or had been in prison. (See Appendix G for definitions of prior records.)

The juveniles were primarily (91.5 percent) in the no prior record classification. Juvenile records, however, are not as complete as those of adults. Various local booking practices and court decisions make juvenile records incomplete at the state level. If the juvenile had a CYA commitment, however, it would show in state records. The older burglars have more serious records, especially those in the over 30 category (76.2 percent) in the major and prison categories. The older the burglar, the more serious his record. Thus, the majority of burglars are in the younger age groups and tend to have less serious records.

TABLE VI
BURGLARY OFFENDERS

Existing Criminal Status by Age Group

	Total	Percent	Juvenile	Percent	Adult			
					18-29	Percent	30 and over	Percent
Total	1,242	100.0	613	100.0	524	100.0	105	100.0
Not under commitment .	973	78.3	607	99.0	314	59.9	52	49.5
Under commitment .	269	21.7	6	1.0	210	40.1	53	50.5
Parole	92	7.4	5	0.8	60	11.5	29	27.6
Probation ..	176	14.2	1	0.2	149	28.4	24	22.9
Serving term	1	0.1	-	-	1	0.2	-	-

When an arrest takes place, the police sometimes find the arrestee is already on some kind of court commitment for another offense. Table VI shows the majority of all the burglars, 78.3 percent were not under any commitment when apprehended on the present burglary charge. Looking at the age groupings, the younger individuals again dominate the not under commitment category. The older persons (50.5 percent) tend to be under some kind of previous commitment. As in prior records, the older the person, the more serious tends to be his past criminal experience.

TABLE VII
BURGLARY OFFENDERS

Offenders per Offense by Age

	Total	Percent	Juvenile	Percent	Adult			
					18-29	Percent	30 and over	Percent
Offenders . . .	1,242	100.0	613	100.0	524	100.0	105	100.0
One	366	29.5	119	19.4	193	36.8	54	51.4
Two	435	35.0	216	35.2	186	35.5	33	31.4
Three	221	17.8	112	18.3	92	17.6	17	16.2
Four	115	9.3	87	14.2	28	5.3	-	-
Five and over	105	8.4	79	12.9	25	4.8	1	1.0

Stereotyped burglars are thought of as individuals with dark clothing, or perhaps masks who ply their trade alone with secrecy and stealth; as a matter of fact, the burglars examined tended to work in groups of two or more. Overall, as seen in Table VII, only 29.5 percent of burglars in this study who were arrested worked alone. In comparing age groups, it is evident that juveniles and young adults tend to work primarily with other persons. The mode for juveniles and young adults is in the two persons per burglary category. For the older adults, the mode is the lone offender grouping. Older adults, however, still work with others 48.6 percent of the time.

TABLE VIII
DISTANCE FROM BURGLARY SCENE TO OFFENDER'S RESIDENCE

By Age

	Total	Percent	Juvenile	Percent	Adult			
					18-29	Percent	30 and over	Percent
Total known	1,220	100.0	600	100.0	518	100.0	102	100.0
Within one mile	617	50.5	386	64.4	197	38.1	34	33.4
One to three miles . . .	257	21.1	124	20.7	112	21.6	21	20.6
Three to five miles . . .	115	9.4	35	5.8	70	13.5	10	9.8
Five to ten miles	112	9.2	26	4.3	67	12.9	19	18.6
Ten miles and over . . .	119	9.8	29	4.8	72	13.9	18	17.6

Note: Of the total 1,242 offenders, mileage was unknown for 22.

Police knowledge of the professional burglar indicates that he travels widely in pursuit of his profession. However, the average burglar in the study, according to Table VIII, committed his burglaries in his own city and very close to his own neighborhood. Overall, 50.5 percent committed their offense within one mile, 71.6 percent within three miles and 81.0 percent within five miles of where they lived at the time of their arrest. Juveniles tended to stay within one mile, 64.4 percent of the time and within three miles in 85.1 percent of the cases. Young adults operated within one mile, 38.1 percent and within three miles, 59.7 percent of the time. Older adults travelled farther more frequently but still were within one mile (33.4 percent) and within three miles 54.0 percent of the time.

The major conclusion of this report is that burglary is primarily a crime of opportunity rather than the work of professionals.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Burglary and Housebreaking

459. (Burglary defined.) Every person who enters any house, room, apartment, tenement, shop, warehouse, store, mill, barn, stable, outhouse or other building, tent, vessel, railroad car, trailer coach as defined by the Vehicle Code, vehicle as defined by said code when the doors of such vehicle are locked, aircraft as defined by the Harbors and Navigation Code, mine or any underground portion thereof, with intent to commit grand or petit larceny or any felony is guilty of burglary.

460. (Degrees of burglary.) 1. Every burglary of an inhabited dwelling house, trailer coach as defined by the Vehicle Code, or building committed in the nighttime, and every burglary, whether in the daytime or nighttime, committed by a person armed with a deadly weapon, or who while in the commission of such burglary arms himself with a deadly weapon, or who while in the commission of such burglary assaults any person, is burglary of the first degree.

2. All other kinds of burglary are of the second degree.

3. This section shall not be construed to supersede or affect Section 464 of the Penal Code.

461. (Punishment for burglary.) Burglary is punishable as follows:

1. Burglary in the first degree: by imprisonment in the State prison for not less than five years.

2. Burglary in the second degree: by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding one year or in the State prison for not less than one year or more than fifteen years.

... in any case in which defendant committed burglary and in the course of commission of the burglary, with the intent to inflict such injury, inflicted great bodily injury on any occupant of the premises burglarized, ... defendant shall suffer confinement in the state prison from 15 years to life.

464. (Burglary with explosives: Definition: Punishment.) Any person who, with intent to commit crime, enters, either by day or by night, any building, whether inhabited or not, and opens or attempts to open any vault, safe, or other secure place by use of acetylene torch or electric arc or nitroglycerine, dynamite, gunpowder, or any other explosive, is guilty of burglary with explosives.

Any person duly convicted of burglary with explosives shall be deemed to be guilty of a felony and shall be punished by imprisonment in the State prison for a term of not less than ten years nor more than forty years.

APPENDIX B

BURGLARY IN CALIFORNIA, 1960-1972

	Total	Rate per 100,000 population	Offenses cleared by arrest	Percent cleared by arrest	Arrests		
					Total	Adult	Juvenile
1960. . .	149,794	881.4	44,120	31.6	38,307	23,526	14,781
1961. . .	143,546	872.9	47,017	32.8	40,944	24,073	16,871
1962. . .	154,564	904.2	39,001	25.2	42,248	24,048	18,200
1963. . .	171,549	970.6	41,540	24.2	44,523	24,352	20,170
1964. . .	191,150	1048.3	42,916	22.5	46,319	24,047	22,272
1965. . .	218,078	1162.7	47,372	21.7	51,067	27,421	23,646
1966. . .	237,535	1221.9	47,851	20.2	49,424	24,312	25,112
1967. . .	265,780	1360.5	53,370	20.1	55,739	27,717	28,022
1968. . .	299,589	1514.5	54,436	18.2	63,345	30,851	32,494
1969. . .	321,749	1620.4	53,567	16.7	65,085	31,051	34,034
1970. . .	348,575	1742.6	59,092	17.0	66,735	33,095	33,640
1971. . .	391,049	1930.2	67,201	17.2	72,364	36,522	35,842
1972. . .	398,465	1941.5	66,443	16.7	71,348	35,263	36,085

APPENDIX C

BURGLARY ARRESTS

Year by Type of Offender

	Total	Adults	Percent	Juveniles	Percent
1960. .	38,307	23,526	61.4	14,781	38.6
1961. .	40,944	24,073	58.8	16,871	41.2
1962. .	42,248	24,048	56.9	18,200	43.1
1963. .	47,523	24,352	54.7	20,170	45.3
1964. .	46,319	24,047	51.9	22,272	48.1
1965. .	51,067	27,421	53.7	23,646	46.3
1966. .	49,424	24,312	49.2	25,112	50.8
1967. .	55,739	27,717	49.7	28,022	50.3
1968. .	63,345	30,851	48.7	32,494	51.3
1969. .	65,085	31,051	47.7	34,034	52.3
1970. .	66,735	33,095	49.6	33,640	50.4
1971. .	72,364	36,522	50.5	35,842	49.5
1972. .	71,348	35,263	49.4	36,085	50.6

APPENDIX D

BURGLARY CRIMES AND ARRESTS IN CALIFORNIA, 1972

TABLE 1

BURGLARY CRIMES REPORTED

By Type of Premise

	Number	Percent	Value
Total	398,465	100.0	\$131,679,262
Residence	263,331	66.1	90,149,672
Other structures	135,134	33.9	41,529,590

TABLE 2

BURGLARY ARRESTS

By Type of Offender

	Number	Percent
Total	71,348	100.0
Adult	35,263	49.4
Juvenile	36,085	50.6

TABLE 3

ADULT BURGLARY ARRESTS

By Police Disposition

	Number	Percent
Total	35,263	100.0
Released	7,077	20.1
Turned over to other jurisdiction	1,130	3.2
Misdemeanor complaint	13,314	37.8
Felony complaint	13,742	38.9

TABLE 4

JUVENILE BURGLARY ARRESTS

By Police Disposition

	Number	Percent
Total	36,085	100.0
Handled within department	9,593	26.6
Referred to other agencies	594	1.6
Probation department	25,898	71.8

APPENDIX E

ADULT BURGLARY PROSECUTIONS IN CALIFORNIA COURTS, 1972

TABLE 1

ADULT FELONY COMPLAINTS TERMINATED IN LOWER COURT

By Reason for Termination

	Number	Percent
Total	6,942	100.0
Refiled as a misdemeanor.	1,456	21.0
Misdemeanor under Section 17 P.C	3,042	43.8
Certified to juvenile court . . .	95	1.4
Felony prosecution in other jurisdiction.	84	1.2
Dismissed	2,265	32.6

TABLE 2

BURGLARY DEFENDANTS DISPOSED OF IN SUPERIOR COURT

By Type of Disposition

	Number	Percent
Total	10,044	100.0
Non-convictions	883	8.8
Dismissed	524	5.2
Acquitted	359	3.6
Convicted	9,161	91.2
Plea of guilty.	7,931	79.0
Trial	1,230	12.2

TABLE 3

DISPOSITIONS OF BURGLARY DEFENDANTS CONVICTED IN SUPERIOR COURT

By Type of Sentence

	Number	Percent
Total	9,161	100.0
Prison.	845	9.2
California Youth Authority. . . .	424	4.6
Straight probation.	2,514	27.4
Probation and jail.	3,724	40.7
Jail.	1,007	11.1
Fine.	20	0.2
California Rehabilitation Center.	616	6.7
Department of Mental Hygiene. . .	11	0.1

TABLE 4

BURGLARY DEFENDANTS DISPOSED OF IN SUPERIOR COURT

By Age

	Number	Percent
Total known	10,002	100.0
Under 20.	1,413	14.1
20-24	4,139	41.4
25-29	2,062	20.6
30-34	1,088	10.9
35-39	587	5.9
40-44	372	3.7
45-49	166	1.6
50 and over	175	1.8

TABLE 5

BURGLARY DEFENDANTS DISPOSED OF IN SUPERIOR COURT

By Sex

	Number	Percent
Total known	9,991	100.0
Male.	9,478	94.9
Female.	513	5.1

TABLE 6

BURGLARY DEFENDANTS DISPOSED OF IN SUPERIOR COURT

By Race

	Number	Percent
Total known	9,991	100.0
White	5,112	51.2
Mexican-American.	1,649	16.5
Negro	3,109	31.1
Other	121	1.2

TABLE 7

BURGLARY DEFENDANTS DISPOSED OF IN SUPERIOR COURT

By Prior Record

	Number	Percent
Total known	9,913	100.0
None.	1,221	12.3
Minor	2,416	24.4
Major	4,007	40.4
Prison.	2,269	22.9

TABLE 8

BURGLARY DEFENDANTS DISPOSED OF IN SUPERIOR COURT

By Existing Criminal Status

	Number	Percent
Total known	9,913	100.0
Not under commitment.	4,945	49.9
Under commitment.	4,968	50.1
Parole.	2,165	21.8
California Department of Corrections	864	8.7
California Youth Authority.	762	7.7
California Rehabilitation Center.	539	5.4
Probation	2,762	27.9
Institution	41	0.4

APPENDIX F

JUVENILE BURGLARY REFERRALS TO CALIFORNIA PROBATION DEPARTMENTS, 1972

TABLE 1

JUVENILES REFERRED TO PROBATION FOR BURGLARY

By Disposition^a

	Number	Percent
Total	16,989	100.0
Dismissed or referred to other agencies.	6,167	36.3
Informal probation.	3,604	21.2
Petition filed - juvenile court	7,218	42.5

^aDoes not include cases which were awaiting initial determination in Alameda County.

TABLE 2

JUVENILES REFERRED TO PROBATION FOR BURGLARY

By Sex

	Number	Percent
Total	16,989	100.0
Boys.	15,837	93.2
Girls	1,152	6.8

TABLE 3

JUVENILES REFERRED TO PROBATION FOR BURGLARY

By Race^a

	Number	Percent
Total known	16,539	100.0
White	10,671	64.6
Mexican-American.	2,125	12.8
Negro	3,480	21.0
Other	263	1.6

^aAlameda County not included (data not available).

TABLE 4

JUVENILE COURT BURGLARY DISPOSITIONS OF INITIAL PETITIONS^a

By Disposition

	Number	Percent
Total	7,030	100.0
Dismissed	1,339	19.0
Placed on probation as non-ward	758	10.8
Formal probation.	4,827	68.7
Remanded to adult court	65	0.9
Committed to California Youth Authority	41	0.6

^aExcludes transfers to other counties.

APPENDIX G

Criminal History Information

Data Element

Prior Record - Prior to date of current arrest

I. No Prior Record

X. No prior arrests

II. Minor Prior Record

0. One or two arrests only - no disposition given.
1. Three to seven arrests - no dispositions or one or two convictions of less than 90 days jail or probation of less than two years.
2. Eight or more arrests - no dispositions or three, four or five convictions of less than 90 days or probation of less than two years.
3. Six or more convictions of less than 90 days or probation of less than two years.

III. Major Prior Record

4. One or two convictions of 90 days jail or more or probation of two years or more.
5. Three or more convictions of 90 days jail or more or probation of two years or more.

IV. Prior Prison Record

6. One prison commitment and no more than one major.
7. One prison commitment, with two or more majors.
8. Two prison commitments.
9. Three or more prison commitments

Notes: - CYA commitment from juvenile court = major conviction.
- CYA commitment from superior court = prison sentence.
- YCA commitment (Federal Court) = prison sentence.
- Federal Juvenile Delinquency Act commitment = major.
- Federal commitment of 13 months or less = major conviction.
- Federal commitment of over 13 months = prison sentence.

- Reformatory commitment of juvenile = major conviction.
- Reformatory commitment of adult = prison sentence.
- Probation less than two years = minor.
- Probation two years or more = major.
- CRC or MDSO = major.
- All fines coded as minor.
- PV with a new commitment, count previous commitment as a prison.
- USDB - US Detention Barracks - major if under 13 months.
- Returned on 1168 P.C. - count as prison if time is a year or more.

END