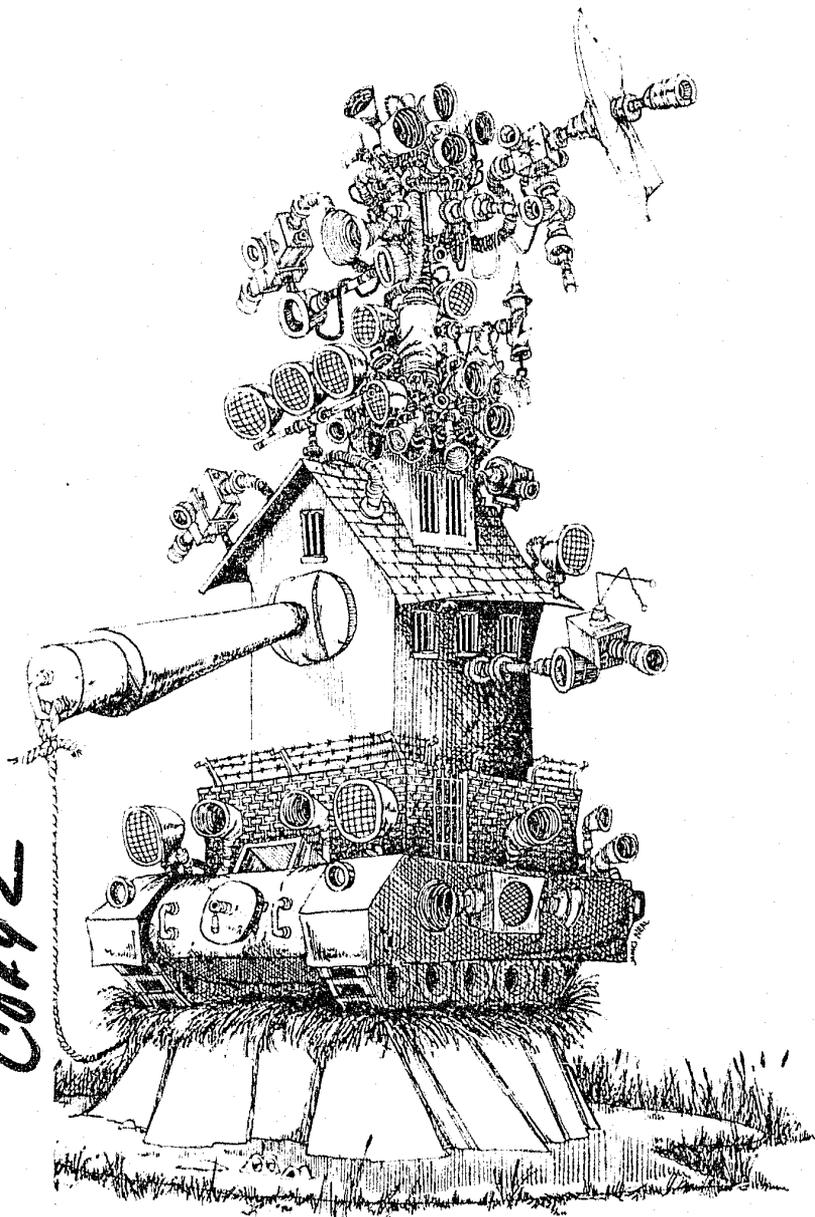


# Home Security

## Book Two: The Burglary Game



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 National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice  
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HOME SECURITY

BOOK TWO: The Burglary Game

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## PREFACE

Burglary is the most pervasive crime in the United States. It cuts across geographic, economic and cultural boundaries. While it is not officially classified as a crime of violence, burglary creates the fear of violence. Because of it many people no longer feel safe in their homes.

This booklet is designed to help you prevent burglary where it counts most--in your home. It makes no difference whether your home is a small apartment in the city or a large house in the suburbs. In real life, the burglary game is played everywhere. You can win if you follow the rules, play the "game" carefully and seriously. The chances of your home being burglarized will diminish. But it all depends on you. We can provide the tools. You must provide the energy.

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## BASIC BELIEFS

1. Most residential burglaries are committed by young amateurs. They choose your house or apartment rather than your neighbor's on the basis of:
  - a. The ease of access;
  - b. The likelihood they won't be observed or interrupted;
  - c. A belief that they won't be caught;
  - d. The prospects of attractive and easily disposed of loot.
  
2. Five distinct groups have interest in burglary: you, the burglars, the police, insurance companies, and the buyers of stolen goods. Of these five YOU are the one with:
  - a. The greatest interest in preventing your own burglary;
  - b. An immediate ability to do something about it.
  
3. If you're like the rest of us, you've done very little to protect yourself. You may even believe that it is someone else's responsibility. Some of you have considered buying or actually have bought "hot" or stolen goods. To be brief, and annoyingly candid about it, you may be a big part of the problem but fortunately you can also be a big part of the solution.

## INTRODUCTION

Traditional thinking has the burglar--a criminal--about to prey on you--the victim. With diligence, skill, devotion, and superhuman luck, the police are expected somehow to appear magically at the precise moment the criminal is about to make off with your possessions. That sort of thinking has led to a lot of burglaries, few burglars caught, fewer still convicted, and very little stolen property recovered.

We reject the idea that your local police are or ever can be an effective means of burglary prevention UNLESS you take over a major role, learn how to deal effectively with your own security, and act on what you learn.

This game is intended to help you help yourself. IT WILL NOT SUCCEED UNLESS YOU PLAY WELL. To play well will require effort, time, and total concentration. You will benefit, or fail to benefit, in direct proportion to your own efforts.

## RULES OF PLAY

1. Forfeiture: If the burglar elects to pass up your home because of the security precautions you have taken (i.e. the burglar elects not to play) and burglarizes someone else whose home is not as well protected, then he forfeits the game and you win.

2. Winning: The burglar wins if he can enter your home, locate and seize your valuable property (the prize), carry it away, and sell it. You win if he is unable to enter your home, cannot locate or seize your property, is prevented from carrying it away or cannot sell it. You also win if he is detected at any point, or if he voluntarily breaks off his attack for any reason.

3. Moves: The Burglary Game consists of four basic moves:

a. Breaking In: The burglar wins this move if he can get into your home using common burglary tools without being detected in the process. If he cannot get in, or is detected, you win the move.

b. Locating and Seizing the Prize: The burglar wins this move if he can find and take your valuable portable property. If he cannot find it (it is well hidden, or has been put in a safe deposit box at the bank) or cannot capture it (it's locked or stored in a strong room), then you win.

c. Exiting: If the burglar cannot get out without being discovered or cannot carry away the property he has chosen, then you win. If he can, he wins the move.

d. Selling: If the burglar is unable to sell your property, or if it is traced back to him by the police, he loses. If your property is recovered and returned, you win the move.

4. Dress and Demeanor: The burglar is allowed to dress in any manner he desires. He can pretend to be a repairman, meter reader, letter carrier, moving van driver, door-to-door salesman or use any other disguise he chooses to hide his identity as a burglar. He is permitted to lie when questioned either by you, your neighbors or the police. If you are able to penetrate his disguise, he loses.

## PLAYERS

The burglary game is best played by two or more players. One of your neighbors can be the home dweller while you play the burglar. But if you are a little bashful about involving your neighbors at this point, you can play a solitaire version of the game acting in both roles.

## PREPARATION

A) Psychological Preparation. The role of home dweller is very familiar to you. The role of burglar will take some practice. You will have to adopt a new view of the world. The basic premise a burglar works under is that what's his is his, and what's yours is also his, if he can get it. As a burglar you are preoccupied with five basic concerns:

1. How hard is it to get in?
2. Can I get in, take the prize, and get out?
3. How good (valuable) does the prize look?
4. Can I sell it easily for a good price?
5. What is my chance of being caught?

As the burglar, you must memorize these questions. These are your major concerns. You are sneaky, clever and fast. But you must be careful and cautious. You are afraid of being caught. YOU MUST FEAR CAPTURE AND JAIL (the penalty for playing poorly).

B) Tools. A burglar needs tools. A large screwdriver and small crowbar are a must. A hammer and plastic credit card are optional. Place them in a small satchel, briefcase, or gym bag and carry them while playing.

As the home dweller, you will need only your copy of Books One and Three, some note paper, and a pen or pencil.

C) Pick a Target. If a neighbor is willing, make his place the target. You, the burglar, will be less familiar with it, it will be more fun and you'll learn faster. Otherwise, the target is your house or apartment.

D) Check Your Psychological Preparation. Be sure you are comfortable in your role as the burglar. Repeat the five basic concerns. If you feel silly, start over again until you feel sure of yourself.

If you have the tools, the target residence, the burglar's attitude, and understand the rules, you are ready to play. Remember, the player most likely to win is the one who uses his imagination and applies all of his skills, talents, experience and intuition to playing the game.

## MOVE 1: BREAKING IN

### Burglar:

1. Using only my tools and imagination, what are the five easiest ways

to get into the target? (Prowl around!) List them in order on your note paper.

- a. Why are they easy?
  - b. What, if anything, do the easy ways have in common? How do they differ?
2. Did you feel noticed or unnoticed while prowling around these entry points? (Consider each separately.)
- a. What point felt safest? Least observed by neighbors, the police or passerby?
  - b. Are there any noisy dogs?
3. How long would it take me to get in? What would slow me down? (Hints: Look at hinges; locks on doors and windows; bars or grills; sturdiness or doors and frames; lighting or lack thereof; peepholes which might have observers behind them.)
4. Can I be sure that no one is inside the target? (Hints: Look for uncollected mail; newspapers; deliveries; lack of light and sound; an empty garage; uncut lawn.)
5. What can I see from outside looking in? Are there any valuables visible? (How good does the prize look? Is it worth the risk?)

#### Home Dweller:

1. What can be done to make the easy points of entry harder?
  - a. What could I do if I had \$1000 to spend?
  - b. What can I do for free or almost free with nails, screws, blocks of wood, noise makers, common tools?
  - c. How can I make the easy ways just look harder?
2. How can I make each entry point feel less safe? Can the neighbors help? How can I enlist their help? What can I offer in return?
3. How can I make it appear that someone is always inside? How would this make the burglar feel?
4. How can I advertise the presence of an alarm or that my property inside is marked for identification by the police?

#### MOVE II: LOCATING AND SEIZING THE PRIZE

#### Burglar:

1. Once I am inside, can I move about freely without being observed? Where is this most true? Most false? Is anyone apt to notice the tampering with my point of entry while I am inside?
2. What valuables are unconcealed and unsecured? Money? Jewelry? Portable appliances, tools? Firearms? Bikes? Stereo?

- a. Are these items locked or otherwise secured? How long would it take me to break them loose? Do I have that much time?
  - b. Are these items marked for easy identification by the police?
3. Where might valuables be hidden? Use your imagination.

Home Dweller:

1. How can I increase the likelihood that someone (myself, a friend, the police, a neighbor) will come along while the burglar is inside. (Hints: Arrangements with the neighbor or the police for house checks; alarms; dogs.)
2. What valuable items should be stored in a bank safe deposit box? Which should be stored in a strong room? Which should be individually locked?
3. Where can I hide valuables?

MOVE III: EXITING

Burglar:

1. Can I get back out while carrying the items I want to steal? (Hint: Limit yourself to small valuable items where possible.)
2. How many trips do I dare make?

Home Dweller:

1. How can I make it harder for a burglar to get out with the prize? (Hint: Consider double cylinder locks, secured hinges.)

MOVE IV: SELLING

Let's change your role for a moment. You are now a BUYER OF STOLEN GOODS. There are only two major determinants of profit for a burglar. The ease of selling the items (ready buyers) and the price the buyers will pay. Both of these are determined by the same supply and demand checklist. Here it is. Remember you are now a BUYER OF STOLEN GOODS.

1. Do people, preferably lots of them, want the items?
  - a. What items do you want that you can't afford or can't justify the expense for right now? List them. What would you want if you were poor? List them.
  - b. What items would you buy for a fraction of their legitimate value? What would encourage you? Why?
  - c. What does or would keep you from buying these same items? Why?
  - d. What would reduce the price you are willing to pay?
2. Assume that you are a professional buyer of stolen goods for resale

and go through items a, b, c, and d again.

Let's assume that many people do want and will continue to want some property enough to buy suspicious goods at bargain prices. (However, it should be obvious that people who buy stolen goods cannot complain if they are again stolen.) Buyers create sellers (fences) and suppliers (burglars). Imagine yourself with 100 stolen color TV's, and no one willing to buy them at \$25 each. Rather unprofitable, isn't it?

Suppose that a policeman discovers those 100 color TV's. He can arrest and convict the person that has them, right? WRONG! He is helpless unless he can identify the victims, the people from whom the TV's were stolen. Otherwise, he can't prove that they were stolen. Serial numbers aren't much help either. Many items don't have one. Most people don't record them. Even if they are recorded and reported to your local police, there is no central file of such numbers. So a burglar takes your TV from Boston and gets caught or stopped in New York. No central file means he'll never be connected with the list kept by the Boston police. This is lucky for the burglar, unlucky for the owner. Before you get mad at the police for inefficiency, ask yourself how they could possibly keep track of millions of items each year.

Now imagine that a policeman stops a suspicious person with an armful, a carload, a truck load, a pawnshop or a warehouse full of stolen items. Imagine that he or she could pick up the police radio, call in a description of the suspicious property items and in less than a minute determine:

- a. Is the item stolen?
- b. Who was the owner?
- c. What is his or her address?
- d. Which police department covers that address?

What would happen to the value of the stolen items if this were true? Would you want a color TV set that could result in a conviction for receiving stolen goods? Would you risk stealing, transporting and selling stolen goods if the police could be that effective (one minute or less and the policeman knows!)

Sound far fetched? Not really. The police can be that effective if your personal property is engraved. This is being done right now in many parts of the United States. It has been widely advertised, yet substantially less than one percent of all stolen property is currently marked in a way which permits the police to catch and convict. The system is a combination of radios, teletype machines, and computers coordinated at the national level by the FBI. But what is really important is that it works and works well.

The engraving of valuables with social security numbers by means of electric etching pencils (engravers) was begun in 1963 in Monterey Park, California. Since that time the method has been used in thousands of communities with uniform success.

There are two basic ways for you to get an engraver. The cheapest way is to borrow one from your local police department. Most departments have engravers to lend. Does yours? Call them and ask them if they have identification engravers.

If you can afford it, or if your local police are unable to help, you can buy an engraver (you may wish to share the cost with one or more neighbors). Engravers, like everything else, vary in price according to the

quality of the tool purchased. In this case you can pay anywhere from \$5 to \$15. As a general guide, pick the cheaper ones if you are only engraving large items. If you intend to do fine work on small items (watches, jewelry, etc.), buy one in the medium to expensive category. In general, you will find less expensive models in the hardware sections of discount and department stores. More expensive models can be found in quality hardware stores.

Whether you borrow or buy, be sure that you get instructions and window decals. The decals warn potential burglars that you have engraved your valuables.

A final word about where to engrave a given item. Should you hide the engraving or place it on an obvious surface? Wherever possible, do both! The obvious engraving is best as a deterrent and for rapid police identification. The hidden engraving provides a back-up in case a thief defaces the more obvious engraving.

#### WHO WON THE GAME?

Answer: It makes no difference...this time. This was really a practice run for the real game to follow, though we hope it never takes place.

If you have played the game at all well, you have learned enough to realize that locks; interior and exterior lights; radios; attention to signs that indicate someone's home; vigilant neighbors; closed garages; window stops and pins; clever hiding places; noisy alarms; dogs, and a variety of other such improvements make your home less desirable for burglars. Hopefully you've played well, learned a great deal, and applied what you learned to protect your home. Good. You may even have organized a neighborhood crime prevention council; helped a friend; foiled a burglary; become a member of a voluntary patrol; or spoken up for better police services.

Now you're really ready to play the Burglary Game. Good Luck.

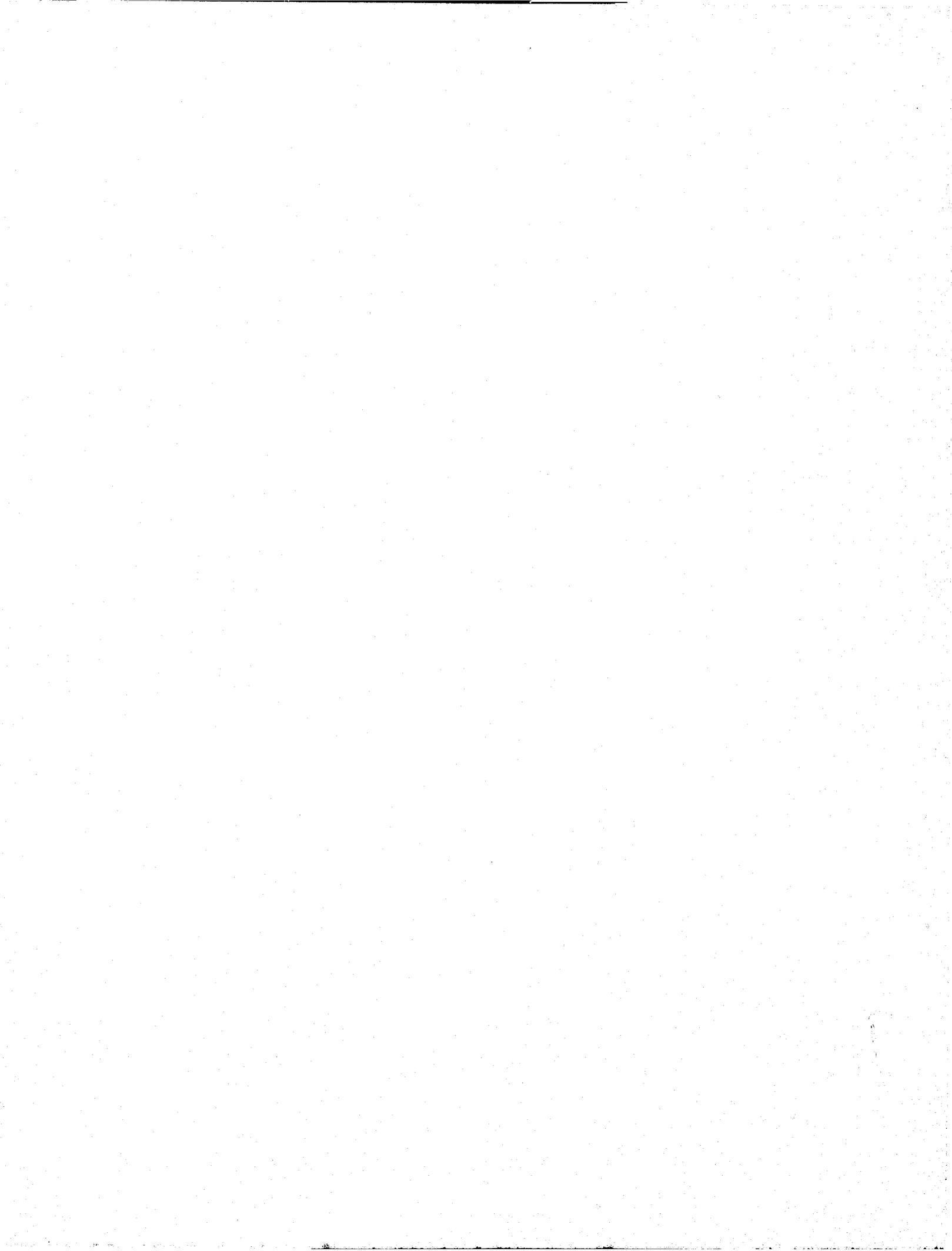
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