

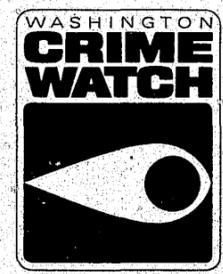
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SHOPLIFTING IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:
THE CRIME AND ITS PREVENTION

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In Cooperation with the
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Introduction	1
United States Trends	2
Washington Trends	3
Scope of Shoplifting Activity	5
Cost of Shoplifting	7
Patterns of the Offense	9
Victimization	9
Time and Season	10
Articles Frequently Stolen	11
Shoplifting Techniques	12
The Shoplifter	14
Amateur or Pro	14
Age	14
Sex	17
Race and Social Class	19
Motivations for Shoplifting	20
Prevention	25
Retailers' Anti-Shoplifting	25
Anti-Shoplifting Campaigns	28
A Washington State Anti-Shoplifting Project	30
Conclusions	33
Bibliography	35
Appendix	39

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PURPOSE

"Shoplifting in the State of Washington" has been prepared for Washington Crime Watch, a unit of the State Attorney General's Office. The purpose of this report is to provide a substantial and accurate foundation for a proposed statewide anti-shoplifting campaign. The research will be used to determine the focus of a media campaign, identify trends in shoplifting, provide up-to-date statistics for advertising and educational efforts, judge the effectiveness of prevention techniques, and provide a possible base for evaluation of the proposed campaign.

RESEARCH METHODS

Twenty-four retail establishments (including security personnel), two private security agencies, four mental health professionals, three psychiatrists, nineteen law enforcement agencies and crime prevention programs, and several state criminal justice planning departments provided input.

Personal interviews were used extensively to gather data and impressions from Washington sources. Requests for information were sent to every state, all national retail associations, and crime prevention institutes.

A thorough literature search was conducted at the Washington State, Seattle Public, and University of Washington libraries. Especially useful were a National Criminal Justice Reference Service computer search and a shoplifting bibliography from the University of Toronto.

A complete bibliography is appended.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

There are several factors which should be mentioned as impediments to the shoplifting research. One problem is the lack of a statewide crime reporting system in Washington. The FBI claims that Washington is one of only seven states without such a program. This makes it nearly impossible to identify crime trends. The fact that shoplifting is treated and reported as a larceny in Washington further obscures the crime.

There are also biases inherent in shoplifting data collected from retailers. The following is a listing of identified problem areas:

1. The majority of store detectives are female. This could result in a disproportionate number of female arrests.

2. Young shoplifters are often inept and thus more likely to be spotted and apprehended.
3. Store personnel spend more time monitoring juveniles because they have a natural inclination to distrust them. Consequently, the apprehension figures may not be representative of shoplifters in general.
4. Many young, elderly or female shoplifters are caught and released without any record being made. Thus, they may be under-represented in store data.
5. Trends within stores are subject to dramatic changes due to turnover in store detectives, and new or expanded security programs.

Biased data is not the only problem. There is also an insufficiency of data. Only the larger stores even try to keep statistics on crime loss and arrests. Often merely the gross yearly apprehension and recovery figures are compiled.

For the above cited reasons, efforts have been made to provide substantiation for those findings thought to be significant.

UNITED STATES TRENDS

The FBI Uniform Crime Report for 1976 states that reported shoplifting offenses rose 50% from 1972 to 1976, as compared to a 37% average rise in all FBI index crimes (Kelley, 1976, pp. 28, 34). Although this is not firm evidence that the amount of shoplifting activity has been increasing, it at least indicates that more shoplifting is being reported to the police.

However, again according to the FBI, this long-term trend altered course in 1976. The shoplifting rate in 1976 was about 2% lower than in 1975 (Kelley, 1976, p. 28). It appears that reported shoplifting may have reached a plateau.

To gain a perspective on the above figures one should know that the U.S. population increased 3% from 1972 to 1976, and the retail sales dollar figure jumped 49% ("Sales and Marketing Management", 1973, 1977). Although perhaps 25% of the sales volume figure is due to inflation, this still means that larger numbers of consumers are buying more and probably spending more total time in the stores. Thus, more potential shoplifters have had more opportunity to steal.

It is interesting to note that the rise in reported shoplifting occurred at the same time that retail shrinkage (loss expressed as a percent of gross sales) was going down. Arthur Kaufmann, president of a business counseling company and author of Combating Shoplifting, states that "...department store shrinkage peaked in 1969 at 2.34%,

has since moved moderately downward and leveled off at just below 2%" (Kaufmann, 1974, p. 4). This could indicate that the nationwide increase reflected a new willingness to have shoplifters arrested, which in turn resulted in reduced shoplifting losses.

The conclusion is that the long term increase in reported shoplifting (not necessarily reflecting incidents) has leveled off and may even be decreasing. And a part of the apparent increase over the last few years is attributable to a larger volume of sales and an increase in the number of shoppers.

WASHINGTON STATE TRENDS

The only statewide figures on shoplifting offenses in Washington come from the FBI and are incomplete because 114 of the 241 law enforcement agencies in this state presently report to the FBI.

TABLE 1: REPORTED SHOPLIFTING OFFENSES IN WASHINGTON STATE
(From FBI Uniform Crime Report - Non-Published Figures)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Offenses</u>	<u>Number of Agencies Reporting</u>	<u>Population Represented</u>
1976	14,353	114	2,314,658*
1975	12,581	90	2,042,436
1974	11,473	81	1,881,028
1973	3,823	25	752,333
1972	6,570	8	1,039,206

*Washington population in 1976 = 3,607,300

To obtain a more accurate picture, statistics were gleaned from a sample of police departments. Even the larger police departments have, in the immediate past, kept poor records. Thus, data is missing for some months or years. Other departments were unwilling to provide requested data for the full five year period (1972-1976). The results are summarized in Table 2 which follows. Almost without exception the number of reported incidents has been rising.

TABLE 2: REPORTED SHOPLIFTING OFFENSES
IN SELECTED WASHINGTON CITIES AND COUNTIES
(from police statistics)

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>% of Change</u>	<u>Years Considered</u>
Aberdeen	149	92	140	165	165	223	+50	1977/1972
Asotin County	-	-	-	-	-	10		
Bellevue	257	249	339	436	488	-	+90	1976/1972
Bellingham	-	-	-	341	392	480		
Bremerton	-	-	-	-	385	336		
Clarkston	-	-	-	-	-	21		
Garfield County	-	-	-	-	-	1		
King County	991	988	753 (2 months missing)	1016	915	904	-9	1977/1972
Kitsap County	-	-	-	46	47	69		
Moses Lake	-	-	-	82	57	91		
Seattle	3104	-	-	-	4770	4708	+52	1977/1972
Spokane	733	619	1234*	1287	1297	1449	+98	1977/1972
* (commissions issued to store security in 1974)								
Spokane County est.	122	est.170	282	254	383	365	+200	1977/1972
	(61-6 mo.)	(85-6 mo.)						
Tacoma	-	-	-	-	1222	1653		
Tukwila	794	-	-	-	-	963	+21	1977/1972
Whitman County	-	-	-	-	-	95	(80-90% from one store)	
Yakima	-	-	570	854	799	774		

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>% of Change</u>	<u>Years Considered</u>
Washington Population*	3,443,500	3,458,200	3,607,300	+4.8	1976/1972
Washington Retail Sales*	\$7,328,829,000	\$9,307,100,000	\$11,544,570,000	+58	1976/1972

* From "Sales & Marketing Management"; Vol. 119, No. 2, 1977; Vol. 115, No. 2, 1975; Vol. III, No. 2, No. 9, 1973.

Apprehensions in Washington stores are also increasing as demonstrated by the following table.

TABLE 3: SHOPLIFTING APPREHENSIONS IN SELECTED WASHINGTON STORES

<u>Store Code</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>
P						825	1263	1777
E							303	449
T	1887	4374	4525	4713	5768	6771	8049	9886
D							1165	1235
Q (figures rounded by company)						6000	7000	7000
A						2464	2610	2822

Increases in apprehensions from 1976 to 1977 range from 8% to 48%. The one store with figures dating back to 1972 indicated a 119% jump between 1972 and 1976 -- part of this was due to a larger number of stores within the chain.

It is the impression of almost all retail security people that there is more actual shoplifting now than in the past. Unfortunately, this feeling is not well documented. When assessing shoplifting trends most retailers and security directors ignore the growing volume of customers and sales, and the ever increasing numbers of security personnel. A new awareness of shoplifting as a serious detriment to profits also causes managers to claim that shoplifting is becoming a serious problem.

Although the collected statistics show an increase in both apprehended shoplifters and reports to the police it is unlikely that this means that shoplifting has been increasing during the seventies. On the contrary, shoplifting probably peaked in the late sixties and early seventies. The subsequent and tardy reaction of retailers has resulted in loss prevention activity with a consequential "on paper" increase in shoplifting.

SCOPE OF SHOPLIFTING ACTIVITY

Because of the large numbers of cases, shoplifting is a problem not only for police and retailers but also for the judiciary. Shoplifters account for 10% of all reported thefts (Kelley, 1976, p. 29). This is in spite of the fact that shoplifting has long been considered a minor violation, and is one of the most under-reported crimes. A 1975 survey of 846 stores conducted by R. K. Griffin, manager of the security consulting firm of Commercial Service Systems, found that 58% of adults and 74% of juveniles caught shoplifting were released without prosecution (Griffin, 1975,

p. 7). Surveys by this same company reveal that reporting to the police increased from 22.3% in 1963 to 35.5% in 1974 (Griffin, 1974, p. 41; 1975, p. 7). Commercial Service Systems also notes that, "investigation into the reporting practices of the companies represented in this survey indicate that a substantial number of juvenile apprehensions are not reported at all" (Griffin, 1974, p. 2). Thus, no written report is ever made on many shoplifting incidents and the percentage of shoplifters released is actually higher than the figures indicate.

Saul Astor, president of the investigative company Management Safeguards, Inc., revealed that one of every 12 to 22 customers in east coast department stores was a shoplifter. These figures were based on the surveillance of 1,647 customers selected at random. The following table is from the Management Safeguards report (Astor, 1970, p.2).

TABLE 4: SHOPLIFTING IN EASTERN U.S. STORES

City	Number of Tests	Number of Shoplifters	Ratio of Shoplifters to Customers	Percent of Shoplifters	Average Theft
N.Y. Store #1	500	42	1 out of 12	8.4	\$7.15
N.Y. Store #2	361	19	1 out of 19	5.2	5.36
Boston	404	18	1 out of 22	4.4	3.69
Philadelphia	382	30	1 out of 13	7.8	4.86
Total	1,647	109	1 out of 15	6.6	\$5.26

This discussion emphasizes perhaps the most important single indicator of the real scope of shoplifting activity - the sheer numbers of people involved. An article in the "FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin" estimates that one of every 60 customers shoplift (Dornfeld, 1967, p. 3) In a nationwide poll of high school seniors, 91% of the respondents indicated that they had stolen from a retail business (Sabine, 1976, p. B2). Wisner, in a report on "The Teenage Shoplifter", surveyed 1000 high school students. 62% of the males and 32% of females admitted to shoplifting (Hughes, ed., 1973, p. 158). A study of adolescent theft in Illinois reveals that 53% of white males, 57% of non-white males, 47% of white females, and 49% of non-white females had shoplifted while teenagers (Miller, Silveira, Simon, p. 5). All statistics point to the fact that shoplifting is engaged in by the majority of the populace at some time.

Shoplifting remains a serious problem because of the vast numbers of people involved; the relatively large caseload which must be handled by security forces, police and the judiciary; the continued under-reporting by retailers; and, as will be discussed in the next section, the monetary impact of the crime.

COST OF SHOPLIFTING

How much does the crime of shoplifting cost the nation? Most estimates range from \$3.5 billion (Rogers, 1977, p. Fl; Kaufmann, 1974, p. 4) to 5 billion (Texas Retail Federation, 1975; Jones, 1975; Mascaro, 1977, p. 2). Some recent articles have upped the loss figure to \$6 billion ("Sunday Olympian", January 15, 1978; Van Slambrouck, July 8, 1976). The highest estimate located is \$6.5 billion (Illinois Retail Merchants Association).

Unfortunately, sources or methods of derivation for these various figures are not revealed. It appears that most are based on Department of Commerce "loss to crime" statistics. For instance, in Crime in Retailing, the total retail loss due to ordinary business crime is given as \$5.77 billion (Morton, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1975, p. 2). The tendency is for people and organizations to attribute this total crime loss figure entirely to shoplifting.

One can arrive at a more realistic amount by applying the following formula:

\$662 billion	Total 1976 U.S. retail sales ("Sales and Marketing Management", Vol. 119, No. 2).
x.61	Portion of sales subject to pilferage (from Thompson, Seattle Chamber of Commerce, 1972).
<hr/>	
\$404 billion	
x.02	National average retail shrinkage (Kaufmann 1974, "NCPI Hotline" 1977, Detroit S.T.E.M. program). Shrinkage is loss expressed as a percent of gross sales.
<hr/>	
\$8.1 billion	Amount lost to shoplifting, internal theft, paperwork errors, etc.
x.40	Percent of shrinkage which is due to shoplifting (survey of Washington State's stores. Range 25-50%).
<hr/>	
\$3.24 billion	Estimated 1976 national loss to shoplifting.

Note that this loss figure presumably does not include those shoplifted items which are recovered by store detectives in the course of an apprehension (these items should eventually end up back in inventory). So, the actual shoplifting loss is slightly higher than computed, but this additional amount is almost completely recovered by the store (a small proportion of items are damaged during the theft or recovery).

Nationwide, merchants spend an additional \$400 million on loss prevention programs. ("U.S. News and World Report", 1977, p. 61). This is a cost which is usually ignored in assessing the impact of the crime, but, since most retail security programs exist because of the shoplifting threat, it must be included.

The same formula used to compute the national cost of shoplifting may be applied to Washington State:

\$11.6 billion	1976 State retail sales.
x.61	Portion subject to pilferage.
<hr/>	
\$ 7.1 billion	
x.02	Retail shrinkage.
<hr/>	
\$142 million	Retail loss.
x.40	Portion of shrinkage due to shoplifting.
<hr/>	
\$56.8 million	Estimated 1976 Washington State loss to shoplifting.

If this loss figure is divided by the population of the state (3,607,300), the result is approximately a \$16 loss per person in 1976. This is within reasonable distance of a 1971 Seattle Chamber of Commerce estimate of \$13.34 per capita. Store security programs would add to this cost, but figures on security expenditures are unavailable.

A common approach among anti-shoplifting advertising is to claim that, "Consumers pay from 3-5% or more..." because of shoplifting ("The Georgia Bureau on Crime Prevention", 1976, p. 1). Other articles claim 5-6% increase in retail costs (Buck, 1977).

These estimates seem exaggerated when shrinkage figures are reviewed. Kaufmann, in Combating Shoplifting, states that shrinkage varies widely -- as high as 5% and as low as 1% (Kaufmann, 1974, p. 4). A 2-5% range is quoted by M. Cameron in the classic book on shoplifting, The Booster and the Snitch (Cameron, 1964, p. 10). Dan Mascaro, writing for the National Crime Prevention Institute of Louisville, Kentucky, gives the current national average shrinkage as 2% (Mascaro, 1977, p. 2).

Shrinkage in the State of Washington is summarized in Table 5.

TABLE 5: SHRINKAGE IN WASHINGTON RETAIL STORES

Type of Store	Store	Shrinkage (% of gross sales)	Year
Department and General Merchandise	G	2.7 (1.0)	1975 (-76)
	P	1.9	1976
	A	2.0	1976
	T	2.5	1976
	Q	1.0	1976
Food	I	1.0	1976
Book and General Merchandise	X	1.1	1976

With even this limited selection of stores, it is clear that an average shrinkage figure would be 2% or less. Since at most only 40% of the shrinkage is due to shoplifting, we have a cost increase to the customer of about .8%. When the cost of loss prevention programs is added, it is possible that the consumer pays an additional 1% for retail purchases because of shoplifting.

Although a 1% or even 2% loss does not sound impressive it does have a major impact on the retailer. Since retail profits usually range between 1% and 5%, a shoplifting loss of 1% can cut profits sharply.

A different way of dramatizing the impact on retailers is to compute the additional sales required to offset profit loss to theft. If a business is operating on a 2% profit, then the theft of a \$20 item will require that additional merchandise in the amount of \$1,000 be sold to compensate. Increasing sales volume is usually not a practical way to offset crime losses because, (1) most businesses are already operating at close to maximum sales potential, and (2) if sales and customer volume were increased, then shoplifting would also increase. It is for these reasons that most theft losses are passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices.

PATTERNS OF THE OFFENSE

Victimization

All stores do not suffer equally from shoplifting. Because small businesses do not have security expertise or personnel they probably experience proportionately higher losses than larger chain stores. The Department of Commerce states that, "...small business suffers an impact from crime which is 3.2 times that of firms with annual receipts of over \$5 million...". Unfortunately, small firms are the least able to absorb these losses, nor can they afford the overhead required for extensive protective measures", (Morton, 1974, p. 1). Excessive shoplifting losses could conceivably force a small business into a non-competitive pricing situation, or even cause closure.

Department stores (including discount and general merchandise outlets) suffer the highest losses to crime (including shoplifting) both in total dollar loss and in proportion to sales. 1974 figures show this category accounting for 41% of sales and 61% of crime loss. Drug stores with only 6% of total retail sales experience a disproportionate 10% of crime loss. Grocery stores make up 42% of sales, but only 21% of loss (Morton, 1975, p. 2). These proportions should also hold true for shoplifting.

Substantiating this conclusion is the dramatic difference in "average recovery per apprehension" among Washington stores. See Table 6.

TABLE 6: AVERAGE RECOVERY PER APPREHENSION IN WASHINGTON STORES

Type of Store	Store	Average Recovery	Year
Department and General Merchandise	A	\$25.33	1976
	P	22.43	1976
	E	18.12	1976
	B	23.99	1976
"Drug", General Merchandise	T	9.87	1976
	Q	5.50	1976
Hardware	H	7.91	1976
Grocery (None reporting)			

The Commercial Service Systems Company's 1974 shoplifting data reveals an average grocery store recovery of \$4.97, a drug store figure of \$5.91, and discount store average recovery of \$9.78 (Griffin, 1975, p. 7).

Only the FBI reports a recovery figure, \$39, which does not seem to fit in with other data (Kelley, 1976, p. 27). This figure is inflated because of the merchant's tendency to have shoplifters formally charged only when the theft is sizable.

From the data presented, we can conclude that department and general merchandise stores are the hardest hit, both per incident, and as a group; grocery stores have the smallest and fewest thefts; and drug and hardware stores fall in between.

Time and Season

Shoplifting does have some identifiable characteristics. Thirteen years of surveying drug, discount and grocery stores has confirmed Commercial Service Systems' belief that most shoplifting -- 38% -- occurs between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. (Griffin, June, 1974, p. 43). Ron Sperry, a police officer and Puget Sound area detective with 3,300 shoplifting arrests to his credit, states that early morning and late afternoon produce the most apprehensions. Only two Washington stores provided figures on time of apprehension. One, a book store, had a peak between noon and 4:00 p.m. The other, a drug and general merchandise store, made most stops between 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Drug stores experience the expected Christmas increase in shoplifting, but this jump is not too significant -- 12.4% of annual apprehensions are made in December (Griffin, June, 1974, p. 42). A local drug and discount store provided the following figures.

TABLE 7: MONTHLY APPREHENSIONS IN DRUG/DISCOUNT STORE 1976

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Total
#	142	178	168	190	185	171	148	165	126	200	196	174	2043
%	6.6	8.7	8.2	9.3	9.1	8.4	7.2	8.1	6.2	9.8	9.6	8.5	100%

No clear trend is identifiable from these limited statistics. Although most department stores did not provide data, they did indicate that a large proportion of shoplifting apprehensions were made during the Christmas and "back-to-school" seasons. Many stores hire more detectives during this period and also make efforts to increase sales clerk awareness of the problem. Stores also make the majority of their sales during Christmas and have the highest levels of customer traffic. These factors tend to increase the number of people apprehended.

Supermarkets do not seem to experience peak shoplifting seasons -- probably because the demand for food is fairly constant (Griffin, June, 1974, p. 42).

Most reporting police departments indicate a rise in reported offenses during the Christmas season. See Table 8.

TABLE 8: 1977 POLICE DEPARTMENT SHOPLIFTING REPORTS BY MONTH

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Highest Month
Yakima	58	70	68	65	66	39	64	56	50	69	74	82	Dec.
King County	105	71	70	48	57	63	85	65	57	79	80	124	Dec.
Aberdeen	10	15	23	22	17	15	14	10	22	29	25	21	Oct.
Bremerton	31	25	30	29	24	23	19	36	21	29	28	41	Dec.
Bellingham	24	45	38	28	56	43	38	48	33	40	46	41	May
Tacoma	111	100	114	120	100	108	84	94	102	130	154	212	Dec.
Spokane County	40	22	62	36	26	28	21	15	24	18	39	34	Mar.
Everett (1976)	25	28	17	30	20	26	31	29	24	31	34	69	Dec.

One can summarize shoplifting occurrence trends in one short sentence, "PEAK HOURS FOR SALES ARE PEAK HOURS FOR SHOPLIFTING", (Griffin, June, 1974, p. 43). The same is true for peak shoplifting seasons.

Articles Frequently Stolen

R. S. Post is the author of Combating Crime Against Small Business, a recent security-related publication. He states that the general characteristics of items most often stolen from retailers are small physical size and high value (Post, 1972, p. 54). Washington retail grocers report that meat, cigarettes, and liquor are frequently targets. Department stores lose jewelry and clothing, especially expensive sportswear and leather coats. Drug stores

have cosmetics, records, vitamins and toys stolen. The following table by Commercial Service Systems lists the most frequently shoplifted items.

TABLE 9: PERCENTAGE OF CASES IN WHICH THE FOLLOWING KIND OF MERCHANDISE WAS RECOVERED FROM THE SHOPLIFTER

	Supermarket	Drug Store	Discount Store
Vitamins	1.3%	1.4%	1.3%
Cigarettes	4.0%	2.2%	.5%
Liquor	5.6%	3.0%	.9%
Clothing	6.4%	7.4%	10.7%
Deli	9.6%	-	.7%
Fresh Meat	12.4%	-	.7%
Other Food Items	20.6%	7.1%	4.3%
Other Non-Food Items	31.4%	67.0%	79.7%

(Griffin, June, 1974, p. 14)

M. Cameron states in her 1964 study of Chicago Department store shoplifting that suits, coats, dresses, luggage, radios, cameras, jewelry, small leather goods, cosmetics and stationery are among the most frequently stolen items. She further comments that these are mostly luxury goods, whose purchase is hard to justify (Cameron, 1964, pp. 77-80).

According to Crime in Retailing, "Items with strong buyer appeal that can easily be resold are major targets of theft" (Morton, 1975, p. 1). The articles previously mentioned as targets are also listed by Crime in Retailing.

Shoplifting Techniques

Although films and books often stress the use of sophisticated devices by shoplifters, these devices are, in reality, very rare. Washington businesspeople mention the following methods in order of frequency: Concealment within clothing (pockets, socks, hats, inside belt, etc.), purses, shopping bags; palming; ticket switching; wearing item out of store.

1973 data from 16,809 individual cases in market and drug stores corroborates these impressions. Pockets were used in 27.2% of market and 32.8% of drug store cases, purses in 26.6% of market and 18.4% of drug shoplifting cases, and concealment beneath clothing used in 25.6% of market and 15.1% of drug store offenses. Shopping bags or other bags were the preferred technique in 7.6% of market and 11.2% of drug store shoplifting (Griffin, June, 1974, p. 18). Wisher found that 44% of juveniles used a coat for concealment and 35% used a bag (Hughes, 1973, p. 159). Astor's 1970 study of 1,647 shoppers found that shopping bags (42%), concealment in clothing (34%), and purses (20%) were the favored shoplifting methods (Astor, 1970, p. 3).

One of the techniques used by both professionals and more advanced amateurs is the "crotch carry". In this time-honored method, employed by women wearing dresses, the stolen item is held between the thighs until out of the store. Reference to this technique is made by Bennett, who studied shoplifting in an anonymous town in 1966 (Bennett, 1968, p. 421), and others (National Retail Merchants Association, 1969, p. 14). Store detectives interviewed in Washington have also witnessed this routine.

The traditional "booster box" is also occasionally employed. A booster box is an empty package with a spring-loaded panel which allows surreptitious concealment of articles (On the Alert, Attorney General of California, 1973, p. 6). More frequently seen are special overcoats with extra inside pockets, or split linings (the whole lining of the coat becomes a large pocket).

Juveniles and professionals both use distraction to aid in the successful theft. Juveniles often enter a store noisily and split up, knowing that sales clerks cannot watch all of them. Or, the group may act as a shield for the thief. Professionals, in teams of two or three, usually do not acknowledge each other while in the store. One person may create a disturbance or merely divert the sales person so that the other can shoplift without attention.

Another professional technique is to "hand off" the stolen item to an accomplice. If the thief is then stopped and searched, he will not be in possession of the article.

Juveniles, vagrants and addicts sometimes abandon stealth and resort to "grab and run". This is becoming more common due to the safe anonymity of large shopping malls.

Related to shoplifting are certain refund frauds. Liberal policies allow customers or professional thieves to pick items off the shelf and return them to customer service for a cash refund without a receipt (Kentucky Department of Justice, 1977, p. 48). This is usually very safe since the thief does not even have to remove the item from the store, and it is lucrative because full cash value is obtained instead of a discounted "hot item" price. Sometimes, articles stolen in one store are returned to another. Washington merchants report an increase in this activity.

Small items are stripped of packaging both to reduce bulk and to disguise the newness of the product. Price tags and other identifiers are removed to make conviction more difficult. Items may be concealed within another package which will be purchased by the shoplifter.

Umbrellas are occasionally mentioned as a shoplifting concealment device (Association of Washington Business, 1970, p. 8), but few retail security people have noticed this technique.

There are numerous variations on these methods but the basics remain the same -- concealment, (clothing, bags, purse, etc.), subterfuge (price tag switching, refunding), or speed ("grab and run").

THE SHOPLIFTER

Amateur or Pro

Who is doing the shoplifting? One of the easiest questions to answer about the shoplifter is whether he is an amateur or a professional.

There are indeed professional shoplifters, but for the most part they do not fit our movie image of the slick, calculating thief who makes a living by his wits. According to Washington security officers, the pro of modern times is young, urban and involved in drugs and other criminal activity. Although males predominate, there are also females in this group. While often quite practiced at shoplifting, he/she does not hesitate to "grab and run", or use force to escape. This pro is considered very dangerous because he/she is often armed with a knife or handgun, and may be using drugs which make him/her unpredictable. These shoplifters are pros only in that they steal regularly for resale rather than personal use. According to local retailers, this type is fairly rare and does not account for a majority of theft losses.

Reference is also occasionally made to the "California Pro". This is the classical professional thief who works a large geographical area. The characteristics of this offender are some kind of semi-formal training (usually while in prison), high mobility, ready access to bail money and a lawyer, and an outlet for large quantities of stolen property. Such a group or person might be in Washington several times a year.

Cameron identified a similar professional shoplifting group in Chicago department stores. She noted that addicts or career criminals compose about 6% of those shoplifters apprehended (Cameron, 1964, p. 106).

The security chief of a large New York department store estimates that professionals account for about 10% of all shoplifting (Jobin, 1978, p. 168). In 1964, Cameron gave the same estimate (Cameron, 1964, p. 56).

Age

Although professionals can individually cause large losses, they are so outnumbered by the amateurs that they remain a relatively small part of the problem. One of the characteristics of shoplifting is that anybody can do it -- the professional has too much competition. Seattle statistics show that 70% of juveniles arrested for shoplifting had never been arrested before. A Washington department store security person estimates that 80% of the shoplifters caught have never been apprehended before. Most shoplifters are amateurs; and amateurs, by weight of numbers, cause the greatest financial damage. The data collected on age of shoplifters supports this assertion.

An axiom in the field of retail security is that "you can't trust anyone under thirty." Although shoplifters do come in all sizes, shapes and ages, this prejudice against youth is based on fact, as demonstrated in the following data.

TABLE 10: AGE OF SHOPLIFTERS APPREHENDED IN WASHINGTON STORES

Store	Year	Juvenile (under 18)	Adult (over 18)	N=
A	1976	65%	35%	2,610
D	1975	58%	42%	1,095
P	1977	64%	36%	1,777
E	1977	77%	23%	414
N	1977	48%	52%	297
T	1976	58%	42%	8,049

The one store which indicated a majority of adults reported a fairly small sample of shoplifters -- only 297. Police arrests do not bear out this juvenile trend quite as strongly because of the tendency to deal with juveniles informally.

TABLE 11: AGE OF SHOPLIFTERS REPORTED TO WASHINGTON POLICE

		Juvenile (under 18)	Adult (over 18)	N=
Tacoma	1976	47%	53%	1,381
Yakima	1977	56%	44%	761
Aberdeen	1977	64%	36%	123
Bellingham	1977	49%	51%	480
Seattle	1976	50%	50%	3,140

To really appreciate the actual levels of juvenile involvement, one must know that whereas juveniles account for approximately 60% of the shoplifting they make up less than 30% of the total Washington State population ("Sales and Marketing Mangement", 1977, p. C-212). Furthermore, a large portion of juveniles -- those less than age six or seven -- are not considered capable of theft.

It is possible to even more narrowly define the shoplifter. Data from 5,300 Seattle juvenile cases reveals that the shoplifter is usually 15 years old (19.5% of offenders). Shoplifting becomes significant at age 11 (4.7% of offenders) and builds to a peak at age 15, then declines at ages 16 (15.9% of offenders) and 17 (13.4% of offenders).

A chain of Washington stores (Store A) provides substantiating figures. Apprehensions rise with age to a peak at age 14 (13.36% of shoplifters). Age 15 is a close runner-up with 12.78% of all shoplifters apprehended. Ages 16 and 17 again show a decline in percent of shoplifters.

Another local discount store (Store P) claims that age 14 to 16 group accounts for 40% of all juvenile apprehensions and 25% of all shoplifting stops. Ages 11 to 13 are the next largest group with 35% of juvenile shoplifters and 22% of total arrests. Only one other store provided an age breakdown. Store E figures show that age 12 to 14 make up 38% of shoplifters and age 15 to 17 account for 35% of those caught.

It is not merely juveniles who are shoplifting -- young adults also make up a surprising percentage of all offenders. 91% of all store E shoplifters are under age 25. Store A indicates that 86% of shoplifters are under age 25.

Other studies of shoplifting have arrived at similar conclusions: Gerald Robin, a sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania, examined department store shoplifting in Philadelphia. Robin gives the juvenile apprehension figure as 58.1% (Robin, 1963, p. 166). In a 1975 report on over 22,000 shoplifters, Griffin states that "...people under 30 years of age made up 71% of the supermarket apprehensions and 80% of those caught in the drug stores" (Griffin, 1975, p. 5).

It has been suggested that juvenile statistics may be ballooned by store personnel who are over-eager in watching and apprehending this age group. It is also possible that younger thieves are less practiced and thus, more likely to be caught. More than offsetting these factors is the proven under-reporting of young shoplifters. A 1963 study found that whereas 25.8% of the adults were prosecuted, only 5.5% of the juveniles were so processed (Robin, 1963, p. 169). Bennett reports that young shoplifters are, "...dealt with leniently and many managers tried to contact their parents if they were unaccompanied" (Bennett, 1968, pp. 417-18). Commercial Service Systems claims that from 74 to 80% of juveniles are released (Griffin, 1975, p. 7), and further states that, "...a substantial number of juvenile apprehensions are not reported at all" (Griffin, June, 1974, p. 3).

It is clear that shoplifting cannot be considered a crime of the elderly person in need, or the middle-aged housewife. These age categories account for only 4% and 1.5% of the shoplifting arrests, respectively (from Store A data). Shoplifting is predominantly a young person's crime.

The above examination of the age distribution of shoplifters does not clarify one important area -- the actual impact on the retailer of different groups. The dollar amount of the theft is definitely related to age and also to sex.

Several Washington stores collect statistics on the amount of recovery for age groups. Store P information is that the average recovery among adult shoplifters is \$23.26, and the average juvenile recovery is \$8.53. This disparity means that although juveniles compose 64% of all shoplifters apprehended they account for only 39% of the dollar recovery.

Store E provided the following table which further dramatizes this point.

TABLE 12: AVERAGE RECOVERY BY AGE GROUP OF SHOPLIFTER - DEPT. STORE E

<u>Age</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Dollars Recovered</u>	<u>Average Dollar Per Arrest</u>
Less than 12	2	17	119.00	6.26
12-14	56	101	1,377.00	8.77
15-17	77	67	2,095.00	14.54
18-21	19	11	1,078.00	35.93
22-25	13	15	1,056.00	37.71
Over 25 years	13	23	1,778.00	49.39
Totals:	180	234	\$7,503.00	\$18.12

These results are not unusual. Philadelphia department stores report a juvenile theft median average of \$5.98 - \$8.97 and an adult average of \$14.00 - \$14.84 (Robin, 1963, p. 167). In 1973, west coast drug stores had a juvenile average recovery of \$3.07 and an adult average of \$7.90. (Griffin, June, 1974, p. 7).

Sex

Age is not the only characteristic tied to amount of theft. There are also sex differences. Figures from 649 adult shoplifters in Store P show a slightly higher average recovery for men (\$24.72) than for women (\$22.25). Cameron presents a mean average of \$28.36 for men, \$16.40 for women, \$8.06 for female juveniles and \$7.14 for male juveniles (Cameron, 1964, p. 71). Even though not strongly supported, there seems to be a tendency for males, especially adults, to steal more valuable articles. This could be due to the effect of career shoplifters (as with most career criminals, predominantly male) who can be expected to steal only expensive merchandise.

Most Washington stores catch more female than male shoplifters. This is mostly due to an excessive number of adult female shoppers and shoplifters. Table 13 presents data related to the sex of shoplifters.

TABLE 13: SEX OF JUVENILE AND ADULT SHOPLIFTERS
APPREHENDED IN WASHINGTON STORES

Store	Type of Store	Male		Female		Age/ Sex Unknown	Total
		Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile		
N 1977	Grocery and General Merchandise	73 (25%)	89 (30%)	82 (28%)	53 (18%)	∅	297
P 1977	Grocery and General Merchandise	265 (15%)	594 (33%)	384 (22%)	534 (30%)	∅	1,777
A 1976	Department (Fashion)	280 (11%)	436 (17%)	609 (23%)	1,256 (48%)	29 (1%)	2,610
D 1975	Department (Fashion)	81 (7%)	83 (8%)	381 (35%)	550 (50%)	∅	1,095
E 1977	Department (Fashion)	45 (11%)	135 (33%)	49 (12%)	185 (45%)	∅	414

It is only in the grocery and general merchandise discount stores that male juveniles show up as a problem. As is expected, the department stores with a heavy emphasis on current high fashion clothing are those with predominantly female shoplifters.

Police department data paint a less clear picture. Few departments keep a breakdown of shoplifting offenses. The Aberdeen Police Department's 1977 data shows that juvenile females are the largest offender group, accounting for 35% of all reported shoplifters. Bellingham Police data for 1977 indicates that adult males and juvenile females are equally represented among the ranks of shoplifters, accounting for 56% of all shoplifters.

Commercial Service Systems' report shows a high proportion of youthful male shoplifters and near equality of apprehension among male and female adults (Griffin, June, 1974, p. 13). Bennett claimed 56.6% of shoplifters in a sample city were female (Bennett, 1968, p. 417). Robin's figures give 60.7% as the proportion of shoplifting committed by women (Robin, 1963, p. 166). A Honolulu study of supermarket files, conducted by University of Hawaii sociologists George Won and George Yamamoto, found that females accounted for 59.4% of shoplifting, but only 49.2% of the general population (Won, Yamamoto, 1968, p. 46).

Although the general finding is that there are more female than male shoplifters, most articles explain this by noting that women have more opportunity to shoplift because they shop more. Doubt is cast upon this theory by the Management Safeguard surveillance of department store shoppers which discovered that 5% of male shoppers and 7.4% of female shoppers shoplift -- N=1,647 (Astor, 1970, p. 2). This study indicates that even when men and women are exposed to the same shopping environment, a greater proportion of women will steal.

One must not make the mistake of thinking that shoplifting is an exclusively female crime. But, the weight of information forces the conclusion that shoplifting is unique because of the large numbers of females involved. One must remember that traditionally almost all crime has been committed by males, especially adolescent males.

Race and Social Class

Some store security personnel have suggested that shoplifting can be tied to race and economic class. However, no Washington stores could provide data on the race of apprehended shoplifters. Statistics from the Seattle Law and Justice juvenile data computer records show that 66% of juvenile shoplifters are white and 34% are "non-white" (other races not specified). Astor, commenting on his east coast study, states that "...both whites and non-whites seem to steal with equal frequency..." (Astor, 1970, p. 5). In 1964, Cameron found that whites and blacks were involved in shoplifting in proportion to their representation in the Chicago population (Cameron, 1964, p. 89). Of the literature reviewed, only one study found that blacks were over-represented in shoplifting. This was Robin's paper on department store shoplifting in Philadelphia (Robin, 1963, p. 163).

It is, perhaps, more logical to suspect a tie between economic status and shoplifting, but this is difficult to establish. In The Booster and the Snitch, it is noted that a significant number of shoplifters were manual laborers and that very few shoplifters are from the upper income levels (Cameron, 1964, pp. 95-96). Won and Yamamoto arrived at similar conclusions, although with stronger justification -- they state that, "...almost two-thirds of the offenders were from the manual working class", but that all categories of occupations are represented (Won and Yamamoto, 1968, p. 51). Won and Yamamoto also found that 78% of shoplifters are from middle income levels which make up only 37% of the population (Won, Yamamoto, 1968, p. 49).

The studies point to the possibility that although not tied directly to hardship, shoplifting may be a reaction to perceived need or expectations created by advertising and methods of merchandising. Reinforcing this idea is the unanimous conclusion of retail security personnel that 95-99% of all shoplifters have either the cash or credit card necessary to pay for the stolen item. The type of items stolen, described earlier, are another indication -- they are usually luxuries which cannot be justified within the budget. Thus, it appears that although shoplifting is usually not committed because of immediate need, there is a tie between economic status and shoplifting.

MOTIVATIONS FOR SHOPLIFTING

This discussion of conditions which contribute to shoplifting is intended to provide a base from which prevention strategies can be formulated. Donald Sutherland, a well-known criminologist, "...provides sound advice for all who seek to ascertain motivation for criminal behavior: Though criminal behavior is an expression of general needs and values, it is not explained by those general needs and values since non-criminal behavior is an expression of the same needs and values" (Glaser, 1974, p. 291).

This does not mean that the underlying contributors to shoplifting activity cannot be identified. It is possible that the interaction of personal needs and values, and external sanctions and pressures combine to direct the individual into shoplifting activity.

Dr. John Chiles, A University of Washington psychiatrist, divides shoplifters into two broad categories - the emotionally disturbed and the anti-social. The emotionally disturbed shoplifter suffers from low self-esteem, depression and guilt.

Dr. Huffine, a Seattle area psychiatrist expresses a similar position. He states that shoplifting may be a non-specific symptom of an emotional problem. The shoplifter sometimes seeks to acquire possessions which are a replacement for other needs such as love, attention, or affection.

A King County area sociologist who has been involved in research on shoplifting and in the treatment of juvenile shoplifters, Dr. Mitch Wax, also sees guilt and need for attention as common among shoplifters. For some, being caught shoplifting actually relieves some guilt. For others it is a cry for help.

Dr. Abe Fenster, a New York psychologist interviewed for a popular magazine article stated that, "...shoplifters are generally most deeply motivated by emotional factors" (Jobin, 1978, p. 174). The equation of things with security or status can promote shoplifting during an emotional period when the individual feels deprived of love, status, etc. Shoplifting is also suggested as a substitute for basic needs such as love or sex (Jobin, 1978, p. 1974; Weisman, 1978, p. C6).

Appelbaum and Klemmer, writing for "Meninger Perspectives", claim that unsatisfactory sexual activity may find expression in theft (Appelbaum and Klemmer, 1974). Other authors support this assertion (Edwards, 1948, p. 55; Jobin, 1978, p. 190). "A Contribution to the Psychopathology of Shoplifting" attempts to link unfulfilled sensuous needs to shoplifting (Meyers, 1970, p. 306). The substantiation for this theory is minimal and unconvincing.

The "kleptomaniac" is an extreme example of the disturbed thief. The kleptomaniac is distinguished from other neurotic shoplifters by the tendency to steal any place or any time, i.e. the person will steal from friends and relatives (Meyers, 1970, p. 297). The stolen items are often of no use to the thief but it is suggested that they may have symbolic (sexual) meaning (Edwards, 1958, p. 54). Cameron's data on department store shoplifters indicates that 3.8% of the females apprehended were found to be in need of psychiatric care, but there is nothing to support the claim that the kleptomaniac accounts for much shoplifting activity (Cameron, 1964, pp. 116, 120). A Puget Sound area therapist, Steven Wolf, has treated six avowed kleptomaniacs with aversion therapy during the last two years. This indicates that the kleptomaniac undoubtedly exists but is extremely rare.

Mental Health North of Seattle is a public agency which provides therapy and crisis intervention for emotionally disturbed people who are still able to function in the community. They report that adult shoplifters referred to their program by the court all have very high levels of stress as measured by a "life changes - stress" questionnaire. The majority of people in this program are employed, middle class, and many claim that the items stolen are not useful to them and that they were "in a fog" during the incident. Since these were court referrals and a reported 10% had severe psychiatric problems, it appears that this group is not representative of shoplifters in general. However, this information does validate the idea that stress and personal problems contribute to shoplifting.

The anti-social shoplifter has not received much attention from researchers. Yet, store security personnel report that a high percentage of shoplifters express remorse not at what they have done, but merely at being caught. One psychologist does state that stealing is a natural, universal impulse which is kept under control by socialization (Jobin, 1978, p. 174). The failure to

internalize society's rules or the outright rejection of these rules are personal attitudes which lead to shoplifting. The very young are characterized by these narcissistic tendencies.

The anti-social person has no feeling that shoplifting is either good or bad, rather, they view things as "easy to get away with", or "not worth the risk". Because shoplifting is easy and low-risk, it is engaged in.

The amateur shoplifter is, according to psychiatrists, also characterized by low impulse control and low frustration tolerance. Doctors Huffine, Chiles and Wax support this notion, as does the age data collected, and literature (Appelbaum and Klemmer, 1974).

Another strong motivator working within the anti-social personality is the need for excitement. William Belson, who interviewed 1,425 randomly selected London boys, found that one of the secondary causal factors among juvenile shoplifters is frequent boredom (Belson, 1975, p. 13). This hypothesis is well expressed by Farley and Sewell -- "...Too little or vastly reduced stimulus input impels the organism to seek an increase in stimulation" (Farley and Sewell, 1976, p. 315). Farley and Sewell are psychologists and professors in east coast universities. They hypothesize that the seeking of stimulation may lead to delinquency if the environment provides insufficient outlets for these urges. Farley and Sewell's study did show a correlation between delinquency and high test levels on a Sensation Seeking Scale. Thall, in researching his 1973 thesis, also found adolescent shoplifters to be more likely to engage in risk taking behavior than non-shoplifters (Thall, 1973).

The addict (including the alcoholic) and vagrant are a group of people who fit into the anti-social category, even though they steal because of an immediate need. Shoplifting can be an integral part of this anti-social way of life.

The anti-social personality has a number of attitudes which steer him toward shoplifting rather than some other form of behavior. 1500 university students responding to a questionnaire formulated by Robert Kraut, indicated that shoplifters: 1) perceive a low-risk of apprehension, 2) anticipate less serious consequences if caught, 3) think that "others" would engage in similar behavior (Kraut, 1976, p. 365).

The shoplifter is usually not seriously anti-social. His stealing behavior is active only in certain instances. Cameron points out that most shoplifters are "peripheral criminals", or in other words, people who identify with the dominant values but manage to rationalize stealing well enough to maintain a good self-image. This explains the low frequency of recidivism among arrested shoplifters - the arrest in itself serves to re-define the behavior.

Probably, the most common motivation for shoplifting, and perhaps a definition of the crime, is the, "...acquisition of goods at minimal cost" (Kraut, 1976, p. 365). Shoplifting can be viewed as an extension of normal bargain hunting behavior. This is one

explanation for the large number of otherwise law abiding people who engage in retail theft. Shoplifting is a mild form of deviance that can be successfully rationalized by many. An article notes that, "One religious woman . . . claimed she committed the crime in the name of morality. She believes devoutly in thrift" (Weisman, 1978, p. C6).

The above-described internal attitudes and disturbances are not solely responsible for shoplifting. Only when society or peers provide sanctions, and merchants provide opportunity does the individual express himself by shoplifting.

Our civilization's increasing depersonalization is often identified by retailers and shoplifting literature as a factor which makes shoplifting justifiable by many people who would not otherwise steal (Weisman, 1978, p. C6). Chain store retail security officers report a much smaller shoplifting rate among rural stores than urban - suburban stores often have higher rates than either. The proliferation of chain stores and shopping malls results in a very impersonal shopping environment. It is obviously much easier to steal from a faceless corporation than from the local shopowner who lives on the same block as the thief. Norman Weiner wrote a case study of a shoplifter in the article, "The Teenage Shoplifter: A Microcosmic View of Middle Class Delinquency". As stated by this shoplifter, "The large stores are impersonal and coldly-efficient; they can stand the loss" (Weiner, 1970, p. 216).

Increasing mobility adds to this problem by allowing shoplifters to steal in localities where they are unknown. If apprehended, the scandal will not follow them home. Mobility also exposes juveniles to temptations much earlier than in the past. It is the consensus of store keepers that younger children are frequenting stores in larger numbers and unaccompanied by adults.

A study of adolescent theft in Illinois found strong parental ties, high levels of family interaction and high levels of parental regulation to be positive factors, i.e. they result in less involvement in theft. Highly social juveniles not committed to societal or school goals are more likely to be involved in shoplifting (Miller, Silveira, Simon). Thus, one finds, logically enough, that disturbed family and school relationships can and do affect levels of criminal involvement. The shoplifter may have a background which predisposes him or her to crime.

Sub-culture approval of shoplifting is an extremely strong motivator among most juveniles and some young adults. The attitude of "ripping off the Man" was prevalent in the sixties as, at least partially, a rejection of then current societal values (Jobin, 1978, p. 170). Shoplifting, as a way of striking out at an alien society, persists among some groups. This attitude is epitomized by Abby Hoffman's book, entitled aptly, "Steal This Book." Stores are an obvious target for anyone rebelling against rules or authority.

It is not only an occasional subculture which encourages shoplifting, but also the main youth culture. Shoplifting is both tolerated and encouraged. Kraut, after surveying college students,

discovered that active shoplifters thought that "others" would either approve their behavior or engage in identical behavior (Kraut, 1976). Shoplifters may be seeing the situation accurately. According to an article, "The Teenage Shoplifter", "...abstinence is generally considered unique. Shoplifting seems to bother no one" (Weiner, 1970, p. 217). Elsewhere, shoplifting is described as a "competitive sport" (Appelbaum and Klemmer, 1974).

The social nature of shoplifting is well-documented by Cameron who reports that in her sample no one under age 9 was caught alone, but by age 19, 100% of the males and 85% of females apprehended were alone. In between there is a continuum with solitary shoplifting increasing with age (Cameron, 1964, p. 103). A 1963 report indicates that 75.3% of juveniles and 23.3% of adults caught were shoplifting in groups (Robin, 1963, p. 170). The psychiatrists and juvenile counselors interviewed all commented on the strength of peer pressure.

It is no wonder that juveniles tolerate and encourage shoplifting. The main culture does the same thing by often treating shoplifting in a different and less serious manner than other larcenies. Even the terminology used is euphemistic -- instead of larceny or theft, society uses the labels "shoplifting", "lifting", "ripping off", and "five-finger discounting". This form of stealing is treated by courts, parents, and shopkeepers as a sort of prank. If caught, one usually returns or pays for the merchandise and no further action is taken -- a true "no-fault" crime.

Society's dominant values may not overtly encourage shoplifting, but they do place a high emphasis on material possessions. Status is equated with what one owns. Won and Yamamoto (1968) concluded that shoplifting was unusual because of the high proportion of middle income offenders. This lends support to the notion that perceived deprivation may result in high shoplifting rates. This frustration of middle class goals has been identified as a possible motivator by Cameron (1964, p. 173).

Retailers must take some of the responsibility for creating these expectations. Television, a truly democratic media, bombards all elements of society with persistent messages to acquire status through possessions. "Retailers . . . advertise with signs that read . . . 'Buy one, get one free' and then react with innocent outrage when the psyched-up shopper takes advantage of the 'free' part of the offer" (Weisman, 1978, p. C-6).

And, if advertising does not create a strong enough desire in the public, then the retailer ensures that merchandise will be displayed in such a manner as to encourage both impulse buying and impulse shoplifting.

Expensive merchandise can be handled and tried on with no supervision in the modern, self-service store. Customers are invited to help themselves. It is obvious that shortages of clerks in self-service stores provide the opportunity, and further encourage theft. "Some shoppers, it seems, have simply decided to interpret the notion of help yourself literally" (Jobin, 1978, p. 160). It is

an ironical aside that if the retailer tries to cut shoplifting by hiring more sales people, his losses may rise due to internal theft (if hiring procedures and employee controls are inadequate).

The situation is such that both society and the retailing industry conspire to provide the emotionally disturbed or anti-social person with the opportunity to shoplift.

PREVENTION

Retailer's Anti-Shoplifting Measures

There are an impressive number of devices and techniques intended to reduce shoplifting losses. As with other commercial security measures, shoplifting prevention will occasionally clash with merchandising methods. A listing of techniques both good and bad, will be useful in the implementation of a shoplifting prevention program.

The best shoplifting deterrents do not impose serious restrictions on sales-oriented retailers. In fact, many crime prevention suggestions are nothing more than good business.

Among the better ideas are:

1. Adequate numbers of sales clerks. To guarantee effective coverage, breaks and lunch hours should be staggered.
2. Training of sales people. Stress should be on greeting each customer and establishing eye contact. Special shoplifting awareness training is also useful. Several Washington stores use regular training sessions for both new and continuing employees, and report that it definitely increases the detection of shoplifters.
3. Proper store design. Shelves and displays should be low for good visibility. Lighting should be adequate, and customers should be channeled by checkstands when exiting. In small, one-checkstand, convenience stores, a fan-shaped aisle layout will increase the area which can be monitored by the clerk.
4. Incentive programs for clerks which provide a bonus for spotting shoplifters.
5. Rewards for customers who report shoplifters (gift certificate, award, letter, phone call from manager/owner). Both "4" and "5" have been used by local stores with excellent results and improved morale among sales clerks.

Useful, but sometimes resisted, procedures which can cut shoplifting losses include:

1. An active policy of prosecuting shoplifters and publicizing this policy.
2. Fitting room checkers, a limit on the number of items which may be taken into a fitting room, or a tag system to verify the number of pieces brought into a fitting room.
3. Placing high value and small item displays near supervised areas and away from exits.
4. Display of only one-half of a pair (e.g. shoes).
5. Stapling all bags shut and attaching receipt to the outside of bag.
6. Instituting a refund control policy which requires a sales slip. Or, request name, address and phone number plus driver's license verification. Keep card file on returns to cross-check frequent refunders, and follow-up refunds by phone or mail to verify legitimacy of information given. Mail refunds to customers. Locate refund desk near entrance.
7. Use signs in the store to publicize refund and shoplifting policies.

If the shoplifting losses are very high and cannot be brought under control using the above recommendations, then specialty devices and security personnel may be in order. The following are some of the more effective approaches:

1. Visible, identified security officers are said to have a deterrent value.
2. Store detectives whose job is to monitor suspicious persons and apprehend shoplifters. Poorly paid and inadequately trained detectives are a liability -- they are likely to be involved in more violence, expose the store to false arrest suits, and catch few shoplifters. Off-duty police officers are used successfully by some stores because of their arrest experience and police commissions. The store security officer can be the major component in an apprehension-oriented program of deterrence.
3. Observation booths and two-way mirrors. These must usually be built into a store. They make observation of floor area possible.
4. Convex corner mirrors are more of a deterrent than a monitoring aid. They remove the sense of privacy in corners.
5. Video cameras are useful if monitored regularly. They also have some deterrent value. Dummy cameras are useless because their nature is soon public knowledge.

6. Disintegrating price tags are an excellent device which can eliminate most price-switching.
7. An extra, concealed second tag is also useful.
8. Alternating the direction of hanger hooks will prevent "grab and run" losses.
9. Security hangers are attached to the rack and require that the clothing be removed from the hanger for inspection -- effective against "grab and run" thief only.
10. Garment cables and chains require that the sales clerk unlock the clothing before it is tried on. This type of device is not liked by retailers because it reduces impulse buying.
11. Special locking holders are made for calculators and cameras. These allow the customer to operate and inspect the item.
12. Cable and loop alarms also allow the customer to inspect merchandise closely. Such an alarm usually has a "hot" cable which is run through some part of the article. If this cable is cut or unplugged, then the circuit is broken and the alarm triggered.
13. Pressure sensitive mats and switches can be used to set off an alarm when the display merchandise is picked up.
14. Plug monitor alarms are useful where the display operates on AC current. Merely unplugging the display will set off the alarm.
15. The use of locked display cases is necessary with many small, expensive items, but is unpopular with merchants since sales are reduced.
16. Electronically-sensed tags may be affixed to merchandise by rivets, plastic string, or by concealing in the item. If the tags are not removed before the customer exits then an alarm will sound. This type of system has several drawbacks including erratic use of tags, failure to remove tags, high cost, and ease of defeat. At least one Washington department store chain is using this system on a large scale and with considerable success (a reduction in shrinkage from 2.7% to 1% in one year is partially attributed to this system). It seems to work best on exit rather than department coverage.

Anti-Shoplifting Campaigns

This research has located 44 anti-shoplifting projects sponsored by retail groups, police departments, state agencies and city governments. These are all programs which have some elements which may be applicable to a statewide campaign in Washington. Since many of the projects are similar and quite a few even use the same materials, only the better projects will be discussed.

The conventional anti-shoplifting campaigns contain the elements of public awareness (television, radio, newspaper ads, posters, billboards, school programs, pamphlets) and retail crime prevention training (pamphlets, seminars, legal information).

The most widely used single project is "Shoplifters Take Everybody's Money" (S.T.E.M.). S.T.E.M. material is the product of an advertising firm, Spiro and Associates of Philadelphia. This program is usually purchased from Spiro by state retailers' groups and is in use in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, New York (Rochester), North Carolina, Oregon, Hawaii, Alaska, and Colorado (Colorado Springs, Denver). Suggested activities include media events ("Anti-Shoplifting Week"), television and radio public service announcements, newspaper and magazine ads, brochure distribution, and school programs. The theme used in all advertising and brochures is that "shoplifting is stealing".

Other S.T.E.M. treatments of shoplifting are:

1. Shoplifting costs consumers, not retailers.
2. Consequences of getting caught: Possibility of arrest, criminal record, jail and fines for adults, reduced employment opportunity, impaired credit rating, loss of parental trust, social ostracization.
3. Increased chances of being apprehended. Several security techniques are demonstrated in an attempt to increase perceived risk.
4. Need for parents to give guidance and set example.

Many other anti-shoplifting programs are similar to S.T.E.M. or use the same themes. S.T.E.M. is a well-executed, conventional campaign. Spiro claims that S.T.E.M. reduced reported shoplifting by 20% after use for one year in Philadelphia.

The Idaho Retailers' Association receives 70% Law Enforcement Assistance funding for their statewide campaign. Unique features include: the use of college student volunteers to present school programs, publicity of a civil penalty law, retailer education on shoplifting, the development of a film directed at elementary grades, and the use of both paid and public service advertising time. "Shoplifting is a crime" is the central theme and a handcuffed wrist is used on posters. Other approaches include:

1. Shoplifting is not a game.
2. Shoplifting raises consumer prices.
3. Retailers are taking various actions to catch shoplifters.
4. A description of laws on shoplifting.
5. The need for parents to keep track of children.
6. The humiliation of being arrested and treated like a criminal.

The Idaho campaign appears to be efficiently reaching large numbers of students, retailers, and citizens. The use of volunteers in the delivery of services is responsible for the unusual levels of activity. Attitude changes are to be evaluated by pre and post-program phone surveys, but no results are presently available.

Another grant funded retailers project, in Utah, emphasizes school and community presentations and an advertising campaign aimed specifically at teenagers (including television, radio, pamphlets, cash register stickers, posters). The message is "Shoplifting Doesn't Pay -- You do."

The Nevada Attorney General is sponsoring a statewide program of advertising, school art contests, and encouragement to use the civil penalty law. The project logo is a manacled hand with the phrase "Shoplifting in Nevada is a handful of trouble, don't risk it!"

Advertising approaches include:

1. Real consequences - arrest, police record, humiliation, civil penalty.
2. Exaggerated consequences - handcuffing and jail.

The best idea in the Nevada campaign is the creation of a booklet for businessmen which discusses laws relevant to shoplifting.

A Montreal, Canada campaign of advertising, store employee training and school tours resulted in an average shoplifting decrease of 48% within three weeks of initiation (Bunyar, 1977). The short term results are impressive but there is no way of judging the long term impact.

The State of Ohio's Division of Crime Prevention has published a pamphlet for retailers and funded one school anti-shoplifting program in Toledo. The pamphlet is one of the most professionally done of those reviewed. Arkansas Crime Check, Kentucky Office of Crime Prevention, and Scriptographic Company also have good pamphlets.

Other themes used in anti-shoplifting programs are: "Everything Has a Price. Shoplifting Can Cost You Plenty" (Illinois). "Shoplifting: Another Word for Stealing" (Arkansas). "A Shoplifter Can Count on Two Things: Getting Caught and Getting Prosecuted" (Washington D.C., Retail Bureau). "Shoplifting is Dumb - What's That Tell You About Shoplifters?" (Washington D.C., Retail Bureau).

School programs or special classes are an integral part of some efforts. Other anti-shoplifting programs operate only in the schools. In Washington, school programs which deal with shoplifting are commonly sponsored by the police juvenile officer.

Bellingham, Tukwila, Moses Lake and other police departments sponsor programs. Typically such a project is designed around the showing of a film. Speakers are either police officers, retailers, security officers, judges or prosecutors. There is usually a class discussion session after the presentation. In Wayland, Massachusetts, the classes were taken on a tour of local department stores so that they could view some of the security procedures (Meyer, 1974).

Anti-shoplifting school programs are being held in elementary, junior and high schools. The majority of programs are presented to elementary grade children because they are thought to be more receptive. Those giving junior high programs argue that they are reaching the juveniles at the problem age. The high school programs are usually part of a retailing class and are more business oriented. The subject of shoplifting is often conveniently included in civics or government classes.

Although many media programs were examined, no single project is a suitable model for a project in Washington. But, pieces of individual programs are good and some of the themes, ideas, and school programs may be useful. A discussion of possible prevention techniques to be used in Washington follows.

A Washington State Anti-Shoplifting Project

The review of other shoplifting prevention programs suggests approaches which can be applied in Washington.

In dealing with shoplifting, the removal of opportunity (sense of privacy or concealment) is the goal of many prevention techniques (Hughes, 1973, p. 183). A media campaign which merely discusses shoplifting can have the effect of reducing crime, because the publicity reduces the shoplifter's sense of privacy.

The closer the publicity is to the point of theft, the more likely it is to be effective. Thus, in-store signs should have more effect than TV advertising. Anti-shoplifting signs with messages such as "shoplifting is stealing" have been proven to reduce theft. More specific signs which identify certain items as "frequently stolen by shoplifters" have an even greater impact (McNees, et al, 1976, pp. 402, 403).

The use of signs reduces privacy and tends to increase the perceived threat of detection. Television ads which point out that retailers are aware of shoplifters and are taking steps to catch them would also increase perceived risk. Such advertising would show store detectives, cameras, magnetic tape, etc. in operation.

Other studies verify that low levels of risk and anticipation of mild consequences allow many to shoplift (Kraut, 1976, p. 358; Teevan, 1976, p. 155). Increasing perceived certainty of punishment, while not as good as increasing certainty of apprehension, is another media tool. Advertising which stresses the real consequences of being caught will be effective. Some of the real consequences are: arrest, conviction records and fines for adults, reduced employment opportunity, impaired credit rating, loss of parental trust, humiliation, civil monetary penalties. The "hand-cuffs and bars" treatment so prevalent should be avoided.

Kraut also found that shoplifters define their activity as acceptable by "others" (Kraut, 1976, p. 362). Advertising can attack this notion, by re-defining both the shoplifter and shoplifting for the public. Shoplifting can be defined as bad or illegal. The theme "shoplifting is stealing" is one approach.

It may be possible to increase customer reporting of shoplifters through advertising in the store but this is a difficult goal. Bickman (1975) tried such a project in a student bookstore with minimal success. He suggests that the reporting is more likely if the shoplifter is from an "out-group" and that reporting is low in all instances because the situation is potentially threatening. A campaign to re-define the shoplifter may be helpful. Providing the customer with non-threatening options could have some value. One example would be a store sign which states that the customer will not be required to confront the shoplifter or appear in court.

Appealing to economic self-interest by citing the costs of shoplifting which are passed on to consumers is an approach used by many campaigns. It will not be effective, according to Dr. LaMar Bass of Bellevue, because the anti-social personality doesn't care what the cost to someone else is, and he is convinced that he is beating high costs by stealing. Publicity of shoplifting losses can make security measures more palatable though, and may motivate some people to report shoplifting incidents.

A school program can use the same approaches as the media campaign. The goal of a school program is to alter peer pressure to that it will work against shoplifting. A film may be useful but could result in a superficial classroom treatment of the subject. Class materials, a teaching guide and the cooperation of police and retailers should add up to an effective program. It is the consensus of psychiatrists that a school program has the best chance of influencing children in the elementary grades, preferably fourth or fifth grade. Most people in education prefer to deal with shoplifting as part of a larger theme of rights and

responsibilities. The publication "You and the Law" treats shoplifting in this manner.

The only shoplifters which any campaign will be able to reach are the marginal, potential or occasional offenders. Cameron (1964) called these people "peripheral criminals" and stated that they compose the largest group of shoplifters. School programs and advertising should be aimed at this group rather than at the habitual offender. The emotionally disturbed and anti-social shoplifters will not be affected by the same types of messages, so the campaign must use both threat of consequences (anti-social) and a moral approach (disturbed).

If at all possible the message should be positive rather than negative. Perhaps a portrayal of the rewards of not shoplifting would work.

Any shoplifting campaign must also deal with retail education. Retailers are ignorant of the laws of apprehension and the civil penalty statute (a copy of Washington's civil penalty law is appended). This civil law allows a merchant to recover a penalty in the amount of the value of the stolen article, plus an additional penalty of between \$100 and \$200. Many businessmen do not even know of this law, and the majority are not using it.

There is also a common feeling that apprehending a shoplifter is legally risky. Many merchants avoid making stops on suspects for this reason. Legal information should be clarified and assembled in a booklet. Small businesses do not have security resources - prevention training manuals would be helpful to them.

And, it is not only customers who fail to report shoplifting, but the employees. Because of the number of decisions and actions required in dealing with a shoplifter, many employees fail to take any action at all (Newberg, 1974, p. 53). Employee training, with a clear-cut course of action, is required if one is to expect an increase in anti-shoplifting efforts.

Prosecutors and judges need to be informed about the crime of shoplifting and the use of the civil penalty. An informational packet from the Attorney General might be one way to reach this group.

The implementation of Washington's program must be a cooperative effort of Washington Crime Watch, local law enforcement and crime prevention personnel, and the Association of Washington Businesses. A special shoplifting prevention training session for crime prevention officers will facilitate the widespread use of project materials, and retailers' input will be solicited by formation of a liaison committee. The utilization of these resources should guarantee widespread adoption of the campaign.

CONCLUSIONS

Trends

Maximum retail losses were experienced in the late sixties and early seventies. Shrinkage has dropped slightly during the last eight years. More shoplifters are being apprehended and prosecuted than ever, but reporting is still low. These increases in apprehensions are due to retailing attitude changes, increased customer volume, and larger numbers of security officers.

Scope

Probably 90% of the population has shoplifted at some time. Estimates are that one of every 50 customers in west coast stores is a shoplifter.

Cost

The 1976 national loss to shoplifting was \$3.24 billion. The Washington state shoplifting loss in 1976 was \$56.8 million (per capita = \$16 annually). Most loss is passed on to the customer in 1-2% higher prices.

Victimization

Department stores lose the most to shoplifters, both totally and per incident. Small businesses are proportionally harder hit because they have no security training or personnel, and limited prevention budgets.

Patterns

Peak shoplifting activity parallels peak sales seasons and hours. The Christmas shoplifting rush hits only department and other general merchandise stores that make the majority of sales during Christmas.

Items commonly stolen include clothing (leather coats, sportswear), jewelry, cosmetics, records, toys, liquor, meat and cigarettes.

Shoplifting techniques fall into three basic categories: 1) Concealment (clothing, bag, purse), 2) Subterfuge (price tag switching, refunding), 3) Speed ("grab and run").

The shoplifter: Amateurs account for the bulk of shoplifting loss. Professionals are often dangerous career criminals and steal more expensive merchandise than amateurs, but account for no more than 10% of losses.

60% of shoplifters caught are juveniles. The most frequently arrested group is age 15. 80% of all shoplifters are under age 30. The disproportionate numbers of juvenile shoplifters are somewhat offset by larger dollar losses to older shoplifters.

Shoplifting has an unusually large number of female offenders - about 60% of all those apprehended.

Motivations for Shoplifting

Personal motivations for this behavior include stress, family problems, depression, guilt, boredom, desire for attention, impulsiveness, low frustration tolerance, and anti-social attitudes. Providing the opportunity for these problems to be expressed as shoplifting are a number of external sanctions including: depersonalization, increased mobility, reduced parental control of juveniles, sub-culture attitudes of disrespect for property, peer pressure, lack of consequences, materialistic values, advertisements which create unrealistic expectations, and self-service merchandising.

All of the above are valid causes of deviant behavior, but none should be accepted as the cause, even in one specific case.

A Washington State Anti-Shoplifting Project

The priorities of a prevention program are listed below:

1. A school program for fourth to sixth grades which includes a teaching guide, student materials, and possibly a film.
2. Retail shoplifting prevention training sessions for managers and employees. A legal information booklet is a necessity and a prevention techniques manual desirable.
3. Printing and distribution of posters to be used in stores. These signs would explain penalties and prosecution policy, and could identify "target" items.
4. Distribution of information on shoplifting to all judges and prosecutor's offices. This material would explain the civil penalty and stress the cumulative economic impact of shoplifting.
5. A training session for crime prevention officers which would give them the information necessary to initiate anti-shoplifting campaigns in their schools and communities.
6. A television, radio, billboard ad campaign.

The prevention program should attempt to define shoplifting as wrong and as a crime. Increasing perceived risk of both apprehension and consequences can be effective if done realistically.

Advertising should be aimed at the young (under age 25) and female shoppers. Department and general merchandise stores (especially small, privately owned stores) are most in need of prevention assistance. The project should not attempt to anticipate and respond to seasonal fluctuations in shoplifting.

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A P P E N D I X

TYPE OF STORES PROVIDING DATA

<u>CODE</u>	<u>CHAIN STORE</u>	<u>TYPE OF STORE</u>
A	Yes	Fashion and General Merchandise
B	Yes	Fashion and General Merchandise
C	Yes	Fashion and General Merchandise
D	Yes	Fashion and General Merchandise
E	Yes	Fashion and General Merchandise
F	Yes	Fashion and General Merchandise
G	Yes	Fashion and General Merchandise
H	Yes	Hardware
I	Yes	Grocery
J	Yes	Grocery
K	Yes	Grocery
L	Yes	Convenience, Grocery
M	Yes	Grocery
N	Yes	Grocery, General Merchandise
O	Yes	Grocery
P	Yes	General Merchandise, Grocery
Q	Yes	Drug, General Merchandise
R	Yes	General Merchandise
S	Yes	General Merchandise, Grocery
T	Yes	Drug, General Merchandise
U	No	Books, General Merchandise
V	N/A	Shopping Mall
W	N/A	Shopping Mall
X	N/A	Shopping Mall

CIVIL ANTI-SHOPLIFTING LAW

RCW 4.24.230

(1) An adult or emancipated minor who takes possession of any goods, wares or merchandise displayed or offered for sale by any wholesale or retail store or other mercantile establishment without the consent of the owner or seller, and with the intention of converting such goods, wares or merchandise to his own use without having paid the purchase price thereof shall be liable in addition to actual damages, for a penalty to the owner or seller in the amount of the retail value thereof not to exceed one thousand dollars, plus an additional penalty of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than two hundred dollars.

(2) The parent or legal guardian having the custody of an unemancipated minor who takes possession of any goods, wares or merchandise displayed or offered for sale by any wholesale or retail store or other mercantile establishment without the consent of the owner or seller and with the intention of converting such goods, wares or merchandise to his own use without having paid the purchase price thereof, shall be liable as a penalty to the owner or seller for the retail value of such goods, wares or merchandise not to exceed five hundred dollars plus an additional penalty of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than two hundred dollars: PROVIDED, That for the purposes of this subsection, liability shall not be imposed upon any governmental entity or private agency which has been assigned responsibility for the minor child pursuant to court order or action of the department of social and health services.

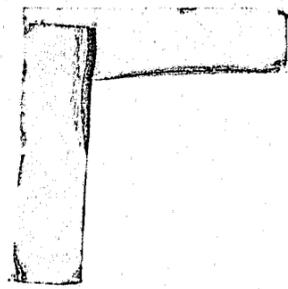
(3) Judgments, but not claims, arising under this section may be assigned.

(4) A conviction for violation of chapter 9A.56 RCW shall not be a condition precedent to maintenance of a civil action authorized by this section.

DETAINMENT OF SHOPLIFTER BY MERCHANT

RCW 4.24.220

In any civil action brought by reason of any person having been detained on or in the immediate vicinity of the premises of a mercantile establishment for the purpose of investigation or questioning as to the ownership of any merchandise, it shall be a defense of such action that the person was detained in a reasonable manner and for not more than a reasonable time to permit such investigation or questioning by a peace officer or by the owner of the mercantile establishment, his authorized employee or agent, and that such peace officer, owner, employee or agent had reasonable grounds to believe that the person so detained was committing or attempting to commit larceny or shoplifting on such premises of such merchandise. As used in this section, "reasonable grounds" shall include, but not be limited to, knowledge that a person has concealed possession of unpurchased merchandise of a mercantile establishment, and a "reasonable time" shall mean the time necessary to permit the person detained to make a statement or to refuse to make a statement, and the time necessary to examine employees and records of the mercantile establishment relative to the ownership of the merchandise.



END