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## Profile of Shoplifting: Disparity Between the Practice and Prevention

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PROFILE OF SHOPLIFTING:  
DISPARITY BETWEEN THE PRACTICE & PREVENTION

A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Department of Criminal Justice  
and the  
Faculty of the Graduate College  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

by  
Douglas D. Steensma  
November, 1977

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## ABSTRACT

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### Purpose

It was the purpose of this study to show the disparity in effort between the shoplifter in practice of the crime, and the retail security specialist's efforts toward prevention and apprehension.

In addition, a further objective was to dispel some of the myths surrounding the crime of shoplifting and its prevention.

Finally, this study sought to make specific recommendations for the purpose of advising retail security personnel where their efforts may be continued, discontinued, or re-directed to combat more effectively the crime of shoplifting.

### Methods

The research strategy used to investigate why shoplifters are usually successful and why retail security efforts fall short of prevention was as follows: (1) an interview schedule was used to cover a wide range of responses from admitted shoplifters as to how they were successful; (2) a number of retail security specialists were asked to respond to the same basic questionnaire with only minor rewording of the questions. The obtained data

was analyzed to arrive at the disparity between the efforts of the shoplifter and the security specialists.

### Findings

From the data presented in this study, the following conclusions were made:

1. Two-way mirrors are the most effective shoplifting deterrence device.

2. Store detectives without the use of two-way mirrors are not achieving maximum effort because they are too conspicuous to the average shoplifter.

3. Crowded stores do not cause more shoplifting.

4. Several clerks in a given department in a store does not necessarily reduce shoplifting.

5. The majority of customers and employees fail to report shoplifters.

6. Fear of jail or prison does not deter shoplifting.

7. Shoplifting begins in early teenage years for both male and female shoplifters.

8. The majority of shoplifters will not resist when being apprehended.

9. Our court system needs to show more consistency in the handling of shoplifters, and the judgements of the courts need to be more severe.

10. Shoplifters basically like to shoplift alone.

11. The peak shoplifting periods are 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

12. Simulated shoplifting for the purpose of suing for false arrest are very uncommon.

13. Ticket or price tag switching is a major problem.

14. Family members rarely shoplift together.

15. Male shoplifters prefer to conceal their merchandise under a coat or on their person, while female shoplifters prefer a purse for their concealments.

16. Unattended fitting rooms are frequent targets of shoplifters.

17. Shoplifters do increase their shoplifting during the holidays.

18. Shoplifters after a concealment will usually take their time leaving the store.

19. Most shoplifting is a spontaneous act.

20. Shoplifters frequently bring back stolen merchandise for a refund - especially the female shoplifter.

21. The majority of persons apprehended for shoplifting are released without prosecution.

22. Shoplifters very often use sacks and bags to conceal stolen merchandise.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Shoplifting is the unlawful taking or stealing of properties or articles of value from a place of business, during business hours, without the use of force or violence. Shoplifting is a form of larceny. Other forms include pocket picking, theft of auto parts, theft from automobiles, etc. (A larceny offense is committed every seventeen seconds (Gray, 1971:30)).

Generally speaking, to commit the crime of shoplifting or stealing as it is referred to in legal language two elements are necessary: taking the merchandise from a shop or store during business hours and carrying it away with the intention of theft.

Shoplifting, once associated in most peoples' minds with characters called "kleptomaniacs", has become a part of American Society. Big stores are obliged to maintain elaborate security systems (TV cameras, detectives, trick mirrors, and concealed electronic waffers that set off alarms when unpaid merchandise is carried out the door). Furthermore, it is an accepted practice for stores to raise their prices to cover losses from stolen merchandise. In large cities, some boutiques keep their doors locked as a

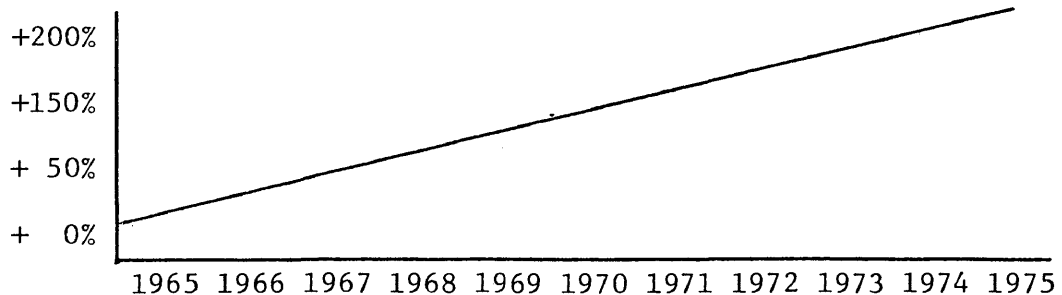


deterrent to thieves, opening only when they recognize the customer.

Despite such precaution, the following facts prevail: shoplifting has become the fastest growing crime in the United States (Cassell, 1977:41) and it is up over 200 percent in the last ten years (Kelley, 1975:30). Shoplifters steal approximately \$12,000,000 a day across the U.S. (Cassell, 1977:41). There are roughly 150,000 shopliftings a week (Selby, 1967:95). There were 900,000 shoplifters caught in the U.S. in 1973 (Drew, 1974:15); one out of 10 customers who enter your store will shoplift (Astor, 1969:12); and, shopliftings account for about seven percent of all bankruptcies in the U.S. (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1974:6). Even these figures do not show the full extent of the problem. (See Figure 1)

FIGURE 1

INCIDENCE IN RISE OF SHOPLIFTING



(Based on data gathered by Kelley, 1975)

Experts estimate that U.S. merchants lose three to five billion dollars annually to shoplifters alone (Drew, 1974:15). (The actual amount is impossible to determine. After the first couple billion dollars in loss, establishing the exact amount becomes academic.

In an article by Mary Hughes titled "Shoplifting Statistics," she states:

Shoplifting, like internal theft, is one of the major unknowns of retail operations. Of shoplifters actually apprehended, few are referred to police for booking. Thus, of the fraction who are detected, only a small and inconsistent percentage becomes known to law enforcement, and national crime statistics cannot show any 'yardstick' for shoplifting remotely comparable to the statistics for such crimes as robbery, assault, and auto theft (Hughes, 1974:58).

Hardware Retailing editors, in doing field research, found a wide diversity of attitudes among hardwaremen. One dealer summed up his loss prevention program by simply saying:

If Adam had opened a hardware store upon leaving the Garden of Eden, he would have lost 2 percent of sales to shoplifters. The problem has always been with us and always will be. You do what you can, but shoplifting is just a cost of doing business (Hammond, 1972:39).

Another merchant goes to the opposite extreme. Standing on his patrolled sales floor, under a ceiling bristling with television cameras, he exclaimed:

We have the problem fairly well under control, but we really should have given more consideration to shoplifting when we bought fixtures. I feel we need 40% to 50% of our shelf space under security cases (Hammond, 1972:39).

As with most polarized points of view, the sensible and profitable answer to the theft problem lies somewhere between the two extremes.

A retailer does not have to sit back and accept mounting losses as inevitable, operating on the premise that losses are increasing because there is more and more theft. (Losses are increasing because of a lack of prevention. This is attributed to a lack of understanding and knowledge of his problem--shoplifting).

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Few problems in this country are more acute than the crime rate which has characterized this country the past decade. It is a problem that is not unrelated to other aspects of the entire society. Many people say high unemployment is probably the greatest contributor to this problem because unemployment equates with poverty and poverty with crime. Others say the unemployed have the need to steal, the time to steal, and sufficient frustrations to overcome any remaining moral inhibitions to stealing. Inflation is still another variable--it, too, contributes to poverty. But inflation also engenders a bitterness on the part of the consumer who believes increasingly that he is being victimized by profiteering retailers; and, therefore, turns to a reciprocal crime to even the score. It would also appear that morality has become a factor. Morality is used here in the sense that honesty is no longer a virtue

looked up to in our society today. Many people feel the theft of one or two items will not break a company. As morality shifts in this direction, it may become a rationale for theft rather than against it. Coupled with this, the perceived laxity of our court system to strictly enforce the theft laws has virtually left merchants helpless. According to some authors our society today has undergone quite a change from our society of twenty years ago. This change has involved among other things: deteriorating neighborhood conditions, poverty, and the problem-family, which have all contributed to give shoplifting a sort of "twisted legitimacy" (Cronkhite, 1974:40-45, Saxbe, 1974:30-48).

On the surface at least, it would appear that shoplifting is a rather ordinary and relatively innocuous crime, with the only principles being the shoplifter and the merchant. The American consumer comprises an unknowing third principle, however, because a portion of every dollar spent by the consumer helps pay for what shoplifters steal. The merchant simply passes his losses on to the customer.

The Uniform Crime Report indicates that reported shoplifting arrests have risen nearly four times over what they were in 1959 (Hoover, 1974:21). Retail security specialists have taken note of these figures and have responded by implementing thousands of dollars worth of sophisticated security equipment designed to search for concealed objects. While it is recognized that utilization of such

sophisticated equipment may do much to detect and prevent shoplifting, it is held by this investigator that the total answer to the problem does not lie in this area.

Each year the losses from shoplifting continue to increase both from the merchandise lost and the expense associated with security and prevention. Contrastly, the number of apprehensions, arrests, and convictions show no noticeable increase.

Accordingly, this study investigates the following:

What is the nature of the security specialists knowledge of shoplifting and the shoplifter, and what is the relationship between this knowledge and the security specialist's ability to control and minimize this problem?

This investigator believes the answer to this problem can be found through a thorough investigation of both the security specialist's understanding of the dynamics of shoplifting and an examination of the techniques and methods utilized by convicted shoplifters.

#### THE PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this study to show the disparity in effort between the shoplifter in practice of the crime, and the retail security specialist's efforts toward prevention and apprehension. The results of this research will be compared with previous research in order that a clearer understanding of the shoplifting problem can be gained.

In addition, a further objective will be to dispel

some of the myths surrounding the crime of shoplifting and its prevention.

Finally, this study will attempt to make specific recommendations for the purpose of advising retail security personnel where their efforts may be continued, discontinued, or re-directed to combat more effectively the crime of shoplifting.

## CHAPTER II

### Review of the Literature

Chapter two will trace the history of shoplifting from the earliest known accounts to the present. It will cover techniques and operations of different types of shoplifters and will review studies done on shoplifting both in this country and abroad.

#### Development of Shoplifting

The history of crime shows that shoplifting is an ancient, if not honorable, art; and, the techniques of operation seem to have changed relatively little through the centuries. One of the earliest known accounts of shoplifting, written in 1597, describes "The Discovery of the Lifting Law," and the 'lift,' or shoplifter. Even then there were diverse kinds of lifts; the common and rascal sort of lift, having a fine and nimble agility of the hand, and the gentlemen lifts. In describing his study in 1857, in the book, "Shoplifting and Shrinkage, Protection for Stores," Edwards states the following about the early shoplifter (Edwards, 1976:4-5):

In describing a shoplifting troupe consisting of a "clout" and two "cover," only the language, but not the techniques of operation, differentiates this from a modern description.

The higher degrees and gentlemen-lifts have to the performance of their faculty, three parties of necessity, the lift, the marker, and the santar. The lift, attired in the form of a civil country gentleman, comes with the marker into some mercer's shop, haberdashers, goldsmith's, or any such place where any particular parcels of worth are to be conveyed, and there he calls to see a bolt of satin, velvet, or any such commodity, and not liking the pile, color, or brack, he calls for more, and whilst he begins to resolve which of them most fitly may be lifted, and what garbage (for so he calls the goods stolen) maybe most easily conveyed. Then he calls to the mercer's man and says, "Sirrah, reach me that piece of velvet or satin, or that jewel, or chain, or piece of plate," and whilst the fellow turns his back, he commits his garbage to the marker; for note the lift is without his cloak, or his doublet and hose, to avoid the more suspicion. The marker, which is the receiver of the lifts luggage, gives a wink to the santar, that walks before the window, and then, the santar going by in great haste, the marker calls to him and says, "Sir, a word with you. I have a message to do unto you from a friend of yours, and the errand is of some importance." "Truly, sir," says the santar, "I have very urgent business in hand, and as at this time cannot stay." "But one word, and no more," says the marker. And then he delivers him whatsoever the lift both conveyed unto him; and then the santar goes on his way, who never came within the shop, and is a man unknown to them all.

About one hundred years later (1726) the techniques of theft and the kinds of merchandise taken were similar, but the problem of the shoplifter had apparently become more acute to the merchant. In a study, "Lives of the Most Remarkable Criminals" (Hayward, 1920:375), the author describes a "troupe" consisting of Jane Holmes, "the woman Burton," and Mary Robinson. The three were noted to be the best shoplifters around and plagued merchants for years with their abilities. Finally, in the summer of the year 1726, shoplifters became so common and so detrimental to the



shopkeepers, that merchants made application to the government for assistance in apprehending the offenders; and, in order thereto, offered a reward and a pardon for anyone who would discover their associates in such practice. A stool pigeon, "the woman Burton," responded to the offer and informed on her associates, Jane Holmes and Mary Robinson. They were apprehended, tried, and executed for their crimes.

A history of the "Lives and Robberies of the Most Notorious Highwaymen" (Smith, 1926:231), narrates the life and death of a Nam Harris and a Moll Jones.

Nam Harris--A shoplifter . . . she was called down to her former judgement and hanged in the 20th year of her age, at Tyburn, on Friday, July 13, 1705.

Moll Jones--A shoplifter who had posed and dressed as a titled lady . . . but her Graceless being sent to Newgate and condemned for her lift at the Old Bailey, she was hanged at Tyburn, in the 25th year of her age, on Friday, December 18, 1691.

In 1777, Sir William Meridith referred to the death penalty for shoplifting during a speech in Parliament, on "Frequent Executions."

Under this art (the shoplifting art) one Mary Jones was executed whose case I shall mention; it was the time when press-warrants were issued on the alarm about Falkland Islands. The woman's husband was pressed, their goods seized for some debts of his, and she, with two small children, turned into the street a-begging. She went to a linen-draper's shop, took some coarse linen off the counter, and slipped it under her cloak; the shopman saw her, and she laid it down; for this she was hanged. It seems there had been a good deal of shoplifting about Ludgate; and example was thought necessary (Edward, 1976:8).

In 1886, in the book "Professional Criminals of America" (Byrnes, 1886:31-32) the author noted, possibly for the

first time in print, the existence of the non-commercial shoplifter whom he referred to as the "Kleptomaniac," that the word had a special meaning in regard to shoplifting. The author relates the following concerning his findings about kleptomaniacs:

There are generally but two classes of shoplifters--the regular or professional and the kleptomaniac. The very poor classes seldom take a hand in it. Poverty is held by the world to be the badge of crime, and the poor slattern who enters a store is sure to be so carefully watched that larceny is next to impossible. The shoplifter is always a person of fair appeal and she generally has a comfortable home. If she be a professional she may be one of a criminal community and her home may be shared by some others, engaged in equally evil ways. If she be a kleptomaniac--and in shoplifting the word has peculiar significance--she is possibly a woman whose life in other respects is exemplary. It does seem strange that a wife and mother whose home is an honest one, who seems far removed from the world of crime, should be carried away by her admiration of some trinket or knickknack as to risk her home, honor, and everything to secure it. But the annals of metropolitan offenses are full of instances of just this kind. It is the sexes fondness for finery that nine times out of ten gets them into trouble.

In the book "Notes on Bibliokleptomania" (Thompson, 1944:8), the problem of book thieves is addressed and the author divides them into two categories: criminals and bibliomaniacs. History is full of examples of book ghouls, and the author gives extensive references to thefts of whole libraries of books, manuscripts of libraries in Western Europe, and undoubtedly it could be traced back even further through the history of Greek and Oriental libraries.

Reference is made to thefts as early as the year 627, when use of the curse gained popularity as an effective

measure against book thieves and continued to be used until the introduction of the printed book.

During the first decade of this century, the incidence of shoplifting including the age and sex of the persons committing thefts from one department store, were not significantly unlike present patterns. For example, one department store showed some of the following arrests of shoplifters made between 1900 and 1910 (Edwards, 1976:13):

TABLE I  
Shoplifters Caught Between 1900-1910  
In One Chicago Department Store

Sex	Age	Merchandise Recovered
Females	33	1 belt - \$2.75
Females	17	1 belt - \$12.00
2 Males	15	Moving Pictures and Books
Male	14	Baseball Book
Male	16	Baseball
2 Females	16	Ribbons, Veil, Handkerchief
Female	21	Pocketbook
Male	12	Golfball
Female	37	12 Fancy Buttons
Male	12	Watch - \$2.00
Male	17	Watch - \$2.00
Male	17	Card Case

The available records for the period of 1901 to 1910 varied from those of more recent years in that they indicated a larger percentage of juveniles apprehended.

The newspaper account of the arrest of a sixteen year old girl in 1909 for shoplifting a mink muff, scarf, and gloves, valued at \$158.50 read: "...She stole furs to

outshine rivals--to keep up an appearance as good as that of her classmates..." (Edwards, 1976:13).

In 1910, shoplifting was still a major concern of merchants. One woman was prosecuted for stealing a pair of shoes valued at \$1.75, and she was fined \$100.00 and costs (Edwards, 1976:13).

An increase in the number of shoplifting arrests during the period from 1917 to 1920 was probably due in part to the formation of enlarged protection departments by stores.

From 1920 on, protection departments sprang up all over this country. With this came the increase in shoplifting arrests and the creation of shoplifting laws and statutes. But times were never really that good to the merchants. Population increased, cities grew larger, shopping centers developed rapidly, and poverty and crime were escalating. With these developments, merchants saw shoplifting escalate to heights never before seen or experienced. A problem still with us today. A problem started possibly with the beginning of time and with no foreseeable end (Saxbe, 1974: 30-48, Clark, 1970:23-34).

The twentieth century has done little to change the shoplifting problem or brighten the hopes of merchants. In a recent study, the FBI reports that shoplifting increased 93 percent from 1960 to 1966. Only one other form of crime--daytime robbery--showed a higher growth rate. Many businesses today report detecting from five to nine cases of shoplifting a week. Since many go undetected, this can

only add up to many dollars (Hosiery, 1971:46).

A recent survey showed that 58 percent of all shoplifters in mass merchandising are women, 48 percent teenagers, and 26 percent young children. Surprisingly, professional shoplifters are hardly a factor. The thieves doing the most damage are just average men and women (Hosiery, 1971:46).

In 1958, a study was conducted in three large department stores in the Philadelphia area. The following conclusions were made on the basis of the data gathered (Robin, 1963:163-168):

1. Shoplifting is primarily a juvenile activity.
2. Allowing suspected shoplifters to leave the store or store premises before apprehending them may be a matter of custom and a store precaution rather than a fulfillment of any legal requirement.
3. Although female apprehensions were more prevalent than male, there is little justification for regarding shoplifting as an exclusively female activity.
4. In comparison to their proportion in the population of the city, blacks were disproportionately represented in the store's apprehension figures.
5. Juvenile theft, in terms of the retail value of the stolen goods, tended to be considerably less costly than adult theft.

6. Managers of the stores showed an extreme reluctance to "prosecute" juveniles.
7. By far the most important determinant of the disposition of a case was the size of the theft. (See Table 2).
8. More than seven out of ten juveniles involved in shoplifting were apprehended in groups. The author feels this confirms the social nature of shoplifting among juveniles.

TABLE 2  
Prosecution of Adult Shoplifters  
By Size of Theft

Size of Theft	No. of Shoplifters	No. of Prosecutions	% of Prosecutions
below \$20	280	17	6.07
\$20-\$29.99	47	14	29.79
\$30-\$39.99	30	22	73.33
\$40-\$59.99	28	22	78.57
\$60 +	31	29	93.55
TOTAL	416	104	25.00

The minimum number of employees in each store ranged from approximately 1,600 to 3,000. The stores had from five to ten selling floors. Two of the stores employed ten permanent full time detectives. The number of detectives in the third store was not disclosed.

In 1964, the Federal Republic of Germany was one of the first European countries to do an actual survey on the problem of shoplifting (Loitz, 1965:509-512). The survey yielded the following results: most of the shoplifting in the Federal Republic during the period 1963-1964 occurred in December; the lowest frequency was recorded in June and September. Shoplifters were most active on Saturdays (273 out of 1,172 cases, 23%) and least active on Mondays (152 cases, 13%). The time curve rises from opening time at 1:00 p.m., when it reaches the first peak (109 out of 726 cases). Until 3:00 p.m., it falls to 40 cases, then it rises again to reach another peak of 109 cases at 6:00 p.m. During the last hour before closing, the shoplifting falls again to 35 cases.

Self service stores were the principle sites for shoplifting. Of 1,029 cases, 54.6% were food; 18% clothing; 14.4% toys; 8.5% were alcohol and 4.5% were sweets.

The study showed an increasing inclination to steal up to age 14, followed by a steady decrease (with the exception of age group 19-21). In adult shoplifters, age groups 50-59 was the largest. In the majority of cases, it was demonstrated that 165 delinquents were capable of paying for the stolen goods, 48 possessed less cash than would have been required to pay for what they stole, and 18 individuals had no money on them.

### A Profile of the American Shoplifter

In 1968, Curtis Wisher, in Kent County Delaware, conducted a study on teenage shoplifting (Wisher, 1968:16-20). The purpose of Mr. Wisher's study was to provide an accurate, up to date profile of youth shoplifting by age and sex. Also he attempted to provide a better understanding of the frequency and methods of their shoplifting, determine the percentage caught, penalty received, and whether the penalty affected their shoplifting habits.

His study was conducted in English classes in all eight private and public schools in Kent County. English classes were selected because English is required in all high school grades.

Guided by an advisory committee, questions were developed, redeveloped, recorded and trial tested before the actual survey was conducted.

Questionnaires were given to large groups because it was felt individuals in bigger groups would be less conspicuous and more likely to answer honestly. Before administering the questionnaires, it was emphasized to the students that in no way could the questionnaire be traced back to an individual student. (Table 3)

Wisher obtained 1,173 completed questionnaires and discarded 173 to obtain his desired 1,000 total complete surveys, or 100 in each age-sex group.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed account of methodology, see Appendix A.



TABLE 3

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS  
(student shoplifters only)

Have shoplifted	14 Years		15 Years		16 Years		17 Years		18 Years	
	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls	boys
<u>Frequency:</u>										
once	15.7	7.0	60.0	16.7	35.3	3.4	36.9	12.3	18.9	56.2
2-10 times	29.3	41.6	16.0	38.3	35.3	25.4	18.4	46.0	51.4	17.6
11-25 times	35.2	64.3	4.0	5.1	11.5	22.1	21.1	23.0	5.4	12.3
26-49 times	13.6	4.6	20.0	11.5	6.0	30.4	7.9	8.1	10.8	1.8
50-100 times	4.5	----	----	11.5	11.5	6.8	5.3	8.1	8.1	8.7
over 100 times	----	7.2	----	16.7	----	11.7	10.5	2.7	5.4	3.5
<u>Method:</u>										
under coat	43.2	2.3	36.0	74.3	24.1	42.4	34.3	77.3	62.2	49.2
bag or box	63.7	16.3	52.0	10.3	59.1	20.3	44.8	24.4	32.4	29.8
wear out	20.5	9.3	24.0	15.4	18.1	35.6	18.4	12.3	24.3	21.9

(Taken from Wisner, 1968:18)

TABLE 3-Continued

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS  
(student shoplifters only)

Have shoplifted	14 Years		15 Years		16 Years		17 Years		18 Years	
	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls	boys
<u>apprehended:</u>	38.6	16.3	8.0	38.3	17.4	20.3	15.8	32.4	48.6	42.2
<u>where:</u>										
variety	47.1	3.6	100.0	10.1	33.1	4.7	16.7	16.3	50.0	19.2
discount	14.3	29.4	13.3	-----	13.3	33.5	25.0	33.2	20.8	33.2
hardward	-----	-----	3.3	-----	6.7	-----	20.8	50.0	8.4	5.5
department	28.6	23.5	29.3	-----	20.0	-----	12.5	16.7	12.5	27.7
drug	14.3	17.7	10.1	50.0	6.7	67.1	8.4	16.7	16.7	44.5
<u>what happened:</u>										
let go	-----	41.2	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	50.0	-----	50.0
lectured	71.5	41.2	70.0	100.0	33.3	66.5	41.6	50.0	50.0	50.0
parents called	57.2	64.7	30.0	50.0	33.3	100.0	16.7	50.0	29.2	55.6
called police	14.3	11.7	10.0	-----	33.3	31.8	37.3	16.7	12.6	22.3
taken to court	-----	-----	3.3	-----	16.7	-----	25.0	16.7	4.2	33.4
<u>stopped for shoplifting:</u>										
	28.6	11.8	63.4	50.0	25.0	-----	16.7	-----	58.4	11.2

(Taken from Wisner, 1968:18)

Mr. Wisher's results did point out some very interesting patterns with shoplifters. For example, students from broken homes were more apt to shoplift than students from stable homes; students involved in after school activities shoplifted less than those involved in no activities; most of the shoplifters caught were released; and, the majority who were caught continued to shoplift.

In concluding, Mr. Wisher (author) states; "If this trend continues, before long we may have a nation in which the majority of people have shoplifted, if indeed we don't already have such a condition" (Wisher, 1968:20).

Mr. Wisher also recommends more mechanical devices including closed circuit television; the addition of uniformed guards as well as plain clothes detectives during high risk hours; and, a country-wide shoplifting information exchange center, among others.

In 1969, Saul D. Astor, President of Management Safeguards Incorporated, conducted one of the first real unique surveys on shoplifting in this country. Unique because it was the first time a survey was conducted in which people were randomly followed as soon as they entered the store. Mr. Astor stated:

"In view of the broad disparity in the guessing, and determined to discover how much shortage could be shoplifted, I began a research project never recorded before. Members of my staff were asked to do a particular store and stand with their back to the street facing the interior. They were then instructed to follow the first person who entered the store on their left, regardless of age, sex, race or any other

characteristic, whether the person be a nun, an invalid, a hood, or an average housewife. They were instructed to stay with that particular customer, selected at random, until the customer left the store. If the customer entered the fitting room, the surveillance was discontinued and the test was not counted. If anything, our procedures should have minimized shoplifting because (a) a shoplifter might well know he is being followed and (b) because merchandise stole in fitting rooms, was excluded from our test" (Astor, 1969:112-115).

A total of 169 customers had been followed from the time they entered the store to the time they departed. The store selected for the test was a multi-storied, soft goods oriented, high volume store located in mid-town New York City. The results are as follows:

1. Of 169 customers selected a random, 20 stole. That is 1 out of 8.5.
2. In addition, three customers noticed that they were being followed and observed while putting merchandise into their pockets or bags, and so either dropped or purchased the merchandise.
3. Of 49 males, selected at random, 3 stole merchandise. That is 1 out of 16. Of 120 females selected at random, 17 stole merchandise. That is 1 out of 7.
4. Race seems to have nothing to do with theft. Two out of 30 male caucasians stole; one out of 19 male negroes stole; 10 out of 11 female caucasians stole; 7 out of 43 female negroes stole.
5. Out of 169 persons followed, 50 made purchases.

Of the 50 who made purchases, only 3 stole. The other 17 thieves bought nothing.

6. Age seems to have nothing to do with dishonesty. Quite by coincidence, none of the subjects had been under the age of 17. The study developed an almost equal number of persons below the age of 25, between 25 and 40, and over 40.
7. On the average, each thief stole \$8.00 worth of merchandise.
8. Fourteen of the 20 shoplifters dropped the stolen goods into large shopping bags. Four wore the merchandise out of the store or carried it over their arms, and 2 dropped stolen goods into large handbags.
9. Seven of the 20 shoplifting incidents took place in the men's furnishing department, and the rest were spread largely among ladies accessories.
10. None of the shoplifters were spotted by store detectives.

Mr. Astor concludes in his study that a given shoplifter stands only one chance in 139 of being apprehended. The answer to the shoplifting "horror," as he puts it, may in part be an increased number of store detectives. But certainly we must look elsewhere for answers as well.

In 1972, the article, "Shoplifters Beware" (Carper, 1972:179-184), the author stated the following:

In a downtown Pittsburg discount store, two men browsed in the record department. One carried a gift-wrapped package. Tipped by an alert employee, detectives watched as the men opened a hinged side of the "gift" and loaded the empty box with as many records as they could carry. The men, they were professionals, were caught and convicted.

In a West Coast Supermarket, a well dressed man in his thirties stuffed a ham under his jacket. Observed through a two-way mirror, he was apprehended, fined \$100.00, and given a 30-day suspended sentence.

In a small town in Michigan, two teen-age girls tried to walk out of a store with some shorts and a blouse. The stolen items were tagged with miniature transmitters which triggered an alarm as they passed electronic detectors on the way out. Caught red handed, the girls were sent to juvenile court.

Merchants, all across the nation, in stores large and small, are staging a tough crackdown on shoplifters. C. Robert McBrier, Senior Vice-President of Woodward and Lothrop, which has 13 department stores in the Washington, D.C. area, says his company is now spending about \$1,000,000 a year on security, up more than 50 percent since 1969 (Carper, 1972:179). Macy's department stores in New York recently installed electronic equipment worth \$3,000,000 and redesigned seven floors of the company's main building to thwart shoplifters (Carper, 1972:179).

Declares Howard Haimowitz, former general manager of the operations division of the National Retail Merchants Association (NRMA): "Shoplifting used to be more of a taboo subject than sex or venereal disease. Many retailers denied it existed, even though it was killing them. Now they have their heads out of the sand" (Business Week, 1970:72).

The 1970's has so far turned out to be a important decade for shoplifting surveys and studies. Apparently, as this problem gets worse, more and more agencies are conducting these surveys in hopes of finding an answer.

#### Significant Related Research

Houston, Texas, in 1970, was the sight of a survey called "The Disparity Between Practice and Prevention" (Scheuler, 1970:1-78). The present research draws extensively on the Houston project. The format and research technique are basically the same.

The purpose of the Houston study was to demonstrate the disparity in effort between the shoplifter in practice of the crime, and the retail security specialist in prevention of the crime. Also, to make specific recommendations to security to combat more effectively the crime of shoplifting.

Scheuler's methodology was similar to the present study: (1) an interview schedule was developed to cover a wide range of responses from admitted shoplifters as to how they were successful; (2) a number of retail security specialists were asked to respond to the same basic questionnaire with only minor rewording of the questions; and, (3) the obtained data was analyzed to arrive at the disparity between the efforts of the shoplifter and the security specialists. In all, 25 male inmates, 35 female inmates, and eight security specialists were interviewed.

### Findings of the Houston Study

From the data presented in this study the following conclusions were drawn (Scheuler, 1970:XI-XIV):

- (1) Store detectives, T.V. Scanners, and two-way mirrors are effective shoplifting deterrence devices.
- (2) Store detectives are not achieving maximum efficiency because of their inability to appear inconspicuous, but the female detective is more inconspicuous than the male detective.
- (3) The judicial system must be made to function more swiftly for shoplifters, and the judgements of the courts be made more severe.
- (4) A large number of clerks in a given department of the store will not necessarily reduce shoplifting in that department.
- (5) The majority of shoplifters will not resist when being apprehended for shoplifting.
- (6) While the majority of store employees will report an incidence of shoplifting which they may observe, but, will report female shoplifters more often than males.
- (7) The male is the more active shoplifter when the store is crowded, while the female prefers the store to be less crowded or nearly empty when shoplifting.
- (8) When shoplifting, the majority of males are alone, while a sizeable number of females shoplift with another person.
- (9) Juvenile male shoplifters begin shoplifting at approximately fifteen years of age.
- (10) the peak shoplifting period are from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- (11) Simulated shopliftings for the purpose of suing for false arrest are very infrequent.



(12) Price tag switching is very prevalent. (13) Family members rarely shoplift together. (14) People are shoplifting in far greater frequency than is suspected, and the weekends and the beginning of the week are the most active shoplifting days. (15) Male shoplifters prefer to conceal stolen merchandise on their persons, while females prefer external concealment areas. (16) Shoplifters are often successful in disposing of their stolen merchandise before it can be found in their possession. (17) Dressing or fitting rooms that are left open and unsupervised are very often used by the shoplifter to commit his crime. (18) The average shoplifter will not increase his shoplifting during the Christmas season. (19) Shoplifters do not attempt to disguise their economic status by "dressing up" to go shoplifting. (20) The shoplifter will usually linger in the store for a period of time before leaving. (21) The majority of shoplifters have no pre-disposed plan to steal upon entering a store. (22) Shoplifters often return their stolen merchandise for cash refund. (23) The majority of persons apprehended for shoplifting are released without prosecution, and the primary reason a store will be selected by a shoplifter is whether or not the store prosecutes shoplifters. (24) The majority of shoplifters feel in advance of their crime, that they will be released by the store if apprehended for shoplifting. (25) After prosecution, the shoplifter will usually cease shoplifting. (26) The majority of shoplifters who are released

unprosecuted, will continue to shoplift, and have little fear of returning to that same store to shoplift. (27) Shoplifters will not seek revenge against a company which prosecutes them for shoplifting. (28) The average male shoplifts because of his greed, while the average female shoplifts because of her need, but both know shoplifting is a crime.

This study was most interesting and valuable to this researcher because, unlike most other research on shoplifting, this study covered all areas involved in this problem.

#### Additional Research

Also in 1970, a study of shoplifting offenses and offenders was conducted at four Helsinki, Finland, department stores (Aromaa, 1970:47). The age and sex structure of the apprehended shoplifter population in four Helsinki department stores resembled in several respects those presented in studies made in other Scandinavian countries and Belgium, involving large proportions of young boys and adult females as offenders. When asked for their motives, the offenders most frequently referred to a "sudden impulse", or a "spur of the moment decision". Juveniles were practically the only group to make references to their peers (claiming they were instigated to commit the offense, and saying others do it, too). The percentage of those denying the intent of larceny grew steadily with age. The

median value of the stolen goods was found to be 7.2 marks (\$1.00 = 3.2 marks in 1965). Older persons stole more expensive objects than young shoplifters. Following store policy on shoplifting, 36 percent of the offenders were found to have been reported to the policy. Making certain assumptions, the size of the apprehended risk is estimated to lie in the range from two to fourteen percent. When questioned, 62 percent of the offenders did not have the faintest idea of what kind of punishment to expect for their offense. Department store shoplifters were typically sentenced to 30 day fines (median), the number of day fines ranging from 10 to 60. In some cases, the sanction was a prison term of as much as eight months. The gravity of the sentence was found to correlate positively with the value of the stolen goods, but also with the existence of a prior criminal record (Aromaa, 1970:47).

The Commercial Service System, Inc., in 1971, conducted a detailed survey into shoplifting in chain drug stores as a part of its in-depth examination of shoplifting in California Supermarkets (Griffin, 1971:30-35). The supermarket and the chain drug store are present in all major shopping centers and an analysis of shoplifting activity in these types of stores might well give an indication of the shoplifting problems in shopping centers in general. The 1971 study is based upon a total of 21,155 cases of actual apprehensions. Of this number 13,439 cases of shoplifting occurred in supermarkets and 7,716 cases occurred in chain

drug stores. Each apprehension was documented in a written report and analyzed on data processing equipment. All cases were first divided into either the supermarket or drug store category. Each group was then processed separately and analyzed in four different ways: (1) all data as a single body; (2) a comparison of female and male activity; (3) a comparison of adult and juvenile activity; and (4) a comparison of juvenile male and juvenile female activity.

The following eight categories were further analyzed in these areas:

- Shoplifters turned over to the police
- Shoplifters released at the store level
- Time period during which shoplifting occurred
- Sex of shoplifter
- Age groups
- Method of operation
- Average number of articles recovered per apprehension
- Average value of merchandise recovered per apprehension

#### Results of the California Supermarket Survey

##### Shoplifters Turned Over to the Police

In 1970, supermarkets called the police in 29.7% of shoplifting cases. Drug stores took a firmer stand and turned over 34.6% of their cases to the police. These figures showed 2.6% increase over previous years in the

number of times police were called by supermarkets on shoplifting cases.

#### Shoplifting Per Time Periods

The largest number of apprehensions (12.4%) in drug stores were made in December; where the fewest number (5.7%) were made in January. On the other hand, December was next to the smallest month for supermarkets. The study significantly points up the fact that supermarkets can anticipate an even distribution of shoplifting year round, while the drug store is subject to a seasonal increase in shoplifting activity.

The amount of shoplifting in a supermarket appears to be correlated with the amount of customer traffic. The greatest number of apprehensions were made on Thursday and the fewest on Sunday. Sunday is not the lowest sales volume day, however, and the relatively small number of Sunday apprehensions seems to result from fewer personnel, both in merchandising and security.

In drug stores the most productive day for apprehension was Saturday with 22.3% being caught on that day. Also significant is the point that in the drug stores 25% of all juvenile offenders were apprehended on Saturday.

The author notes that the period from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. consistently produces the most apprehensions and should consider this factor in scheduling security personnel or others in store counter measures.

### Sex of the Shoplifter

Shoplifting is sometimes referred to as largely a female activity by many security experts. However, this survey shows a rather equal distribution between males and females apprehended in supermarkets. The current drug store survey reveals the same ratio holds true with 49.3% of the adult apprehensions involving males.

Some security specialists have speculated there is a relationship between the mature woman undergoing menopause and an uncontrollable impulse to shoplift.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that in this study only 16% of the total females apprehended were in the 40-59 year age group.

### Age Groups

Juveniles under the age of 13 were apprehended on the basis of approximately 11% in supermarkets and 10% in drug stores. Approximately 43% of all supermarket apprehensions were juveniles under 18 with 50% of the drug store apprehensions occurring in the same age group. Twenty-five percent of the total supermarket apprehensions involved the 18-29 age group, with 22.2% occurring in drug stores. Fewer than 20% of the apprehensions involved people past the age of 30.

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<sup>2</sup>Observations obtained from discussions in the past with other security specialists.

### Methods of Shoplifting

Pockets were the most frequently used place of concealment on the basis of 27.7% in supermarkets and 30.6% in drug stores. Handbags were the next most frequently used in 25.8% of the cases in supermarkets, and 23.7% in drug stores.

### Average Amount Stolen

In supermarkets the average was \$3.81 in each apprehension, in drug stores the average was \$5.31.

In a summary of the survey, the author states:

In the life of the retailer, death and taxes are inevitable, and so is inventory shrinkage due to shoplifting. He prevents shoplifting the best he can once his doors are open, but the solutions available (including prosecution) are far from perfect, so he must accommodate to the problem by passing the cost of shoplifting on to the honest customer. The public is paying for shoplifting. Only public involvement can stop it (Griffin, 1971:33).

### Recent Research

In the Spring of 1973, 1500 University of Pennsylvania students who lived in campus housing were surveyed on their involvement with and reasons for shoplifting. A total of 606 students returned the questionnaire. Study results revealed that both perceptions of risk and definitional factors, such as self-concept, served as constraints on stealing. Students who shoplifted most reported that the low risk of apprehension was an important reason for stealing and saw the least risk associated for stealing both in terms of likelihood of apprehension and severity of

formal (and especially informal) sanction. Apprehension increases their estimate of formal risk. Shoplifters accepted responsibility for their behavior, while non-shoplifters, imagining themselves stealing denied it. However, shoplifters who had been caught were more likely to try to justify their behavior (Kraut, 1976:11).

A similar study was also conducted in 1973, designed to identify and examine demographic and behavioral variables which influence shoplifting behavior in adolescents (Thall, 1973:99). Basically, this study was concerned as to why teenagers shoplift. A sample population was stratified by delinquency and sex, and partitioned into four two dimensional strata: male delinquents, female delinquents, male non-delinquents, and female non-delinquents. Nine variables were used to describe shoplifters as compared to non-shoplifters: aggression, rebellion against authority, peer influence, need for achievement, arousal behavior, positive feelings toward parents, economic self-sufficiency, personal consumer needs, and sale of the item. A questionnaire was administered to three groups from state training schools--under an anonymous self-reporting procedure. It was hypothesized that shoplifters would be characterized by a significantly greater degree of aggression, rebellion against authority, receptivity to peer influence, law violation, arousal behavior and the desire for economic self-sufficiency than the non-shoplifter. It was found that the shoplifters showed larger scores than the non-shoplifters



on three variables: rebellion against authority, arousal behavior, and peer influence.

A Los Angeles security firm in 1974 outlined the results of a survey entitled: "Shoplifting Statistics" (Hughes, 1974:4), concerning supermarkets and department store shoplifting. This survey is very much like the survey conducted by Saul Astor in 1969.

The Los Angeles firm provided supermarkets with a punch card to be filled out for each apprehended shoplifter. The cards returned formed the basis for the annual analysis. The service estimated that shoplifting occurs at least six times a day per supermarket and that each shoplifter steals an average of three items.

A similar study carried out in New York for department stores revealed that one out of each fifteen customers entering a downtown department store will probably steal. Thefts will average over \$5 each, most of the thefts will occur on the main floor, and less than one percent of the shoplifters will be apprehended. The methodology for this study (L.A. included) was to assign investigators to follow shoppers entering four test stores. To follow the first person who entered the store regardless of age, sex or race. This study showed a positive relationship between the frequency of shoplifting and the value of goods taken. Neither age or race were significant factors.

The Netherlands entered into shoplifting research in 1974 by doing a statistical study of a random sample of

1,549 shoplifters apprehended by a large department store in the Netherlands (Fiselier, 1974:56). Analysis of the statistics regarding sex, age, social status, and value of the articles stolen, etc., led to the conclusion that shoplifting is no longer a typical female offense. Shoplifting is being committed increasingly by grown men. No prevalence of groups or gangs of juveniles among the shoplifters could be observed.

A survey by the Florida Retail Federation in 1974 also stated that Florida retailers lost \$250,696,334 to shoplifters in 1974 alone. The federation, which is working on drafting proposed changes in shoplifting, estimates that it costs every Floridian over the age of 16 an average of \$51.38 in 1974 (Security Digest, 1976:8).

A study entitled "Facts on Food Store Shoplifters" (Serdahely, 1977:204) revealed that 90% of the shoplifters apprehended stealing food were regular store customers. An intensive, 14 month study of shoplifting in a large number of supermarkets and smaller stores owned by five Pennsylvania food chains, has revealed some interesting facts and statistics. Conducted by Alpha I Investigative Services, a division of Pequet Security Systems, Inc. of Ardmore, Pennsylvania, (1977) the study was based on a total of 1,119 persons apprehended for shoplifting in these stores. Of the 90% apprehension of regular customers, Edward Tehman, Vice President of Pequet Security Systems, point out this is most significant because so many of those

apprehended were regular customers. He indicates that shoplifters don't usually attract their attention until they have developed characteristic methods of stealing.

Tehman also added that most of their (regular-customer) shoplifters, once caught, usually stop stealing. They usually say this was their first attempt, but it would appear that what they are really saying is that it is the first time they got caught in the act. And, curiously, most have the money to purchase the items stashed in their pockets or purses.

The study revealed the average "take", in a supermarket amount to \$3.41, in some cases it went as high as \$100.00.

Statistically, the 1,119 persons who were apprehended were categorized as follows: females apprehended - 52.9%; males apprehended - 47.1%; ages 10-17 - 21.1%; ages 18-25 - 15.5%; and over 50 years of age - 30.7%. Prosecutions - 19.7%; average dollar value per recover - \$3.41; and the average dollar value per prosecution - \$10.50.

The study reported, based on the daily experiences of store detectives, shoplifters resorted to the following in their act of concealment: handbags (large types); pockets - jackets and coats; inside clothing that is worn; bags or other containers. In some cases, food was hastily eaten by the shoplifter right in the store.

Finally, a most interesting fact was revealed from the Ardmore Study. Supermarkets in college or university areas patronized by students appear to have the lowest

shoplifting losses of any stores. This particular finding about the college students is most interesting because this researcher's own studies and surveys have indicated a different interpretation.<sup>3</sup>

In the report "Shoplifting - As Seen By A Professional" (Creeden, 1977:6-13), the author states the following about a professional shoplifter.<sup>4</sup>

He learned the "trade" of shoplifting from the first woman he fell in love with, an addict with a \$150-a-day habit. This was a lot of money and most of the heisting he did was to cover her expenses for a fix. He tried, unsuccessfully, to get her to take the cure. Finally, in desperation and fear of being picked up on a narcotics rap, he dropped her. But this was not until she had taught him all he needed to know about shoplifting. Mrs. X (name given for interview) stated that when she was working she was one of the best in the Southwest. He watched her steal steam irons, watches, toasters, typewriters, adding machines, portable sewing machines, and the like. She was extremely attractive and well built, and she used her assets to her advantage. Store salesmen admired her, never suspecting what was really happening.

When asked who are better shoplifters, men or women, Mr. X replied that women are, without a doubt. According to him, there are many reasons for this, among them the fact that women can enter more areas

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<sup>3</sup>In 1976, a Midwestern Retail Chain with a total of 12 department stores apprehended 1,782 shoplifters. The average age 14. Two of the twelve stores were one and two in apprehension.

Store number one apprehended 312 shoplifters with an average age of 20.

Store number two, apprehended 257 shoplifters with an average age of 19½.

Both stores, have at least 4 colleges within a 20 mile area. The average population is one hundred eighty thousand.

It would appear the college student could be a factor that might prove fruitful in future research.

<sup>4</sup>For further reference see Appendix B.

with less chance of being observed than men. He gave an example--a man in a lingerie or cosmetic section tends to draw clerks to assist him, thereby reducing his opportunities to pick up articles.

Mr. X relates another factor for women's success at shoplifting is that women have a natural hiding place for stolen merchandise, their purses. With the size of today's purses, a store can lose a lot of merchandise.

He further states, carrying a baby can be a gold mine for a female shoplifter. When the weather is cold, they wrap the baby in a blanket or bunting. While in the store they can use the blanket to cover all types of merchandise. They pick up a small item to buy, and just before they get to the register, they will annoy the baby and get him to cry. This has a tendency to get everyone in the store on edge. The shoplifter then approaches the register with money in hand so that she won't have to open her purse or move the baby and chance disclosing the stolen merchandise. This ploy is very effective, especially during a holiday season.

How much does a shoplifter make? Mr. X says it depends on whether he is a professional, an amateur, or a junkie. The latter two are generally beaten out of a fair price. The amateur loses out due to lack of knowledge and fear of holding on to the stolen merchandise and getting caught. The junkie just wants enough money to buy a fix. The professional will have contacts, perhaps even in the local police department. Generally speaking, a good shoplifter working five or six days a week should net a minimum of \$500 a week. Remember he is not getting full value, so he probably 'lifts' between \$1200 and \$1500 worth of merchandise. That's a profit of \$15,000 to \$25,000 per year--tax free.

Creeden goes on to ask: Is shoplifting that easy?

What does the shoplifter look for: Mr. X listed some of the observations he makes about retail stores when he is operating:

1. Traffic in the store--when heavy, when light, when frequented by students and management.
2. Attitudes of employees at various hours.
3. Activities 30 minutes before closing, 10 minutes

before closing.

4. Lack of attention to customers.
5. Store lay-out: how entrances are guarded, space between cashiers and exits; how gondolas are arranged; height of gondolas; position of pharmacist in drug stores; location of manager's office, and whether his position is horizontal or perpendicular to the aisles; dead spots or corners; telephone locations; and location of fountains.
6. Attitude of manager. Does he frequent the floor or pay much attention to the customers, other than watching traffic?
7. At a new store opening, has the company brought older employees in from other stores? If not, shoplifting will be easy.
8. Does the store have a security force? This can be ascertained by using a pretest. Are the employees security conscious?
9. Does the store have mirrors, how are they set up and does anyone pay any attention to them. The same goes for CCTV (closed circuit t.v.).
10. Middle aisles, a good spot for shoplifters to work.

Mr. X stated he has decreased his activities considerably due to two heart attacks, but he says he hasn't lost his touch. How many Mr. X's are there in the world today? Nobody can really answer that question. There is one thing for certain though, you can't expect to stop shoplifters if you don't know how to look for them (Creeden, 1977:13).

Another study, "Who Reports Shoplifting" (Steffensmeier, 1977:79-95), reports on an investigation of the number of factors thought to affect the willingness of shoppers to report a shoplifting incident. The field experiment involved rigged shoplifting incidents. The sex and appearance ("hippie" versus "straight") of the shoplifter were manipulated. In addition, the incidents were staged in three stores selected prior to the experiment to represent varying degrees of size. Major findings were: size of store and sex of shoplifter had little effect on reporting. Whereas, appearance did, with hippie shoplifters more likely to be reported than straight shoplifters; and, lesser educated, middle-aged, and bluecollar shoppers were more likely to report shoplifting.

A similar study was done in Michigan in 1971, testing the interactionist-labeling theory of deviant behavior in the specific context of a staged shoplifting incident (Steffensmeier, 1972:1-232). This research investigated a variety of factors thought to affect the willingness of subjects to report a shoplifting incident. On a more general theoretical level, the concern was with the factors affecting the degree to which an actor is vulnerable to deviant imputation. The research consisted of a field experiment and follow-up by a home interview conducted several weeks after the field experiment. The field experiment consisted of rigged shoplifting events enacted in the presence of store customers who were in a position to

observe and react to the shoplifting incidents. Three variables were manipulated as part of the field experiment, all thought to affect the willingness of subjects to report the shoplifting. These were: (1) shoplifter's appearance, (2) sex of the shoplifter, and (3) sex of the subject. The home survey as well as the post-experimental interviews gathered information relevant to examining the effects on reporting levels of a number of sociopersonal characteristics of subjects. The following variables were included: social distance, perceived seriousness of shoplifting, imputation of deviant character, educational level, socioeconomic status, age, and dogmatism. The likelihood of reporting an observed incidence of shoplifting was found to be directly related to the perceived social distance between the observer and the actor. The seriousness of the theft was also directly related, although not as significantly. More specifically, those shoplifters with a "hippie" appearance were more likely to be reported than the "straight" shoplifters.

### Summary

Based upon the previous discussion, one significant conclusion emerges: shoplifting has increased alarmingly in scope, magnitude, and intensity. It appears as if it will continue to be a major problem for merchants, security, courts, and the disposition of offenders. In fact, the following developments support this contention: according



to a survey by the National Retail Merchants Associations, shrinkage accounted for nearly \$5 billion worth of merchandise lost in 1973, about two percent of total sales (Drew, 1974:15). Mass Retailing Institute's "Store Thieves and Their Impact" report sets the loss figure at 2.56 percent. The 1,188 discount stores covered in the survey lost about \$845 million against sales of \$33 billion (Drew, 1974:15). The MRI reports that an average discount store apprehends 125 shoplifters a year (this reflects a high of 512 and a low of 5) and projects 1974 total shoplifting arrests at 900,000 (Security World, 1974:15).

To counter this problem, retailers are sparing almost no effort or expense. In downtown Washington, D. C., Woodward and Lothrop's invested \$200,000 to get its security system in "fighting trim" (Business Week, 1970:72). Retailers are recruiting whole platoons of uniformed store guards and plain clothes security detectives. They are buying more and more closed circuit television cameras. They are installing two-way mirrors even in dressing rooms. They are putting tiny sensitized tags on merchandise; thus, unless removed or neutralized by a sales clerk, these miniature transmitters trip an alarm as the culprit starts to leave the store.

What's behind the upsurge in retail theft? Every retailer has his theories which might include: the "break-down" of the general "moral fabric"; inflation and the high cost of living, and the youth rebellion against authority

and the Establishment. Stores are also getting larger and more open, which can mean there is more access to the merchandise. As Geraldine Malloy, a store detective at Gertz in Hicksville, Long Island, put it (Business Week, 1970:72): "So many people are doing it, it's actually gained a certain twisted kind of legitimacy, if not legality." However, as stated at the outset, this research will attempt to support the contention that the crux of the shoplifting problem lies in the gap in knowledge about shoplifting and shoplifters and the retail security specialists attempt at prevention and apprehension.

#### Statement of Hypothesis

It is the hypothesis of this study to demonstrate that there exists a disparity between the operations and techniques of shoplifters practicing their crime, and the operations and techniques of retail security specialists seeking to prevent the crime. This study will try to point out the gaps and myths surrounding the practice and prevention of shoplifting. It is felt this disparity could be ameliorated if retail security specialists were more cognizant about the shoplifter and his methods, procedures and motivations.

#### Definition of Terms

Shoplifters, commonly referred to as boosters, fall into several categories. The most common and well known of these are: the professionals, the amateur, the narcotics addict, and the kleptomaniac. For purposes of this study,

the following definitions will be used:

The Professional. The professionals are very experienced shoplifters and usually work in teams, knowing exactly what they want ahead of time. They make quick hits, coming back into the store several times. While one engages the clerk in conversation or sends him away on an errand, the other grabs and immediately conceals merchandise, using such devices as a belt with hooks, a raincoat with cut out pockets, or a booster box (a package with one end which opens so that items may be stuffed inside). Pros generally steal expensive, easily sold goods (Cohen, 1974:41).

The Amateurs. The casual offender, the housewife, persons with meager income, and juveniles of both sexes comprise the amateur group. They steal for several reasons: real or imaginary hardship, personal need, an opportunity presenting itself, inability to resist temptation, or, especially with juveniles, the thrill involved. The amateur's loot is largely taken from counters displaying lingerie, hose, costume jewelry, and various sundry small articles (Cohen, 1974:41).

The Narcotic Addict. The addict shoplifts for merchandise with high resale value. This is necessary because of an expensive habit. To support a \$100.00 a day habit, an addict must lift \$800.00 to \$1,000.00 worth of merchandise a day, since he can get approximately a 10% return on hot goods (Cohen, 1974:41). Working alone, or sometimes with another, he travels fast and steals from such places

as open delivery trucks, stockrooms, freight platforms, or freight elevator areas where quantities of boxed or packaged merchandise are located.

Retail drug stores and drug departments in other stores are the likely places where dope addicts will, either through theft or ruse, attempt to satisfy their addiction. But all stores, regardless of merchandise handled, are targets of narcotic users.

The Kleptomaniac. The kleptomaniac is defined as someone with an irresistible desire to steal. The kleptomaniac usually comes from the upper middle class families and from wealthy or financially stable homes. The articles stolen are desired not because of their value, but may have some hidden meaning, or to be laid aside and forgotten, the act itself having satisfied some inner tension or compulsion.

True kleptomaniacs are only a small minority of all shoplifters. They make up less than one percent of the total number of individuals who steal from stores (Cohen, 1974:41).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

Chapter III will cover the procedures used in the gathering and developing of data based on interviews with a sample of inmates of the Nebraska Penal complex for men and the York, Nebraska, Center for Women. It will also cover the procedures used in gathering data about shoplifting prevention based on interviews with Retail Security Specialists in the Omaha, Nebraska area.

#### Procedure

The research strategy used to investigate why shoplifters are usually successful and why retail efforts fall short of total prevention can be divided into three categories of operations.

The first step consisted of developing an interview schedule to cover a wide range of responses from admitted shoplifters as to how they were able to shoplift. The questionnaire used to obtain their responses was derived from one used in a previous Texas study (Scheuler, 1970). Systematic selections were based on the following: inmates were chosen by going through the inmate index file and selecting only those who had a larceness conviction. Based

upon previous analysis, those individuals convicted of burglary, robbery, auto theft, and larceny from a person were selected. This researcher observed that a significant number had been convicted of shoplifting in some earlier stage of their career. Therefore, it could be anticipated that most people convicted of these particular crimes would also have shoplifted. After selecting the first 100 to meet this criteria, final selection was made by selecting every other one, starting with number one. This was done to further reduce the possibility of bias since knowledge of the inmates history was available to the researcher.

Fifty inmates were chosen for interviews, 25 more than needed. A larger number was selected to allow for non-participation and inappropriate responses.

A list of the sample was given to one of the office administrators in order for the interviews to be arranged. To insure confidentiality, no personal record of the inmates names was kept. The only demographic information retained was age, race, and sex.

Next, interviews were scheduled by a penal complex administrator to take place on Saturdays. Saturday was picked because weekends are free time for the inmates. Ten inmates were scheduled each Saturday at 45 minute intervals. Inmates were brought to the counselor offices just inside the complex walls. This sight was picked because it is in the same area as the visitation rooms and it was assumed that inmates would feel more relaxed. A private room was

provided for the interviews. Each inmate was informed as to who the interviewer was and for what purpose the interviews were being administered. The first ten interviews turned out to be invalid because inmates were afraid the room was "bugged," or the information they would give would hurt their chances for parole. Only two out of the first ten cooperated. Fortunately, one inmate, a 24 year old black convicted of robbery, felt the investigator was a "square dude," as he put it. This inmate "passed the word out that everything was okay" and the remaining interviews went on as scheduled. Of the thirty-six inmates who consented to be interviewed, 25 were actually selected for the sample. Although only three weeks had passed since the male interviews, word had already reached the Center for Women that this study was being conducted. The information was passed by the inmates in the mens complex who knew women in the center. Because of the small population in the women center, (at that time the population was 100) not as many inmates were selected. Forty inmates were chosen and interviewed of which 35 were selected. As in interview procedures with the males, similar arrangements were made with the female inmates. Female inmates were much easier to talk with and less suspicious than the male inmates.

During all interviews, careful consideration was given to inmates the investigator perceived were exaggerating their practices. For example, if he or she would exaggerate

things they had done or how they did something, this researcher realized that pragmatically these practices couldn't have happened.<sup>5</sup> This was done with little problem since the investigator has had vast experience working with individuals involved in shoplifting. When this did occur, the questionnaire was marked invalid and not used.

The second step was to require eight retail security specialists to respond to the same basic questionnaire, with only minor rewording of the questions. Again, a similar questionnaire was used as the one in the previously mentioned Texas study (see Chapter II). Interviews were orally administered and took place in the security specialist's own office.

#### Interview Description and Procedure

Interviews were orally administered to inmates of the Nebraska Penal Complex for Men in Lincoln, Nebraska, and the Nebraska Center for Women in York, Nebraska. Care was taken to select only those individuals who would be classed as amateur or non-professional shoplifters because it was a basic assumption of this research that amateur or non-professional shoplifters comprise the majority of the shoplifters.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part I

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<sup>5</sup>Examples of these types of cases were: shoplifters who stated they would steal 150 pair of pants at one time or 100 pair of shoes, or 150 fur coats.



was used to gather information from shoplifters in reference to their methods, procedures, and frequency of perpetration. Part II of the questionnaire was used to measure the responses of security specialists as to what they feel are the methods, procedures, and frequency of perpetration of shoplifting in their stores.

As previously stated, the questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with the responses of the shoplifters in regard to the various techniques of their shoplifting behavior. The 35 questions cover age of first shoplifting experience, number of time they were successful, possible deterrent devices, and number of times they were prosecuted. All the questions were openended in form.<sup>6</sup>

Part II of the questionnaire consists of 36 questions which, with only minor rewording, were basically the same as those asked of the inmate sample. For example, the shoplifter was asked: "Approximately what hour(s) of the day would you usually shoplift?" The security specialist was then asked: "Approximately what hour(s) of the day are the busiest shoplifting period(s)?"

Eight retail security specialists from the Omaha area were given the same questionnaire the inmates were given with only minor rewording of the questions. The eight specialists chosen were the highest ranking security

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<sup>6</sup>See Appendix C for complete copy of questionnaire.

officials of each particular store. Their titles being either Security Director or Cooperate Supervisor. Criteria for choosing the eight stores were: large volume store, some of which belonged to a national chain; stores that have had security departments for many years, and stores with a large security force.

Part II was also important in determining attitudes of security specialists toward their existing shoplifting prevention methods; and, in determining their perception of the techniques utilized in shoplifting. As noted, Part I of this questionnaire was necessary to determine the nature of the crime of shoplifting.

### Summary

A total of 60 inmates and 8 security specialists were interviewed and 35 questions were answered concerning shoplifting and prevention. An attempt was made to observe more rigorous and systematic methods in carrying out the research than those of previous studies.

The next chapter will deal with the actual findings. It will analyze the obtained data and attempt to point out the disparity and resultant ineffectiveness of preventative methods between the operations of the shoplifter and the security specialists. A description of the shoplifters responses, the specialists responses, and a comparison of the two will be included.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### Introduction

This chapter will deal with the findings obtained from the questionnaire administered to the inmates of the Nebraska Penal Complex, the York Center for Women and retail security specialists in the Omaha area. Each subject's responses to the questionnaire items were solely his or her own.

The chapter will be divided into three areas: shoplifters responses, specialist responses, and a comparison of the two. Each area has four sections: Deterrence, Methods, Prosecution, and Motivation.

#### Questionnaire Results - Part I

##### Deterrence

The shoplifters were first asked from the following categories which deterrence device(s) would have deterred them from shoplifting and why; store detectives, T.V. scanners, two-way mirrors, convex mirrors, prosecution signs or floor walkers. Of the male respondents, twelve indicated that two-way mirrors would have most deterred them because they had no way of knowing if anyone was behind it. Eight

respondents indicated that neither of the six devices would have deterred them. Four respondents indicated store detectives would have been the most effective deterrence device because of their actual physical presence. One respondent felt T.V. scanners were the most effective because they can cover such a great area at one time. Of the female respondents, 15 stated that two-way mirrors would have been the most effective deterrence device. Nine females felt neither of the devices would have deterred them, and five female respondents felt store detectives would have been the most effective in deterring them. Three respondents stated T.V. scanners would have been the most effective, and three respondents felt convex mirrors would have deterred them.

It should be noted, of the 17 male and female respondents who felt none of the devices would have deterred them, the following remarks were offered: store detectives are easy to beat because they are so obvious; T.V. scanners are easy, all you need is good timing; and two-way mirrors have blind spots. (Table 4)

The next question dealt with the ability of the shoplifter to distinguish the store detectives from the regular customers. Of the male respondents, 19 stated that they could usually spot the store detectives, and six stated that they could not. Among the reasons given were: the same people always were looking at you, someone following you all over the store, and their heads faced one direction while their eyes looked around. Of the female respondents, 31

TABLE 4

## Deterrence Devices Most Effective Against Shoplifting

Deterrence	Shoplifters		Percent (of Total) N=60
	Male N=25 (%)	Females N=35 (%)	
A. Store Detectives	4 (16%)	5 (14%)	15%
B. T. V. Scanners	1 (4%)	3 (8.5%)	7%
C. Two-way Mirrors	12 (48%)	13 (43%)	45%
D. Convex Mirrors	0 (0%)	3 (8.5%)	5%
E. Prosecution Signs	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0%
F. Floor Walkers	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0%
G. None of above	<u>8 (32%)</u>	<u>9 (26%)</u>	<u>28%</u>
Total	25 (100%)	35 (100%)	100%

stated that they could usually distinguish the store detectives from the regular customers, while four stated they could not. Among reasons given as to why store detectives were easy to spot were: in cold weather, store detectives would have on light coats; they would wear comfortable shoes, were very obvious in following you; they never buy anything; and, you would always see the same person in that store when you shopped. (Table 5)

TABLE 5

- A. Conspicuousness of Store Detectives  
and  
B. Sex of Detectives Most Conspicuous

Detectives Conspicuous	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25	(%)	Females N=35	(%)	
A. -					
Yes	19	(76%)	31	(89%)	83%
No	6	(24%)	4	(11%)	17%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%
Sex Most Conspicuous					
B. -					
Males	15	(60%)	24	(69%)	65%
Females	2	(8%)	5	(14%)	12%
No Difference	8	(32%)	6	(17%)	23%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The shoplifters were then asked, in their own opinion, was it easier to distinguish a male or female store detective. Fifteen of the male respondents felt that the male detective was always the more obvious, while eight

respondents felt both male and female detectives were easy to distinguish. Two respondents felt female detectives were easier to distinguish. Of the female respondents, 24 felt that the male detective was the more readily distinguishable, while six said both male and female were easy to distinguish from customers. Five respondents felt female detectives were easier to distinguish. (Table 5)

The next question dealt with whether the shoplifter preferred the store to be crowded or nearly empty when they were shoplifting. Fourteen of the male respondents stated it made no difference to them whether the store was crowded or not. Seven preferred the store to be crowded, while four respondents preferred the store to be nearly empty. Fifteen of the female respondents stated that they preferred the store to be crowded, while 13 respondents preferred the store to be empty. Seven respondents said they didn't care. Of the male and female respondents who preferred the store to be crowded, twenty-two responded that crowded stores kept the clerks busy helping customers; therefore, making their act easier. (Table 6)

The next question asked was: If a store has two-way mirrors, do you believe that someone is behind them; and, if so, is someone always behind them. Of the male shoplifters, 20 felt that the two-way mirrors were manned most of the time. Four felt the mirrors were only manned occasionally like holidays and weekends. One respondent felt the mirrors were phony and put there just to scare you.

TABLE 6  
Customer Traffic Affecting  
Frequency of Shoplifting

Customer Traffic	Shoplifters				Percent (of total) N=60
	Males N=25		Females N=35		
		(%)		(%)	
Light	4	(16%)	13	(37%)	28%
Heavy	7	(28%)	15	(43%)	36%
No Difference	14	(56%)	7	(20%)	36%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

Twenty-four of the respondents who stated the mirrors were manned all agreed that they were not manned all the time. Twenty-three female respondents felt that the two-way mirrors were used most of the time. While twelve respondents felt that they were used only some of the time. All 23 respondents who believed the mirrors were manned agreed they were not manned all the time. (Table 7)

TABLE 7  
Frequency of Two-Way Mirror Use

Use of Two-Way Mirrors	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25		Females N=35		
		(%)		(%)	
Always	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0%
Most of the Time	20	(80%)	23	(66%)	72%
Sometimes	4	(16%)	12	(34%)	27%
Never	1	(4%)	0	(0%)	1%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The shoplifters were then asked if the fear of going to jail or prison ever deterred them from shoplifting.



Twenty-four of the male respondents stated that the fear of going to jail or prison had never deterred them from shoplifting. Their basic reasoning being, they never planned on getting caught, and when they did get caught, the fine or punishment was usually light. The legal consequences were not great. One respondent felt the fear of jail or prison, if arrested for shoplifting, did much to deter him. Of the female respondents, 29 stated that the fear of going to jail or prison had never deterred them from shoplifting. Six respondents did feel the fear of jail or prison did deter them from shoplifting. All of these latter respondents, however, stated that they had been arrested for shoplifting prior to the threat of this becoming a deterrent. (Table 8)

TABLE 8

Fear of Jail or Prison as a  
Shoplifting Deterrent

Jail or Prison A Deterrent	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25	(%)	Females N=35	(%)	
Yes	1	(4%)	6	(12%)	10%
No	24	(96%)	29	(83%)	90%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The next question asked if the shoplifter had ever successfully shoplifted from a department in a store that had several clerks. Of the male shoplifters, 22 stated that they had shoplifted in departments of stores which had

several clerks. The majority attributed their success to the inattentiveness of the clerks. Three respondents stated they had never shoplifted from a store that had several clerks. Their basic reason was that with a lot of clerks around you, one had to be more careful and the risk wasn't worth it. Of the female respondents, 31 stated they had shoplifted in a department with a lot of clerks around. Their reason for success was similar to those given by the male shoplifters. Four respondents had never shoplifted from a department that had several clerks. (Table 9)

TABLE 9

## Store Clerks as a Shoplifting Deterrent

Clerks a Deterrent	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25		Females N=35		
		(%)		(%)	
Yes	3	(12%)	4	(11%)	12%
No	22	(88%)	31	(89%)	88%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

Next the shoplifters were asked if they ever assaulted a store employee who was arresting them for shoplifting. Of the male respondents, 22 stated that they had never assaulted a store employee who was attempting to apprehend them for shoplifting. Three stated that they had assaulted store employees attempting to apprehend them for shoplifting, but it was usually a couple of "shoves or punches." Thirty-two of the female shoplifters stated they had never assaulted a store employee who was attempting to apprehend

them for shoplifting. Three of the respondents stated they had assaulted a store employee attempting to apprehend them for shoplifting. Their assaults were similar to the type of assault given by the male respondents. (Table 10)

TABLE 10

## Assault of Store Detectives by Shoplifters

Assault by Shoplifters	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25		Females N=35		
		(%)		(%)	
Yes	3	(12%)	3	(9%)	10%
No	<u>22</u>	(88%)	<u>32</u>	(91%)	<u>90%</u>
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The next question asked the shoplifters was if they had ever been observed shoplifting by a store employee, and then not reported by him, and why. Twelve of the male respondents admitted they had been observed shoplifting by store employees who failed to report them. The reason given for this failure of clerks to report shoplifters included: the employee was in on it; a prior friendship on the part of the employee; fear on the part of the employee; and, some didn't know why the employee did not report them. Thirteen respondents stated as far as they knew, they had never been observed by clerks. Of the female respondents, 14 stated they had been observed by store employees who failed to report them. Their reasons were similar to those of the male respondents. However, a couple of female

stated that they put the merchandise back after they were observed by a store employee and therefore the employee didn't do anything. Twenty-one respondents stated as far as they knew, they had never been observed by store clerks shoplifting. (Table 11)

TABLE 11  
Failure of Employees to Report Shoplifting

Employees Report Shoplifting	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25	(%)	Females N=35	(%)	
Yes	12	(48%)	14	(40%)	44%
No	0	(0%)	10	(0%)	28%
Unknown	13	(52%)	21	(60%)	28%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The last question of this section asked of the shoplifter was if they had ever been observed shoplifting by a legitimate customer of the store, and what did they (the customer) do. Of the male respondents, 17 admitted that they had been observed shoplifting by legitimate customers in the store, and the majority failed to report the shoplifting. Of those customers who did do something, in most cases they were too late. In two cases, the respondents stated they were turned in by the customer, caught and prosecuted. Eight of the respondents felt that they had never been observed shoplifting by legitimate customers. Nine of the female respondents stated that they had been observed shoplifting by legitimate customers in the store,

and were rarely reported by these customers. Of the ones who did report the shoplifter, most of the respondents stated the customer was too late in reporting them. Two respondents stated that as in the case of the male respondents, they were also turned in, caught and arrested. Twenty-six of the respondents felt that they had never been observed shoplifting by legitimate customers. (Table 12)

TABLE 12

## Do Legitimate Customers Observe Shoplifters

Customers Observe Shoplifting	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25	(%)	Females N=35	(%)	
Yes	17	(68%)	9	(26%)	43%
No	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	22%
Unknown	8	(32%)	26	(74%)	35%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

In summary, this section brought out some very interesting points. That is: (1) Two-way mirrors are the best deterrent, (2) Store detectives, males particularly, are conspicuous, (3) Jail or prison sentence is not a shoplifting deterrent, and (4) Store clerks are not necessarily a deterrent to shoplifting.

The second section of the questionnaire deals with shoplifting methods. As in the first section, the responses of the female shoplifters are listed immediately after those of the male shoplifters.

## Methods

The first question asked of the shoplifter concerned shoplifting techniques. Had they ever shoplifted with a group? If so, how often, and how many were usually in the group. Of the male shoplifters, 17 stated that when shoplifting they preferred to be alone. Eight respondents stated they had shoplifted with groups of two or three and the majority stated they shoplifted twice a week. Twenty-four of the female shoplifters stated they were always alone when shoplifting. Eleven respondents stated they had shoplifted with groups of two or three and the majority stated they would shoplift two to three times a week. (Table 13)

TABLE 13

## Shoplifting Alone or in Groups

Shoplifting	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25		Females N=35		
		(%)		(%)	
Alone	17	(68%)	24	(69%)	68%
Group	8	(32%)	11	(31%)	32%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The next few questions dealt with the age of the respondent when their shoplifting activities began. Of the male respondents, 18 stated they first shoplifted between the ages of 12 and 15, and the rest were spread out between nine and 24. The mean age was 14 years old. Of the female respondents, ten stated they had first shoplifted at the age

of 13, seven respondents stated they had first shoplifted at the age of 12. The rest of the respondents were spread out between the ages of 15 and 21. The mean age was 13 years old. (Table 14)

TABLE 14

## Age of Shoplifters First Shoplifting Experience

Age	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25	(%)	Females N=35	(%)	
9	2	(8%)	0	(0%)	3%
10	1	(4%)	0	(0%)	2%
11	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0%
12	5	(20%)	7	(20%)	20%
13	3	(12%)	10	(28%)	22%
14	5	(20%)	6	(17%)	18%
15	5	(20%)	3	(9%)	13%
Older	4	(16%)	9	(26%)	22%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

Mean = 13

The shoplifter was then asked during approximately what hours of the day would you usually shoplift. Of the male respondents, twelve stated it made no difference to them--either morning, afternoon or evening. Seven preferred 3:00-6:00 p.m., three preferred 6:00-10:00 p.m., two respondents preferred 12:00-3:00 p.m., and one respondent preferred 9:00 a.m. to noon. Of the female respondents, 20 stated they preferred to shoplift between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Five respondents preferred 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., four preferred noon to 3:00 p.m., three preferred 9:00 a.m. to noon, and three respondents stated it

made no difference to them when they shoplifted. (Table 15)

TABLE 15

Peak Shoplifting Hours Indicated  
By Former Shoplifters

Peak Hours	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25	(%)	Females N=35	(%)	
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	1	(4%)	3	(9%)	7%
12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	2	(8%)	4	(11%)	10%
3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	7	(28%)	20	(57%)	45%
6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	3	(12%)	5	(14%)	13%
No Difference	12	(48%)	3	(9%)	25%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

It should be noted, of the 27 male and female respondents who like to shoplift between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. the following reasons were given: (1) It was close to the end of the shift and the clerks were more worried about going home than helping the customer; (2) Clerks were getting things ready (merchandise, etc.) for the night clerks and would pay little attention to customers; and, (3) 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. was shift change in a lot of stores and this would usually cause a lot of confusion and unattended departments.

The next question sought to determine if the shoplifter ever pretended to shoplift so when stopped by store officials they could sue for false arrest. Of the male shoplifters, all 25 stated they had never simulated a shoplifting with the idea of suing for false arrest if



apprehended by store personnel. The female respondents were similarly unanimous in stating they had never simulated a shoplifting incident. (Table 16)

TABLE 16

## Pretending to Shoplift in Order to Sue Store

Sue Store	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25		Females N=35		
		(%)		(%)	
Yes	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0%
No	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The shoplifters were then asked if they had ever switched tickets or price tags on merchandise. Fifteen of the male and 27 of the female shoplifters admitted that they often switched the price tags on merchandise. Ten male and eight female shoplifters stated that they had never switched tickets on merchandise. (Table 17)

TABLE 17

## Frequency of Ticket Switching

Ticket Switching	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25		Females N=35		
		(%)		(%)	
Frequent	15	(60%)	27	(77%)	70%
Sometimes	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0%
Never	10	(40%)	8	(23%)	30%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The next question was concerned with the frequency,

if any, of other members of the same family shoplifting. Of the male shoplifters, 20 stated that as far as they knew, they had been the only member of their family who had shoplifted. Four respondents stated they had brothers or sisters who had been arrested for shoplifting, and one respondent stated his wife was a shoplifter. Twenty-four of the female shoplifters stated that they were the only member of their family that had ever shoplifted. Eleven respondents stated they knew their brother or sisters would occasionally shoplift. (Table 18)

TABLE 18  
Members of the Same Family Shoplift

Same Family	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25		Females N=35		
		(%)		(%)	
Yes	5	(20%)	11	(31%)	25%
No	20	(80%)	24	(69%)	75%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The shoplifters were then asked how many times a week would you usually shoplift. Of the male respondents, nine stated they shoplifted twice a week, six stated they shoplifted once a week, and five respondents had no set pattern and shoplifted when the need occurred. Also, three respondents said they shoplifted almost every day, one stated four times a week and one respondent admitted at least ten times a week. Of the female respondents, sixteen stated they shoplifted once a week, and ten admitted to twice a

week, and nine respondents said they shoplifted between four to six times a week. (Table 19)

TABLE 19  
Frequency of the Shoplifters Shoplifting  
on a Weekly Basis

Frequency of Shoplifting	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	N=25	Males (%)	N=35	Females (%)	
Once a Week	6	(24%)	16	(46%)	37%
Twice a Week	9	(36%)	10	(28%)	31%
Three Times a Week	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0%
Four Times a Week	1	(4%)	0	(0%)	2%
Daily or More	4	(16%)	9	(26%)	22%
No Set Pattern	5	(20%)	0	(0%)	8%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The next question dealt with the most common concealment places used by the shoplifters. Of the male shoplifters, 18 stated that they would most often conceal their stolen merchandise under their coat, using their arm to hold the merchandise against their body. Three respondents stated they used sacks, two said they used a purse and two other respondents stated they would just pick up the merchandise and walk out. Twenty-three of the female shoplifters admitted that they would usually conceal their stolen merchandise in their purses. Ten stated they put the merchandise under their coats as the men did and two respondents stated they would just walk out with the merchandise. It should be noted that several female respondents said they would take empty purses and fill them with newspaper.

So when you saw them enter the store, the purse would look fat. Then they would select the merchandise to steal, take out the paper, fill with the merchandise not changing the looks of the purse. As one stated: "store detectives are not stupid, if they see an empty looking purse going into a store and a fat looking one leaving, it's easy to put two and two together." One respondent stated she would use a baby buggy to conceal her merchandise. The majority of the female respondents admitted the large purse was a definite advantage in stealing. (Table 20)

TABLE 20  
Place Where Shoplifters Concealed  
Shoplifted Merchandise

Conceal Merchandise	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25		Females N=35		
		(%)		(%)	
Under Coat	18	(72%)	10	(28%)	47%
Purse	2	(8%)	23	(66%)	42%
Pocket	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0%
Sack or Bag	3	(12%)	0	(0%)	5%
Worn Out	2	(8%)	2	(6%)	6%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The shoplifters were next asked if they had ever been arrested for shoplifting and then discard the merchandise before it could be found on them. Twenty-two of the male respondents and twenty-nine of the female respondents stated they had never been able to dispose of the merchandise before it was found on their person. Nine of the male

and female respondents admitted that they had been able to discard the merchandise while in the custody of the store detectives. In some of the incidents, some of the respondents said they were let go because the store detective couldn't find the merchandise. (Table 21)

TABLE 21  
Frequency of Discarding Merchandise  
After Apprehension

Discarding Merchandise	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25	(%)	Females N=35	(%)	
Yes	3	(12%)	6	(17%)	15%
No	22	(88%)	29	(83%)	85%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The next question dealt with the use of dressing or fitting rooms to shoplift. Of the male shoplifters, ten admitted that they had used the dressing rooms on numerous occasions to shoplift successfully. They unanimously stated this success was attributed to the absence of a clerk to control merchandise going in and out of the rooms. Fifteen respondents stated that they had never used the dressing rooms when they shoplifted. Thirty-one of the female shoplifters admitted that they had used the dressing rooms to steal merchandise. They also added their success was primarily due to lack of controls or laxness on the part of the clerks attending the dressing rooms. One respondent stated the dressing rooms, as she put it, was "the only way

to go. So easy to steal, why risk it on the sales floor". Several respondents stated they went out of their way to go to stores with no controls or loose controls at the dressing rooms. Four respondents stated that they had never used the dressing rooms to shoplift. (Table 22)

TABLE 22

## Use of Fitting Rooms to Shoplift

Fitting Rooms	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25		Females N=35		
		(%)		(%)	
Yes	10	(40%)	31	(89%)	68%
No	15	(60%)	4	(11%)	32%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

The next question asked the shoplifters concerned an increase in their shoplifting during the holidays. Of the male respondents; sixteen stated that they would not increase their shoplifting practices during the holidays. Nine respondents stated they would increase their shoplifting during the holidays. Of the female shoplifters, 28 stated that they would increase their shoplifting during the holidays. Seven stated they would not increase their shoplifting during the holidays. Of the male and female respondents who shoplifted more during the holidays, the majority stated their reasoning was that the stores were very crowded making it easy to shoplift. The crowded stores made it hard for the security personnel to watch you. Those respondents who would not increase their practices during

the holidays felt just the opposite. Shoplifting was too risky during the holidays because of the increased security personnel. (Table 23)

TABLE 23  
Increase Shoplifting During the Holidays

Increase Shoplifting	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25	(%)	Females N=35	(%)	
Yes	9	(36%)	28	(80%)	62%
No	16	(64%)	7	(20%)	38%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

Next, the shoplifters were asked if they would "dress up" to go shoplifting. Of the male respondents, seventeen stated that they never dressed up to shoplift, but dressed casual. Eight respondents stated they would dress up to go shoplifting. Eighteen of the female respondents said they would dress up to go shoplifting, while seventeen stated they would not dress up to go shoplifting. Of the male and female respondents who did dress up to go shoplifting, their main reason for dressing up depended upon whether or not they were going to shoplift in expensive stores. Dressing up, they felt, would make them fit in with that store's particular clientele. (Table 24)

The shoplifters were next asked about their behavior after they had shoplifted an article (i.e., would they exist the store slowly or quickly). Twenty-one male and

TABLE 24  
Shoplifters Attire

Attire	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25	(%)	Females N=35	(%)	
Casual Dress	17	(68%)	17	(49%)	57%
Well-Dressed	8	(32%)	18	(51%)	43%
Total	25	(100%)	25	(100%)	100%

thirty-one female respondents stated that after they had shoplifted an item they would exit the store slowly. Their reasoning was they did not want to attract attention or suspicion. Also, by leaving slowly, it could give them time to spot the store detectives. Three male and four female respondents stated that they would exit the store quickly after shoplifting an item. One male respondent stated that it didn't matter to him how he left the store. Sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly, all depending on how he felt. (Table 25)

TABLE 25  
How Shoplifters Exited a Store

Exit	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25	(%)	Females N=35	(%)	
Slowly	21	(84%)	31	(89%)	87%
Quickly	3	(12%)	4	(11%)	12%
Both of Above	1	(4%)	0	(0%)	1%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%



Next, the shoplifters were asked about target items for shoplifting. Did they seek a specific item or just anything that looked easy. Of the male shoplifter, 17 stated that they rarely, if ever, knew in advance what they were going to shoplift. Eight of the male shoplifters stated that they usually knew what they wanted to shoplift prior to entering the store. Twenty-one of the female respondents stated that they never knew what or when they were going to shoplift until it actually happened. It would depend upon the situation (i.e., finding themselves in a favorable position to commit the act). Fourteen of the female shoplifters had predetermined what they were going to shoplift. (Table 26)

TABLE 26  
Shoplifting Premeditated or Spontaneous

Shoplifter	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	N=25	Males (%)	N=35	Females (%)	
Knew in Advance	8	(32%)	14	(40%)	37%
Spontaneous	17	(68%)	21	(60%)	63%
Total	25	(100%)	25	(100%)	100%

Next, the shoplifters were asked if they ever returned the shoplifted merchandise for a refund. Of the male shoplifters, nine admitted that they had returned their shoplifted merchandise for refunds quite frequently. Sixteen respondents stated that they never returned their stolen

merchandise for refunds. Thirty of the female respondents stated that they would occasionally return shoplifted merchandise for refunds. Five respondents stated that they had never attempted to get a refund from their shoplifted merchandise. (Table 27)

TABLE 27

Shoplifters Returning Merchandise  
For Refunds

Refunds	Shoplifters				Percent (in Total) N=60
	Males N=25	(%)	Females N=35	(%)	
Yes	9	(36%)	30	(86%)	65%
No	16	(64%)	5	(14%)	35%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

In the last question of this section, the shoplifters were asked if they would use a sack or bag for shoplifting which they obtained in another store. Of the male shoplifters, 20 admitted that they had often used a sack or shopping bag which they had acquired in another store. Five male respondents stated that they never used a shopping bag or sack from another store. Twenty-four of the female shoplifters admitted that they had often used a sack or shopping bag from another store to shoplift merchandise. Eleven women stated that they did not use a shopping bag or sack to conceal shoplifted merchandise. (Table 28)

This section illustrates some very important findings concerning the methods of shoplifting. First, most

TABLE 28

Use of a Sack or Bag Obtained From  
Another Store for Shoplifting

Sack or Bag	Shoplifters				Percent (of Total) N=60
	N=25	Males (%)	N=35	Females (%)	
Often	20	(80%)	24	(69%)	73%
Occasionally	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0%
Never	5	(20%)	11	(31%)	27%
Total	25	(100%)	35	(100%)	100%

shoplifters prefer to shoplift alone, (2) most shoplifters begin their shoplifting as a teenager, (3) peak shoplifting hours are 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., (4) shoplifters, seldom, if ever, pretend to shoplift in order to sue, (5) most shoplifters shoplift at least once to twice a week, (6) female shoplifters prefer stores with loose controls or without controls at Fitting Rooms making it easier to shoplift, (7) most shoplifters increase their shoplifting during the holidays, (8) the majority of shoplifters stated they had no idea they were going to shoplift before entering a store, and (9) the majority of shoplifters, especially females, occasionally return shoplifted merchandise for refunds.

The next section of the questionnaire was designed to determine to what extent shoplifters were being prosecuted.

### Prosecution

The shoplifters were first asked if they had been prosecuted the first time they were apprehended for shoplifting. Of the male respondents, nine stated that they had been prosecuted the first time they were caught shoplifting. Sixteen respondents admitted that the first time they were apprehended for shoplifting, they had been released unprosecuted. Seventeen of the female respondents stated that they had been prosecuted the first time they were caught shoplifting. Eighteen respondents stated that the first time they were caught shoplifting they were released. (Table 29)

It should be noted, many of the shoplifters stated that they had shoplifted numerous times before they were caught for the first time. One male respondent stated he had been shoplifting for about a year to year and a half before being apprehended, and during that time probably had shoplifted at least 100 to 150 times.

As an extension of the first question, the shoplifters were asked if not prosecuted, why were you not prosecuted. Of the 16 male respondents who stated they had not been prosecuted, they gave the following reasons: (1) six stated the store officials decided to give them a second chance, (2) three said after they gave the merchandise back, they were released, (3) two stated their parents were called instead of the police, and (4) five respondents didn't know why they were released. Eighteen of the female respondents

TABLE 29

## Prosecution of Shoplifters

Prosecution	Shoplifters		Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25 (%)	Females N=35 (%)	
1st time apprehended-prosecuted:			
Yes	9 (36%)	17 (49%)	43%
No	16 (64%)	18 (51%)	57%
Total	25 (100%)	35 (100%)	100%
If not, Why:			
A) Given a 2nd chance	6 (37.5%)	7 (39%)	(of 34) <sup>a</sup> 38%
B) Gave merchandise back	3 (19%)	2 (11%)	15%
C) Parents called instead	2 (12.5%)	2 (11%)	12%
D) Unknown	5 (31%)	7 (39%)	35%
Total	16 (100%)	18 (100%)	100%
If prosecuted-would you have continued to shoplift:			
Yes	13 (52%)	20 (57%)	55%
No	9 (36%)	14 (40%)	38%
Not sure	3 (12%)	1 (3%)	7%
Total	25 (100%)	35 (100%)	100%
Number of times apprehended but not prosecuted:			
A) Once	10 (53%)	11 (61%)	(of 37) <sup>b</sup> 57%
B) 4 to 6 times	4 (21%)	4 (22%)	21%
C) 6 or more times	2 (10%)	3 (17%)	14%
D) Lost count	3 (16%)	0 (0%)	8%
Total	19 (100%)	18 (100%)	100%

TABLE 29 (continued)

Prosecution of Shoplifters

Prosecution	Shoplifters		Percent (of Total) N=60
	Males N=25 (%)	Females N=35 (%)	
If not prosecuted would you return to that store to shoplift:			
Yes	5 (20%)	6 (17%)	18%
No	20 (80%)	29 (83%)	82%
Total	25 (100%)	35 (100%)	100%
Would you seek revenge against a store for prosecution:			
Yes	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	3%
No	23 (92%)	35 (100%)	97%
Total	25 (100%)	35 (100%)	100%

<sup>a</sup> 34 males and females out of 60 reported first time apprehended not being prosecuted.

<sup>b</sup> 37 out of 60 admitted to never being apprehended for shoplifting.

who stated they had not been prosecuted gave the following reasons: (1) seven stated the store detectives decided to give them a chance, (2) two stated they were released after they had returned the merchandise, (3) two said their parents were called, and (4) seven stated they did not know the reason why they were not prosecuted. Several of the female respondents admitted that after apprehension, if they suspected that a store might prosecute them, they would fake some type of emotional distress, such as sobbing or hysteria. This outburst would eventually lead to their release. (Table 29)

The shoplifter was then asked if he had been prosecuted the first time he was apprehended, would he have continued to shoplift. Of the male and female shoplifters, thirty-three stated they would have continued to shoplift if prosecuted the first time they were apprehended. Twenty-three male and female shoplifters stated they would not have continued to shoplift if they had been prosecuted the first time they were apprehended. Four male and female respondents were unsure whether prosecution would have made any difference. (Table 29)

It should be noted, the respondents who were not prosecuted when apprehended for shoplifting stated they would continue to shoplift, but would choose another store. One reason given was that they would probably be recognized and not be given another chance if they were caught again at the store where they had previously been released.

The next question the shoplifters were asked concerned the number of times they had been apprehended shoplifting and not prosecuted. Of the 19 male shoplifters who admitted that they had been released un-prosecuted, ten stated that this had occurred at least once, four state that this had occurred four to six times, two stated this had occurred at least ten times, and three stated they had lost count on the number of times they had been released un-prosecuted. Of the 18 female shoplifters who admitted that they always had been released un-prosecuted, eleven stated that this had occurred at least once; four stated that this had occurred four to six times; and three stated that this had occurred at least ten or more times. (Table 29)

The next question the shoplifters were asked was if a store apprehended you shoplifting, then released you without prosecution, would they shoplift in that store again. Also, would they shoplift in that chain again. Of the male respondents, 20 stated that they would not return to a store who had apprehended them and did not prosecute. Their main reason was that they didn't want to take a chance of getting caught again and probably prosecuted. Five respondents stated that they would return and shoplift in the stores which had previously released them un-prosecuted. Of the female respondents, 29 stated that they would not return to a store who had apprehended them and did not prosecute. Their reasons were similar to the male respondents. Six



respondents stated that they would return and shoplift in the store that did not prosecute them. (Table 29)

The last question asked of the shoplifters was if they ever sought revenge against a store because it prosecuted them for shoplifting. Of the male shoplifters, 23 stated that they had never sought revenge against a company which had prosecuted them for shoplifting. One respondent said he wanted to, but didn't go through with it. One respondent stated that he did, in fact, seek revenge against the store that prosecuted him for shoplifting. The respondent stated he went back to the store that night and burglarized it. Of the female respondents, no one admitted ever seeking revenge against a company which had prosecuted them for shoplifting. (Table 29)

In summarizing this section on prosecution, some of the following observations were made: (1) The majority of shoplifters are not prosecuted the first time they are caught; plus, the majority are not prosecuted every time they are caught, (2) Being prosecuted the first time would not have deterred them from future thefts, and (3) Most shoplifters will not return to a store that prosecutes shoplifters.

The last section of the questionnaire attempted to determine some of the motivations of the shoplifters and why they would choose a particular store.

### Motivation

The first question the shoplifters were asked was why they shoplifted. Of the male respondents, 16 stated that they shoplifted only because they didn't have enough money at the time to buy that particular item. Four respondents said they stole because they needed the item. Four stated they shoplifted because the opportunity presented itself. One respondent said he often stole merchandise for friends. Of the female shoplifters, 19 stated that they shoplifted items which they needed and could not afford. Fourteen stated that they shoplifted because of the easy opportunity. Two respondents stated they shoplifted items for friends. (Table 30)

The next question the shoplifters were asked was whether or not they considered shoplifting to be a crime. Of the male respondents, 22 thought shoplifting to be a crime. Three of the respondents thought shoplifting should be, as they put it, decriminalized. They stated the stores were making too much money and could afford to lose a little merchandise. Of the female shoplifters, 31 considered shoplifting to be a crime. Four respondents did not consider shoplifting to be a crime, and like the male shoplifters, thought stores were making too much money. (Table 30)

The last question in this part sought to determine why a shoplifter would choose a particular store. Of the male shoplifters, 18 stated they would choose a store that

TABLE 30

What Motivated A Shoplifter to Shoplift

	Shoplifters		Percent (of Total) (N=60)
	Males N=25 (%)	Females N=35 (%)	
<b>Motivation to Shoplift:</b>			
A) Not enough money	16 (64%)	19 (54%)	58%
B) Need	4 (16%)	0 (0%)	7%
C) Opportunity was there	4 (16%)	14 (40%)	30%
D) For friends	1 (4%)	2 (6%)	5%
Total	25 (100%)	35 (100%)	100%
<b>Shoplifting a Crime:</b>			
Yes	22 (88%)	31 (89%)	88%
No	3 (12%)	4 (11%)	12%
Total	25 (100%)	35 (100%)	100%
<b>Choosing a Store to Shoplift:</b>			
A) High racks and crowded aisles	18 (72%)	23 (66%)	68%
B) Security-good or not	2 (8%)	4 (11%)	10%
C) Lots of exits	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	5%
D) Discount stores	0 (0%)	4 (11%)	7%
E) Unattended fitting rooms	0 (0%)	3 (9%)	5%
F) Other	2 (8%)	1 (3%)	5%
Total	25 (100%)	35 (100%)	100%

had high racks and crowded aisles. This would make it easy to shoplift because it was easier for them to hide. Two respondents stated they chose a particular store depending on how good the security was, and whether they were easy or hard to beat. Three respondents chose a particular store it it had a lot of exits. The more exits, the easier they thought it was to get away. Two respondents stated they had no real reason why they chose a particular store to shoplift. Of the female shoplifters, 23 stated they chose stores with high racks and crowded aisles. Four respondents stated they chose discount stores because they had little help around, making it easy to steal. Four respondents stated it would depend on how good the security was--if they were "easy or hard to beat". Three respondents stated they chose stores that had unattended fitting rooms. One respondent chose only boutique shops because they were small and had no security. Smaller stores, the shoplifter felt, made shoplifting easier. There were also fewer clerks on duty. (Table 30)

This researcher feels this last question is one of the most important and merits further comment. More specifically, the shoplifter wants privacy-because with privacy he or she can easily steal. This is evident in the fact that thirty-five shoplifters would chose a store with high racks and crowded aisles. The high racks and crowded aisles give the shoplifter the privacy he needs. Also, the majority of the shoplifters surveyed reported that they would

usually avoid stores that prosecuted. Most of the respondents agreed that "if you are going to take a chance, you might as well take it in a store that doesn't prosecute".

In summary, most shoplifters steal because they don't have the money, but know that shoplifting is a crime. Also, the higher the racks, and the more crowded the aisles, the better the shoplifter will like a store.

The next section will deal with Part II of the questionnaire, the security specialists responses. These questions are the same questions asked the shoplifters, only reworded slightly to fit the specialists. The same format and order used for the shoplifters responses will also be used for the security specialists responses.

### Questionnaire Results - Part II

This section deals with the security specialists answers to the same questions asked the shoplifters in Part I. The questions were slightly modified to fit the specialists.

#### Deterrence

The specialists were first asked to choose from the following categories which deterrence device(s) they feel best deters shoplifters: Store detectives, T. V. scanners, two-way mirrors, convex mirrors, prosecution warning signs, or floor walker (a customer service specialist). Five of the specialists stated that they felt store detectives were the most effective deterrence device. Two specialists

stated that they felt two-way mirrors were the best deterrent, and one respondent felt T. V. scanners would do the most to deter shoplifting. (Table 31)

TABLE 31  
Deterrence Devices Most Effective  
Against Shoplifting

Device	Specialist	Percent (of Total)
A. Store Detectives	5	62.5%
B. T. V. Scanners	1	12.5%
C. Two-way Mirrors	2	25 %
D. Convex Mirrors	0	0%
E. Prosecution Signs	0	0%
F. Floor Walkers	0	0%
G. None of the Above	0	0%
Total	8	100%

The next question dealt with the possibility that store detectives were conspicuous, and thereby ineffective. Seven of the specialists felt store detectives were often conspicuous, and therefore ineffective at times. Their reasoning being the detective is in the store constantly and the average shoplifter seeing him or her repeatedly in a store will "put two and two together". Plus, there's only so much a store detective can do while watching someone, he often becomes noticeable to the person he's watching. One specialist stated he felt store detectives were inconspicuous most of the time. As to whether shoplifters ever spot store detectives, five specialists stated that store detectives are often spotted by shoplifters. Three specialists felt shoplifters spotted store detectives only some

of the time. (Table 32)

TABLE 32

A. Conspicuousness of Store Detectives  
and  
B. Sex of Detective Most Inconspicuous

Conspicuous	Specialist	Percent (of Total)
A. Yes	7	87.5%
No	$\frac{1}{8}$	12.5%
Total	$\frac{8}{8}$	$\frac{100\%}{100\%}$
Less Conspicuous		
B. Males	1	12.5%
Females	7	87.5%
No Difference	$\frac{0}{8}$	0%
Total	$\frac{8}{8}$	$\frac{100\%}{100\%}$

The specialists were next asked which store detectives, male or female, were the most inconspicuous. Seven of the specialists, felt female detectives were the less conspicuous, and one specialist felt male detectives would be the less conspicuous. The basic reasoning behind the female detective being inconspicuous, the specialist felt, was her ability to shop anywhere in the store and not be out of place. By contrast, a male store detective shopping around in the ladies lingerie section would be very conspicuous. (Table 32)

The next question the specialists were asked was whether shoplifters were more active in crowded or nearly empty stores. Four of the specialists felt shoplifting definitely increased when the stores were crowded, because

it was easier for the shoplifter to hide in a crowd. Two specialists felt shoplifters preferred nearly empty stores so they could keep a closer watch on the store clerks. Two specialists felt it didn't make much difference whether the store was crowded or not. (Table 33)

TABLE 33  
Customer Traffic Affecting  
Frequency of Shoplifting

Customer Traffic	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Light	2	25%
Heavy	4	50%
No Difference	2	25%
Total	8	100%

The specialists were then asked how often the two-way mirrors of a store were manned. Five specialists stated they do not use two-way mirrors and therefore could not offer an opinion. Two specialists stated two-way mirrors were manned seldom, and one specialist felt two-way mirrors were used 60-70% of the time. Whether shoplifters believed two-way mirrors are manned all the time, four specialists said no, and three specialists stated yes. One specialist stated he didn't know. (Table 34)

The next question the specialists were asked was if they believed the fear of going to jail or prison deterred shoplifters. Five of the specialists felt the fear of going to jail or prison does not deter shoplifters. Their reason



TABLE 34  
Frequency of Two-way Mirror Use

Mirror Use	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Always	0	0%
Most of the Time	1	12.5%
Seldom	2	25%
Never	0	0%
No Opinion	5	62.5%
Total	8	100%

was the courts are too lenient on shoplifters, and until our judicial system (law, courts, judges, etc.) do crack-down on shoplifters, going to jail or prison will never be a deterrent. One of the specialists indicated more public awareness of shoplifting and the consequences, especially to school age kids, would be a great deterrent. Three specialists felt the fear of going to jail or prison did much to deter shoplifting. (Table 35)

TABLE 35  
Fear of Jail or Prison as a  
Shoplifting Deterrent

Jail or Prison A Deterrent	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Yes	3	37.5%
No	5	62.5%
Total	8	100%

The specialists were next asked if the number of clerks in a given section of the store would have any effect

on shoplifting. The unanimous response of the specialists was that store clerks do have a definite effect on shoplifting. (Table 36)

TABLE 36  
Store Clerks as a Shoplifting Deterrent

Clerks a Deterrent	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Yes	8	100%
No	0	0%
Total	8	100%

The next question dealt with how often are employees assaulted while apprehending shoplifters. Seven of the specialists stated employees are seldom assaulted while apprehending shoplifters. One specialist stated employees are never assaulted when apprehending a shoplifter. (Table 37)

TABLE 37  
Assault of Store Detective by Shoplifters

Assault Store Detective	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Seldom	7	87.5%
Never	1	12.5%
Total	8	100%

The specialists were next asked, do they feel store employees fail to report shoplifting which they observed, and if so why. Seven specialists felt store employees do

fail to report shoplifters they may have observed. Usually their failure to report is sometimes based on fear and the 'I don't want to get involved' reason. This, the specialist felt, happens occasionally, and there is little they felt they could do. One specialist, however, felt it doesn't happen in his store because the employees are well trained and receive a reward for turning in shoplifters. (Table 38)

TABLE 38

## Failure of Employees to Report Shoplifting

Employees Report Shoplifting	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Yes	7	86.5%
No	1	12.5%
Total	8	100%

The last question of this section asked how often do legitimate customers report shoplifters. Seven specialists felt legitimate customers very seldom report shoplifters, because the average customer does not want to get involved. One specialist stated he felt legitimate customers very often report shoplifters. (Table 39)

In summing up this section some very interesting facts emerge. First, security specialists basically feel store detectives are the best deterrent, (2) store detectives are easily spotted by shoplifters, (3) shoplifters prefer crowded stores, (4) fear of jail or prison is not a

TABLE 39

## Do Legitimate Customers Observe Shoplifters

Customer Report Shoplifters	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Very Often	1	12.5%
Seldom	7	85.5%
Total	8	100%

deterrent to shoplifters, and (5) store employees, as well as customers, desire not to get involved with reporting shoplifters.

The second section of the questionnaire deals with the shoplifter's methods. As in the first section, the questions given the specialists are the same as the ones given the shoplifters with only some minor rewording.

#### Methods

The first question asked was if the shoplifters preferred to shoplift alone or in groups. Five of the shoplifters stated they felt shoplifters preferred to shoplift alone. Three of the specialists stated they felt shoplifters usually shoplifted in groups. These three specialists also stated the juvenile shoplifter is the one who frequently shoplifts in groups. (Table 40)

The next question asked the specialists was at what age do people begin shoplifting. The specialists responses were greatly varied from 5 years of age to 14. Only two specialists could agree on the same age, that being 13.

TABLE 40  
Shoplifting Alone or in Groups

Shoplifters	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Alone	5	62.5%
Group	3	37.5%
Total	8	100%

The specialists also stated sex of the shoplifter made no difference in their responses. (Table 41)

TABLE 41  
Age of Shoplifters First Shoplifting Experience

Ages	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Between 5-14	6	75%
13	2	25%
Total	8	100%

Next the specialists were asked what was the peak shoplifting period(s) of the day: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., or 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Three of the specialists felt 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. to be the peak shoplifting period. Three specialists stated they felt 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. was the peak time for shoplifting. One specialist felt 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. was the peak shoplifting time, while one respondent stated he thought 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. was the peak shoplifting period. (Table 42)

TABLE 42

Peak Shoplifting Hours Indicated  
by Security Specialists

	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	1	12.5%
12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	1	12.5%
3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	3	37.5%
6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	3	37.5%
Total	<u>8</u>	<u>100%</u>

The next question sought to determine if simulated shoplifting for the purpose of suing for false arrest was common. Seven of the specialists stated simulated shoplifting for the purpose of suing was common among shoplifters. One specialist felt simulated shoplifting, for the purpose of suing for false arrest was uncommon.

(Table 43)

TABLE 43

Pretending to Shoplift in Order to Sue Store

Sue Store	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Common	7	82.5%
Uncommon	1	12.5%
Total	<u>8</u>	<u>100%</u>

The specialists were next asked if ticket or price tag switching is a problem, and how often are people successful in this. Four specialists stated ticket or price tag switching was a definite problem. Four specialists

felt ticket or price tag switching was not a serious problem. On how successful shoplifters were at switching tickets or price tags, five specialists felt ticket and price tag switching was rarely successful, one specialist felt ticket switching was often unsuccessful, one respondent stated shoplifters were successful 50% of the time switching tickets, and one specialist didn't know how often shoplifters were successful at switching tickets or price tags. (Table 44)

TABLE 44  
Frequency of Ticket Switching

Ticket Switching	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Definite problem	4	50%
Not a serious problem	4	50%
Total	8	100%

The next question dealt with if a member of a family shoplifts, do other members of that family shoplift. Four of the specialists stated it was rare to find that more than one person from the same family shoplifts. Two of the specialists stated it was common to find more than one person from the same family that shoplifts. Two of the specialists stated that they didn't know if it was common or not to have more than one shoplifter from the same family. (Table 45)

TABLE 45

## Members of the Same Family Shoplift

Same Family	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Rare	4	50%
Common	2	25%
No Opinion	2	25%
Total	8	100%

Next the specialists were asked to approximate on a weekly basis the frequency a shoplifter would shoplift. Four specialists stated that they had no idea because the majority of people apprehended for shoplifting would always say it was their first time. Two specialists felt shoplifters steal at least twice a week. One specialist stated shoplifters steal once a week and one respondent stated shoplifters steal at least three times a week. (Table 46)

TABLE 46

Frequency of the Shoplifters Shoplifting  
on a Weekly Basis

Frequency of shoplifting	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Once a week	1	12.5%
Twice a week	2	25.0%
Three times a week	1	12.5%
No opinion	4	50.0%
Total	8	100%

The next question dealt with the most common places of concealment used by shoplifters. All of the specialists agreed that the purse was the most common place of



concealing merchandise by the female shoplifter. While the male shoplifter preferred to conceal his merchandise under a coat or inside the waistband of his pants. The specialists also stated shopping bags and sacks were also common places to conceal merchandise used by both the male and female shoplifters. (Table 47)

TABLE 47

Place Where Shoplifters Concel  
Shoplifted Merchandise

Conceal Merchandise	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Purse-Females	8	100%
Under coat-Males	8	100%

The specialists were next asked how often shoplifters were able to dispose of their stolen merchandise before it could be found in their possession. Six specialists indicated this happens occasionally, usually due to the fact that store detectives were not alert. One specialist stated that shoplifters were not able to dispose of stolen merchandise after they were apprehended. One specialist stated it was very seldom that apprehended shoplifters disposed of stolen merchandise. (Table 48)

Next the specialists were asked how often fitting rooms or dressing rooms were used for shoplifting and why. Six of the specialists stated fitting rooms or dressing rooms were used often to shoplift in because they are left

TABLE 48  
 Frequency of Discarding Merchandise  
 After Apprehension

Discarding Merchandise	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Occasionally	6	75%
Seldom	1	12.5%
Never	1	12.5%
Total	8	100%

unattended. The shoplifter is able to carry merchandise in and out at will. Two specialists stated shoplifting very seldom occurred at their dressing rooms or fitting rooms because they have attendants who check merchandise in and out. (Table 49)

TABLE 49  
 Use of Fitting Rooms to Shoplift

Fitting Rooms	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Often	6	75%
Very Often	2	25%
Total	8	100%

The specialists were next asked if they felt shoplifting increases during the holidays and why. Seven specialists felt shoplifting does increase during the holidays because of two basic reasons: (1) there are more people shopping, making it easier to shoplift, and (2) people are hard pressed for money. One specialist felt shoplifting does not increase during the holidays because stores employ

more clerks and security personnel during the holidays and the shoplifters know this.

TABLE 50  
Increase Shoplifting During the Holidays

Increase Shoplifting	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Yes	7	87.5%
No	1	12.5%
Total	8	100%

The next question was concerned with whether or not store detectives watch well dressed or less well dressed customers. Five specialists stated that they felt their store detectives watch well dressed customers more than less well dressed customers. Two specialists stated they felt their store detectives watch less well dressed customers more than well dressed. One specialist stated it really didn't make any difference to his store detectives whether the customers were well dressed or not.

TABLE 51  
Shoplifters Attire

Attire	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Casual Dress	2	25%
Well-dressed	5	62.5%
Didn't Matter How Dress	1	12.5%
Total	8	100%

The next question asked in what manner did shoplifters exit a store, slowly or quickly. The specialists agreed unanimously that shoplifters exit a store slowly because this enables them to spot someone following them. (Table 52)

TABLE 52  
How Shoplifters Exited a Store

Exit	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Slowly	8	100%
Quickly	0	0%
Total	8	100%

Next the specialists were asked if shoplifters entered a store knowing what they were going to steal, or would they steal whatever looked easiest. Five of the specialists stated they felt shoplifting was premeditated. That the shoplifter knew in advance what he or she was going to steal. One specialist felt shoplifters stole whatever looked easy, on the spot type of theft. Two specialists stated they really didn't know if theft was premeditated or on impulse.

TABLE 53  
Shoplifting Premeditated or Spontaneous

Shoplifting	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Premeditated	5	62.5%
Impulse	1	12.5%
No Opinion	2	25%
Total	8	100%

The next question dealt with whether they require a sales slip on all returned merchandise. Four specialists stated they require a sales slip on all returned merchandise in order to get a refund. Two specialists stated that their stores do not require a sales slip in order to get a refund. Two specialists stated it depends on whether the customer wanted an exchange or cash refund and also the dollar amount of the refund made a difference. If the dollar amount was ten dollars and over, a sales slip for a refund was required.

TABLE 54

## Shoplifters Returning Merchandise For Refunds

Refunds	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Require a Sales Slip	4	50%
Do Not Need a Sales Slip	2	25%
Depends Whether Exchange or Refund	2	25%
Total	8	100%

The last question in this section was concerned with how often shoplifters used sacks or bags obtained in other stores to shoplift. Two specialists stated shoplifters often use bags or sacks obtained from other stores to shoplift. Five specialists stated shoplifters seldom use bags or sacks to shoplift because most of their stores have a policy prohibiting bags or sacks from other stores. The five specialists did admit this policy is not always

enforced. One specialist stated he didn't have an opinion one way or the other if sacks or bags were a problem.

TABLE 55

Use of a Sack or Bag Obtained from Another Store  
For Shoplifting

Sack or Bag	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Often	2	25%
Seldom	5	62.5%
Never	0	0%
No Opinion	1	12.5%
Total	8	100%

In summary, this section pointed out some interesting observations made by the security specialists: (1) the specialists feel shoplifters prefer to shoplift alone, (2) the specialists are divided between 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. as to which is the peak shoplifting period, (3) they are divided on whether ticket or price switching is a problem, (4) that purses pose a big problem for store detectives, (5) fitting rooms are often used to shoplift in, (6) that shoplifting does increase during the holidays, (7) store detectives watch well dressed customers more than less well dressed and, (8) shoplifting is basically a premediated act.

The next section of the questionnaire was designed to determine to what extent shoplifters were being prosecuted.

### Prosecution

The specialists were first asked if they prosecute all the shoplifters they apprehend. Three specialists stated that they did prosecute all shoplifters that were apprehended. Two specialists stated they do not prosecute all customers apprehended for shoplifting. Three specialists said it all depends on age, value of merchandise, and if they have a solid case for court. One of the specialists stated if one of his detectives arrest a prominent, influential or rich individual, he will in almost all cases not prosecute. His reasoning being he does not want the "hassle", plus, he feels he will probably lose in court anyway. (Table 56)

As an extension of the first question, the specialists were asked: how do you differentiate between those you prosecute and those you release. Five of the specialists who do not always prosecute gave the following reasons: (1) age--elderly and juvenile usually are not prosecuted, (2) amount--meaning the dollar amount stolen; small amounts, the shoplifter is released, (3) influential and rich people are released, and (4) depends on whether the case is a solid one or not.

The next question dealt with whether the specialists felt shoplifters will continue to shoplift even when they are prosecuted. Seven specialists stated they felt shoplifters will continue to shoplift even after they are prosecuted. Their main reason being the laws are not strict

TABLE 56

## Prosecution of Shoplifters

Prosecution	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
1st time apprehended and prosecuted		
Yes	3	37.5%
Not always	2	25%
Depends on circumstances	3	37.5%
Total	8	100%
If prosecuted-would they continue to shoplift?		
Yes	7	87.5%
No	1	12.5%
Total	8	100%
Number of times shoplifter apprehended but not prosecuted		
Many times	5	62.5%
50% of the time	1	12.5%
Unknown	2	25%
Total	8	100%
If not prosecuted, would they return to your store to shoplift again		
Occasionally	2	25%
Seldom	5	62.5%
Never	1	12.5%
Total	8	100%



TABLE 56 (Continued)

Prosecution of Shoplifters

Prosecution	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Would they seek revenge against a store for prosecuting them?		
Occasionally	3	37.5%
Rarely	1	12.5%
Never	4	50%
Total	8	100%

enough concerning shoplifting. One specialist felt prosecution was somewhat of a deterrent and only a small percentage would continue to shoplift after being prosecuted.

(Table 56)

The specialists were then asked to approximate the number of times that other companies had released the shoplifter without prosecution. Five specialists felt shoplifters they have apprehended have been released many times by other stores for shoplifting. This, they felt, being especially true of juvenile shoplifters because so many stores do not prosecute juveniles. Two of the specialists stated it was unknown to them how many were released. One respondent felt about one-half of the shoplifters his store apprehends have probably been released by someone else for shoplifting. (Table 56)

The next question in this section sought to determine the frequency that the companies reapprehended shoplifters whom they had previously released without prosecution. Also, if they had ever reapprehended a shoplifter that they did prosecute at one time. Five of the specialists stated they seldom reapprehend a shoplifter whom they had released without prosecution. Two specialists stated this occurs occasionally, and one specialist stated that he has never reapprehended a shoplifter who had been released by his store for shoplifting. The specialists also agreed that seldom, if ever, had they reapprehended a shoplifter they had earlier prosecuted for shoplifting. (Table 56)

The last question in this section asked if shoplifters ever seek revenge because of prosecution. Three specialists felt this had happened on occasion because after they had arrested a shoplifter they received bomb threats and in some cases store windows were broken. Four specialists stated as far as they could determine, they have never had a destruction of property related to a shoplifting incident. One specialist felt shoplifters rarely, if ever, seek revenge against a store that has prosecuted him. His reasoning being that once a shoplifter is caught by a store, he or she wants nothing to do with the store detective or store. The last thing he or she wants is another run in with the store detective and possible jail again. (Table 56)

In summing up this chapter, a few areas should be pointed out. First, the majority of the shoplifters caught are not prosecuted, especially juveniles. Second, age, dollar amount stolen and economic status are factors in determining whether a shoplifter is released or prosecuted. Thirdly, the majority of prosecuted shoplifters will continue to shoplift because of weak shoplifting laws and penalties. Last, prosecuted shoplifters very seldom seek revenge against a store.

The last section of the questionnaire the specialists were asked to determine some of the motivations of shoplifters and why he or she would choose a particular store.

### Motivation

The specialists were asked why, in their opinion, do people shoplift. The specialists all felt people shoplift for different reasons. Common responses were: risk is not great, chances of being prosecuted slim, to get something for nothing, money, for fun, to support a habit, to compensate for their budget, peer group influence, and because its easy. (Table 57)

Next the specialists were asked if they felt shoplifters considered shoplifting to be a crime. Four specialists stated shoplifters all knew that shoplifting is a crime. Three specialists felt most shoplifters do not think of stealing as a crime. Shoplifters rationalize that the companies make so much money, a few items will not hurt them. As one specialist stated, the offenders only realize it's a crime after they are caught. One specialist stated it depends on the shoplifter whether it's a crime or not. The specialist's basic reasoning being that of the above three specialists. (Table 57)

The last question in this part of the questionnaire sought to determine why a shoplifter would choose a particular store. The specialists felt that there are many reasons why a shoplifter will or will not choose a certain store. Their reasons were: big stores, many exits, good merchandise, easy refund policy, lack of clerks, lack of good security, reputation to prosecute or not, and close to home. (Table 57)

TABLE 57

What Motivated a Shoplifter to Shoplift

Motivation	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Motivation to shoplift: different reasons: money, fun, habit, peer group, no risk Total	8 <u>8</u>	100% 100%
Shoplifting a crime to shoplifters: Yes No Depends on Shoplifter Total	4 3 1 <u>8</u>	50% 37.5% 12.5% 100%
Why shoplifters choose a store to shoplift in: Less clerks Lack of good security Reputation to prosecute Easy refund policy Close to home Unknown Total	3 1 1 1 1 1 <u>8</u>	37.5% 12.5% 12.5% 12.5% 12.5% 12.5% 100%

In summary of this section, a few things should be noted. First, shoplifters steal for many reasons, money being the biggest reason. Second, shoplifters basically consider stealing to be a crime, even though some specialists feel a lot of them do not consider it a crime. Last, the lack of clerks and reputation to prosecute are reasons specialists feel shoplifters choose a store to shoplift in.

The next section will show a comparison of some of the responses made by both the shoplifters and the security specialists.

#### Comparison of the Security Specialists and Shoplifters Response

This section will discuss some of the disparity between what the specialists do toward preventing shoplifting and how the shoplifters commit their crime. In addition, some of the questions both the shoplifter and security specialist agree on will be discussed. Because of the number of questions involved in this study (35), only the questions perceived to be of most importance will be discussed.

#### Deterrence

In this section, there are some very apparent disagreements between the shoplifters and the security specialist. Question one, 27 male and female shoplifters (45%) felt two-way mirrors were the most effective deterrent device against shoplifting. Of the specialists, only two (25%) felt two-way mirrors were the most effective. Five

TABLE 58

## Deterrence--Shoplifters and Security Specialists Responses

	Deterrent	Shoplifters	Percent (of Total)	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
What deterred shoplifters the most: Total	Store Detectives	9	15%	5	62.5%
	Two-way Mirrors	<u>27</u>	<u>45%</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>25%</u>
		36*	60%*	7*	87.5%*
Store detectives conspicuous or not: Total	Detectives Conspicuous	50	83%	1	12.5%
	Detectives Inconspicuous	<u>10</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>87.5%</u>
		60	100%	8	100%
Store detective less conspicuous: Total	Male Conspicuous	39	65%	7	87.5%
	Female Conspicuous	<u>7</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>12.5%</u>
		46*	77%*	8	100%
Shoplifters preferred:	Light crowds	17	28%	2	25%
	Heavy crowds	22	36%	4	50%
	No difference	<u>21</u>	<u>36%</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>25%</u>
Total	60	100%	8	100%	
Jail or prison a deterrent: Total	Yes--Deterrent	6	10%	3	37.5%
	No--Deterrent	<u>54</u>	<u>90%</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>62.5%</u>
		60	100%	8	100%

TABLE 58 (Continued)  
 Deterrence--Shoplifters and Security Specialists Responses

	Deterrent	Shoplifters	Percent (of Total)	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Several clerks a deterrent: Total	Yes--Deterrent	7	12%	8	100%
	No--Deterrent	53	88%	0	0%
		<u>60</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>100%</u>
Employees Report shoplifters: Total	Yes	17%	28%	1	12.5%
	No	26%	44%	7	87.5%
		<u>43%</u>	<u>72%</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>100%</u>

\* Totals will not always equal N. Only two most frequent responses listed.



specialists (62.5%) said store detectives were the most effective device against shoplifting. (Table 58)

Question two dealt with the conspicuousness of store detectives. Fifty shoplifters (83%) stated store detectives are very conspicuous. Seven specialists (87.5%) stated store detectives are inconspicuous. However, five specialists (62.5%) stated they were often spotted by shoplifters. It would appear, then, that the specialists contradicted themselves on this question. (Table 58)

The next question, three, deals with who was the most conspicuous detective, the male or female. Of the shoplifters, 39 (65%), and seven of the specialists (87.5%), were somewhat in agreement in stating the male detective was the most conspicuous. (Table 58)

Question four asked the respondents if shoplifters preferred stores to be crowded or empty. Here we have a big difference when looking at all three responses (i.e. light, heavy and no difference). Of the shoplifters, 17 (28%) preferred light crowds and 21 (36%) preferred heavy crowds. Four specialists (50%) felt the shoplifters preferred heavy crowds and two specialists (25%) said shoplifters preferred light crowds. If one considers light crowds and no difference as somewhat the same, then 64% of the shoplifters prefer light crowds, compared to the specialists 50%. (Table 58)

In question six the respondents were asked if jail or prison ever deterred shoplifters. The shoplifters and

specialists both agree that jail or prison does not deter shoplifting. Of the shoplifters 54 (90%) said it was not a deterrent and of the specialists, five (62.5%) agreed jail or prison is not a deterrent. (Table 58)

Question seven dealt with whether several clerks in a department help deter shoplifting. Here there is a vast disagreement between the shoplifters and security specialists. Fifty-three (88%) of the shoplifters stated several clerks in a department did not deter them against shoplifting. All eight specialists felt several clerks in a department did much to deter shoplifting. It should be added, however, that the specialists did state several clerks in a department are only effective against shoplifting if trained properly. (Table 58)

In question nine the respondents were asked if store employees ever fail to report shoplifters. Both the shoplifters and specialists were in agreement that employees do fail to report shoplifters. Their basic reasons were the same. Employees are afraid to get involved. Twenty-six shoplifters (44%) stated employees saw them shoplift but failed to say anything. Seven specialists (87.5%) agree employees very often do not report shoplifters. (Table 58)

In summing up this section, it is apparent security specialists are not too confident as to what exactly deters shoplifters.

## Methods

There are some definite disparities in this section between the shoplifters method and the specialists perception of shoplifting methods.

In question three the respondents were asked approximately what hours of the day are "peak" shoplifting periods. There is a definite disagreement between the specialists on when shoplifters shoplift. Twenty-seven shoplifters (45%) said they preferred to shoplift between 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., while the specialists were more divided on what were the peak times. Three specialists (37.5%) said 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; and, three specialists (37.5%) said the peak period was 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The other two respondents were divided between morning and afternoon. (Table 59)

Question four dealt with whether shoplifters ever pretend to shoplift in order to sue for false arrest. Here again the shoplifters significantly disagree with the specialists. Of the shoplifters, all 60 respondents stated they had never pretended to shoplift in order to sue the store for false arrest. Seven specialists (87.5%) felt shoplifters did, on occasion, pretend to shoplift. (Table 59)

In question five the respondents were asked if ticket or price-tag switching was a big problem. The specialists again were divided on whether it is a problem or not. Forty-two shoplifters (70%) stated they frequently switch

TABLE 59

## Methods--Shoplifters and Security Specialists Responses

	Methods	Shoplifters	Percent (of Total)	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Peak shopping times:	9:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m.	4	7%	1	12.5%
	12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	6	10%	1	12.5%
	3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	27	45%	3	37.5%
	6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	8	13%	3	37.5%
Total	45*	75%*	8	100%	
Shoplifters simulate shoplifting to sue:	Yes	0	0%	7	87.5%
	No	60	100%	1	12.5%
Total		60	100%	8	100%
Ticket switching by shoplifters:	Frequently-done	42	70%	4	50%
	Big Problem	0	0%	4	50%
	Not a Problem	0	0%	4	50%
Total		42*	70%*	8	100%
Number of times a shoplifter shoplifts:	1-2 times a week	41	69%	3	37.5%
	More	19	31%	1	12.5%
	No Opinion	0	0%	4	50%
Total		60	100%	8	100%
Shoplifters attire:	Casual dress	34	57%	3	37.5%
	Well-dressed	26	43%	5	62.5%
Total		60	100%	8	100%

TABLE 59 (Continued)  
 Methods--Shoplifters and Security Specialists Responses

	Methods	Shoplifters	Percent (of Total)	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Shoplifting:	Premeditated	22	37%	5	62.5%
	Spontaneous	38	63%	1	12.5%
	Unknown	0	0%	2	25%
Total		60	100%	8	100%
Use of bags or sacks to shoplift:	Often	44	73%	2	25%
	Occasionally	0	0%	5	62.5%
	Never	16	27%	1	12.5%
Total		60	100%	8	100%

\* Totals will not always equal N. Some respondents had no opinion.

price tickets, while four specialists (50%) said ticket or price switching was not a problem. Four specialists (50%) said ticket switching was a big problem. (Table 59)

Question seven dealt with how many times a week do shoplifters shoplift. Forty-one of the shoplifters (69%) stated they steal between once and twice a week. Four specialists (50%) had no opinion on how many times a week a shoplifter steals. Only three specialists (37%) agreed with the shoplifters. (Table 59)

Question 12 asked the respondents if shoplifters dressed up to go shoplifting. Thirty-four of the shoplifters (57%) stated they do not dress up to shoplift. While five specialists (62.5%) stated shoplifters did dress up to go shoplifting. (Table 59)

Question 14 asked the respondents if shoplifting was premeditated or impulsive. There was an apparent difference between the specialists and the shoplifters view. Thirty-eight shoplifters (62%) stated their stealing was a spontaneous act. While five of the specialists (62.5%) stated that theft was premeditated. (Table 59)

In the next question, sixteen, the respondents were asked if shoplifters frequently used bags or sacks from other stores to shoplift. Forty-four of the shoplifters (73%) said they frequently used sacks and bags obtained from other stores to shoplift. Only two specialists (25%) said other sacks and bags were used frequently. Five of the specialists (62.5%) felt sacks or bags were only an

occasional problem. (Table 59)

To sum up this section, the specialists appear to have little knowledge as to some of the key methods of stealing and how the shoplifters steal.

### Prosecution

In this section both the shoplifters and the security specialists agree almost totally on the prosecution questions. Their mutual responses were: (1) the first time you are caught shoplifting you are usually released, (2) juvenile shoplifters are very seldom prosecuted, (3) prosecution of shoplifters does not stop individuals from stealing, and (4) shoplifters who are caught stealing very seldom return to the store they were apprehended in. (Table 60)

### Motivation

Question one asked the respondents why people shoplift. The specialists had a variety of reasons including: not enough money, need, peer group influence, etc. Specialists really did not point to one cause as being more important than another. However, 39 shoplifters (65%) said they stole because they didn't have enough money to buy that particular item. Fourteen shoplifters (23%) stated the opportunity was there. (Table 61)

The last question asked why shoplifters pick a particular store to shoplift. Probably the biggest disparity between shoplifters and specialists of all the sections can

TABLE 60

## Prosecution--Shoplifters and Security Specialists Responses

Prosecution	Shoplifters	Percent (of Total)	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Arrested first time released:				
Yes	34	57%	5	62.5%
No	26	43%	3	37.5%
Total	60	100%	8	100%
Continue to shoplift if prosecuted:				
Yes	33	55%	7	87.5%
No	23	38%	0	0%
Not sure	4	7%	1	12.5%
Total	60	100%	8	100%
Return to store to shoplift if released:				
Yes	11	18%	2	25%
No	49	82%	6	75%
Total	60	100%	8	100%



TABLE 61  
 Motivation--Shoplifters and Security Specialists Responses

Motivation	Shoplifters	Percent (of Total)	Specialists	Percent (of Total)
Not enough money	39	65%		
Need	4	7%		
Opportunity	14	23%		
Other	3	5%		
All of the above	0	0%	8	100%
Total	60	100%	8	100%
High racks and crowded aisles	41	68%		
Security--how good	6	10%		
Other			8	100%
Total	47*	78%	8	100%

\* Totals will not always equal N. Only two most frequent responses listed.

be seen in this question. None of the specialists agreed on the most frequent reason the shoplifters gave as to why they choose a store. Forty-one shoplifters (68%) stated they chose a store to shoplift because it had high racks and crowded aisles. Their next most frequent choice was ineffective security; six shoplifters (10%) chose this category. The specialists again were all divided as to why shoplifters choose a store. Their reasons were: (1) lack of security, (2) less clerks, (3) reputation to prosecute, etc. None of the specialists mentioned high racks or crowded aisles. (Table 61)

In summary, the specialists definitely show disagreement concerning what motivates a shoplifter to steal. This is, perhaps, the most crucial question and appears to demonstrate a lack of understanding on their parts.

The final chapter of this study will contain a summary of the research, some conclusions, a discussion of the findings, and some implications for further research and practical application.

## CHAPTER V

### Summary, Discussions, Conclusions, and Implications

The purpose of this final chapter will be to accomplish the following: (1) Summary of the problem, purpose, and methodology, (2) A discussion of the research findings and some conclusions, and (3) Implications for further research and application.

#### Summary-Problem

As stated in Chapter I, shoplifting has become the fastest growing form of larceny in the U.S. Hundreds of thousands of people are being arrested each year for shoplifting, stealing billions of dollars worth of merchandise. Retailers are spending millions of dollars each year to help suppress the problem, and we, the customer, are paying the price tag on both.

Where does the problem originate? Some experts maintain it is related to the high cost of living, and inflation. Others point to a general "moral breakdown" in our country and the laxity of our court system. While some believe our security specialists do not know the problem as well as they think they do. Perhaps there is a lack of understanding as to how the shoplifter operates and how the security specialist attempts to prevent it.

This researcher believes the problem is basically the latter, but not to the exclusion of inflation, honesty and our overburdened court systems as major contributing factors. A problem cannot be controlled and minimized if one does not fully understand it. It is for the above reasons why it was felt this research necessary.

### Purpose

It was the purpose of this study to show the disparity in effort between the shoplifter in the practice of the crime, and the retail security specialist in the prevention of the crime. Also, to dispel some of the myths surrounding the crime of shoplifting and its prevention. Finally, this study sought to make specific recommendations for the purpose of advising retail security specialists where their efforts could be continued, discontinued, or re-directed to more effectively reduce the crime of shoplifting.

### Methodology

The research strategy used to investigate why shoplifters are usually successful, and why retail security efforts fall short of prevention was as follows: (1) an interview schedule was used to cover a wide range of responses from admitted shoplifters as to how they were successful; (2) A number of retail security specialists were asked to respond to the same basic questionnaire with only minor rewording of the questions; (3) The questionnaire was divided into four sections: Deterrence, Methods,

Prosecution, and Motivation. The obtained data was analyzed to arrive at the disparity between the efforts of the shoplifter and the security specialists.

### Discussion and Conclusions

This study revealed some very definite disparities between what the shoplifter does and what the specialist believes they do. The problems lie in the following areas:

- (1) Deterrence Devices - Specialists believe store detectives are the best deterrent while shoplifters indicate two-way mirrors deter them;
- (2) Crowded or empty stores - Specialists are evenly divided between crowded and empty, while shoplifters say they prefer empty stores;
- (3) Clerks as a deterrent - Specialists unanimously agree clerks are a deterrent, shoplifters stated clerks do not deter them;
- (4) Peak Shoplifting Periods - Specialists were divided as to what the peak times were, shoplifters stated they shoplifted between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.;
- (5) Pretend to Shoplift in order to Sue - Specialists stated this does occur, while shoplifters were unanimously saying they never do;
- (6) Ticket Switching a Problem - Specialists really didn't know, as they were divided on whether it was or not. Shoplifters stated they frequently switch price tickets.
- (7) Use of Sacks or Bags to Steal - Specialists felt this was only an occasional problem, while the majority of shoplifters stated they frequently used sacks and bags;
- (8) Prosecution - Not enough shoplifters are prosecuted

and our court system is too inconsistent in the handling of shoplifters; and (9) Why does a shoplifter pick a particular store - the specialists feel it is because of a lack of security, less clerks, many exits, fear of prosecution or not, etc., while shoplifters state it's the high racks and the crowded look that they look for in a store in deciding to shoplift there or not.

Based on the data presented in this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

### Deterrence

As can be seen, data revealed that shoplifters are deterred by two-way mirrors, can easily detect store detectives, prefer to shoplift during less busy times, are not afraid of the threat of arrest, clerks do not deter shoplifters from stealing, and employees, as well as customers, do not turn in shoplifters for stealing.

One can conclude, then, that many of the previously held assumption concerning the crime of shoplifting would appear to be unsupported. Shoplifting is primarily a situationally-determined crime with many variables influencing its commission. Deterrence, therefore, can only be accomplished when these variables are recognized and integrated into the over-all system of shoplifting prevention.

### Methods

The data indicated that shoplifting is committed at a relatively young age, committed alone, with usually one

member of a family participating and is committed during late afternoon and early evening hours. Furthermore, shoplifters steal at least once or twice a week, it's a spontaneous act, and when committed by a female, a purse will be involved in the concealing of the merchandise. In addition, price tag switching, unattended shoplifters utilize fitting rooms, increased holiday shoplifting, casual dress, a calm, deliberate manner, frequently returning stolen merchandise for refunds, and often using sacks or bags from other stores as tools of their trade, were found to be common techniques.

Therefore, one might conclude that as previously outlined (Chapters I and II) the enormity and high cost of the shoplifting problem for both the customer and the merchant is not due to methods which are highly sophisticated and specialized. Although there are some patterned-behaviors on their parts, the methods and techniques utilized by the amateur shoplifters surveyed in the present study do not indicate as highly a structured and sophisticated type of criminal methodology as that employed by the professional (Cameron, 1964).

### Prosecution

Shoplifters are usually not prosecuted the first time caught, even if prosecuted they will continue to steal and not all shoplifters are prosecuted each time they are caught. In addition, shoplifters very seldom return to

stores that apprehend them, and shoplifters to not seek revenge against a store for prosecution.

Thus, it can be seen that prosecution by our criminal justice system is, and has the potential for being, a major factor in the prevention and control of shoplifting. However, as presently administered, it is not fulfilling its role and function as part of the solution to this type of criminal activity.

### Motivations

It was discovered that shoplifters steal because of a lack of money and the fact that the opportunity is often present. Shoplifters believe shoplifting is a crime, and they often select stores having high racks and crowded aisles in which to steal.

It should be apparent, then, that the shoplifting specialist and merchant are relatively limited as to the ability to alleviate some of the shoplifter's problems such as inflation, the high cost of living, etc. However, the motivation for shoplifting appears, in part, to be attributed to the opportunity, situation, and easy access to goods presented by the store. Therefore, the merchant and shoplifting specialist do have a responsibility as concerns the motivation to shoplift, and will have to recognize and deal with this responsibility in their efforts toward prevention and control.



### Disparity

As can be seen by the data gathered for this study, and compared with previous research on shoplifting, it would appear that the original hypothesis of a disparity between methods of actual shoplifters and the perception of shoplifting by security specialists is supported. Therefore, it might be concluded that the most fruitful area of concentration in the study of shoplifting would be to focus on this disparity and attempts to reduce its dimensions. As can be seen, the differences are quite large in both perceptions of (and actual) shoplifting practices. Thus, it would benefit both the merchants and the customers to concentrate their efforts on the disparity through further research and activities directed at a fuller understanding of shoplifters and the crime of shoplifting.

### Implications

This researcher feels there are a couple areas where further studies or research could be developed. One area being prosecution. What's being done by our judicial system? How can the courts improve on the handling of shoplifters? Should the courts start with juvenile offenders? Teenage shoplifting could be the most fruitful and important area to be studied. Obvious research questions would include: What motivates teenagers to steal? Is it peer group influence? Is it a lack of educational training?--or does the problem stem from the family? Further,

are the parents, through their actions and beliefs, a major contributor toward their children's stealing? Lastly, a thorough survey of community awareness and involvement in combating shoplifting would prove to be beneficial. An important question would concern effectiveness of community anti-shoplifting campaigns. All three of the above mentioned areas would appear to be needed areas for further research. These could make significant contributions to the knowledge and understanding of an important component of the field of retail security and the discipline of criminal justice.

#### Recommendations

The following are recommendations based on the questionnaire results from the shoplifters and security specialists. Through careful analysis, the areas listed below are areas where this researcher feels there are the gaps or disparities between the shoplifter and the specialist, and what applied measures could be utilized to eliminate these problems.

It is recommended that two-way mirrors should be placed strategically in all areas of the store, since the responses of the shoplifters indicate that two-way mirrors did the most to deter.

The majority of the specialists felt their detectives were often conspicuous and in these instances ineffective. It can be concluded that store detectives are not achieving

maximum efficiency, because of their inability to appear inconspicuous. It is recommended that stores employ personnel with suitable education and intelligence to be trained as store detectives, with this training extended over an adequate period of time. The goal to be sought would seem to be more professionalization among the store detectives. Also, it is recommended that whenever possible, females be employed as store detectives since the majority of respondents felt they were the most inconspicuous.

Concerning crowded stores or nearly empty stores, the majority of shoplifters preferred empty stores. Basic reasoning being the fewer people around, the less likely a store detective is watching them.

It is recommended that stores do not concentrate all their efforts on the busy days. Slow days can be just as fruitful for the shoplifter. It is felt by this researcher, that crowds in a store can actually become an ally for the security department.

In the area of prosecution, the certainty of jail or prison is not a deterrent. The opinion of the specialist is that the judicial system needs to improve on its handling of shoplifting offenders and that the courts take shoplifting seriously and not handle it as some innocuous crime. It is recommended that the retailers of Omaha (at least those who participated in this study) make known to the city and county administration, and the judicial system, their desire to reduce shoplifting by more certainty of prosecution and

sentencing of apprehended shoplifters.

In the area of having several clerks in a department as a deterrent, the data obtained revealed a large number of clerks is not the answer. Clerks do not necessarily reduce shoplifting. The answer appears to lie in the training of clerks on the methods and procedures of shoplifters. Also, this training should include films on shoplifting, seminars, and four to five refresher courses a year in order to insure increased employee awareness of new shoplifting practices.

Concerning the question of employee reporting shoplifters, it was revealed, by both the shoplifters and the specialists, that the majority of the employees do not report shoplifters. It is recommended then, that employees should be trained to recognize and report any shoplifting which they observe. That they in no way will be asked to get involved or testify in court. In addition, employees should be invited to participate in company profit sharing programs. It is felt that this involvement would further encourage employee watchfulness.

In the question concerning legitimate customers reporting shoplifters they observe, the data collected indicated that legitimate customers will often fail to report shopliftings which they may have observed. It is recommended that retailers in Omaha undertake some type of community information program whereby the average customer is advised of exactly how much the shoplifter is costing

him in terms of merchandise and mark-ups due to pilferage. The program would consist of a series of articles in the daily newspapers and other outlets urging the shopper to report to store officials any shoplifter which they observe. Community involvement could be the theme of such a program.

As to the subject of peak shoplifting hours, the data revealed a divided response by the specialists on what is the peak period for shoplifting. The period the shoplifters picked was between 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The 3:00 p.m. time being the more popular time. It is recommended that specialists concentrate their efforts to apprehend shoplifters during this 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. time. Also, employees should be cognizant of this time period so they can be more alert and attentive to their customers.

It should be noted at this time that the entire sample of shoplifters admitted that they usually shoplifted on Thursdays,<sup>7</sup> Fridays, and Saturdays. This data suggests that the end of the week and weekends are the most active shoplifting days. It should also be mentioned, after spending a considerable amount of time with the shoplifters, it was determined by this researcher that shoplifting is definitely a 12 month a year problem. Too often, security specialists and store management "gear-up" for the holidays, thinking most of their shoplifting will occur during this month. This

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<sup>7</sup>Most new advertising comes out in Wednesday nights newspapers.

is definitely a wrong assumption, and the specialist should make note that the shoplifters are just as busy the other eleven months as they are in December. Therefore, it is recommended that security specialists be advised of the tremendous success rate of the weekend shoplifter, and that they undertake to be especially alert and staffed on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

The shoplifters unanimously agree that simulated shoplifting for the purpose of suing a store for false arrest basically doesn't happen. However, a majority of the specialists agree it does happen quite frequently. It is recommended, then, that store officials who are greatly concerned with the possibility of being sued for false arrest by shoplifters, be advised that this is a very infrequent occurrence.

Concerning ticket or price tag switching, this data revealed that price tag switching is more prevalent than the specialist may suspect. It is recommended that the clerks who are responsible for examining the merchandise while making the sale be especially watchful for tags or prices that have been altered by the customer. Security specialists should carefully train and instruct these clerks on what to look for when examining the merchandise prior to the sale.

The majority of specialists admitted that the dressing rooms of the store were often used by shoplifters because of the absence of clerks checking the merchandise in and out. The shoplifters totally agreed with the specialists that

fitting rooms were their favorite target. It is recommended that stores immediately place check-in girls at the entrance of all their dressing rooms. The task of these clerks would be to physically count the number of items that a customer has taken into the dressing room, give that customer a corresponding number, and ascertain that the customer has the proper number of garments upon their emergence from the dressing room. If a store finds that it has too many dressing rooms to physically man each one, perhaps they could eliminate or consolidate some of them.

Concerning the question of premeditation by the shoplifter, the data revealed a majority of shoplifters have no pre-disposed plan to steal upon entering the store. It is recommended, then, that because these shoplifters would probably not have stolen if they had not found themselves in an opportune position, they not be given this opportune position. These people, it would seem, could be discouraged by alert, conscientious sales clerks.

Regarding the refunding of stolen merchandise by shoplifters, the data revealed this happens very often, especially by the female shoplifter. It is recommended, then, that stores cease giving cash refunds to those customers who fail to produce a proof-of-sale slip. By requiring a proof-sale-ticket on all returned merchandise, the retailer will at least confine his loss on the item to the wholesale, and not retail, price.

The question regarding the use of bags or sacks by

shoplifters to steal indicated that a sizeable proportion of shoplifters use sacks or shopping bags from other stores to conceal merchandise. It is recommended that stores have a sign at the entrance of their store requesting all sacks or bags be checked in at the courtesy desk.<sup>8</sup> Or, place an official of the store at the front entrance to staple shut the sacks or shopping bags of customers from other stores. This official should have sufficient knowledge and training to handle this responsibility.

Regarding the prosecution of all shoplifters, this data indicated that the majority of persons apprehended for shoplifting are released without prosecution. It is recommended that store officials establish a uniform policy of prosecuting all shoplifters whom they apprehend. It is felt that if all stores would prosecute shoplifters, shoplifting in the Omaha area could be greatly reduced.

The last question dealt with one of the most important issues. Why does a shoplifter choose a store in which to steal. The security specialist gave every reason but the one the shoplifter chose. Their primary reason for selecting a store was whether it had high racks and crowded aisles or a cluttered atmosphere. It is recommended that store officials be more cognizant of the manner in which they display their merchandise. Wide aisles and low racks where clerks and store detectives can easily look through a department without

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<sup>8</sup>A place where refunds, layaways, and exchanges are handled.



too many obstructions could be beneficial. The fewer hiding places a shoplifter can find, the harder it is for them to shoplift.

### Limitations

The limitations of this study are:

1. Sample selection. The size and method of selecting the usable sample was biased in that a higher percentage of females were used than males. Proportionate numbers of males and females should be selected in future studies.

2. No definite criteria was established for selecting sample. Future research could benefit from large sample size and more attention to standardized criteria for selection.

3. No attempt to control for socio-economic status was made.

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## APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX A

## THE RESULTS OF THE WISHER STUDY

Wisher, Curtis, "Teen-Age Shoplifting, Who, Where, When, How?" Security World, 1968, (November): 16-20.

1. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

The average number was 3.1. However, those who shoplifted had an average of 3.4 brothers and sisters, compared to 2.9 for those who had not shoplifted.

2. Are your parents living together?

74.6% responded their parents were living together. Of the negative responses: 25.4% of the respondents reported their parents were not living together. When divided as to whether they have shoplifted or not, 69.8% who had shoplifted, reported their parents living together, while 79.4% of the non-shoplifters were able to reply affirmatively.

- 2a. If your parents are not living together, is it due to death, separation, or divorce?

Divorce and separation was generally higher among parents of respondents who had shoplifted.

3. How often do you attend church or synagogue?

36.2% indicated they attend religious services regularly. For males, 36.8% had not shoplifted, while 36.3% had. A significant difference was found for females. 50% having never shoplifted, vs. 21.9% who had.

Those not attending church services: 18.6% of the males shoplifted and 22.6% of the females shoplifted.

4. List the non-school organizations to which you belong: Scouts, church organizations.

51.1% reported membership in some organization. 6.2% had shoplifted. Those not belonging to an outside group; 66% had shoplifted. Perhaps those who do not shoplift are too busy with other activities to shoplift.

5. Do you know what the penalty is for shoplifting?

While 66.9% of all those surveys were aware of the shoplifting penalties, far more of those respondents who have not shoplifted (72.1%) were aware of the penalties than those who had shoplifted (61.7%). Females (70.2%) were more aware of the penalties than were the males (63.7%). More than one out of every three (38.3%) of the respondents who have shoplifted stated that they were not aware of the penalty for shoplifting.

6. Do you think it would be easy to take merchandise from most variety (5¢ & 10¢) stores without paying for them?

65.3% of the respondents believed it would be easy. There seemed to be a direct relationship between age and the belief it would be easy to steal from a variety store: 70.6% of the 14 year olds believed this compared to 48.2% of the 18 year olds. More males (64.2%) than females (61.8%) believed it would be easy to steal from variety stores, and more of those who have shoplifted (66.9%) believed this than those who have not (59.1%).

7. Name the type of store that would be the easiest to take things from without paying?

42.1% of the respondents believed variety stores the easiest kind of store to steal from. The figures for other 'targets' were discount stores 21.9%, department stores 16.6%, and drug stores 15.0%.

8. Have you ever taken a product from a store without paying for it?

472 of the 1,000 respondents had stolen merchandise at least once. Shoplifting was more common with the boys than with the girls, with 62.2% of the boys and only 32.2% of the girls reporting having taken merchandise from a store at least once. The respondents made one thing clear - shoplifting begins early: at 14 years of age, the percentages were 43% for the boys and 44% for the girls.

The following questions (9-10) were only answered by those who shoplifted.

9. Approximately how many times in your life have you taken merchandise without paying for it?

Some respondents were already hardened shoplifters. 5.7% of those who have shoplifted had done so more than 100 times (8.3% of the boys and 3.1% of the girls). 7.2% of the 14 year old males reported having shoplifted more than 100 times, but no female shoplifting of this extent was reported until the age of 17. 25.1% who did shoplift did so only once (17.1% of the males and 33.3% of the females).

Those who did shoplift did so an average of 26.9 times (31.8 times for boys and 22.1 times for girls). Fourteen year old shoplifters were active, averaging 20.1 times (23.3 times for girls and 18 times for boys).

- 9a. How did you get the items out of the store without paying for them?

The most popular method of removing items from a store without paying was hiding them under the coat. 44% used this method (49.1% of the boys and 38.9% of the girls).

The second most popular method (35.3% of respondents) was hiding the item in a bag or box. Probably because girls of this age carry purses, more girls, than boys reported using this method (50.4% of the girls, and 20.2% of the boys). Slightly more boys (21.9%) wear the items from the store than do the girls (21%).

Other methods were mentioned frequently. These included hiding the merchandise on their younger brother or sister, eating edibles stolen before leaving the store, girls carrying items out of the store between their legs, and so forth.

10. Have you ever been caught taking items from a store without paying for them?

27.7% of those who reported shoplifting had been caught at least once (29.9% of the boys and 25.6% of the girls). A larger percentage of the older groups had been caught.

- 10a. If so in what kind of store(s)?

31% had been caught in a variety store (49.3% of the girls and 12.7% of the boys). 25.2% of those caught had been caught in drug stores (11.2% had been girls and 39.2% of the boys) 21.5% had been caught in discount stores (17.3% of the girls and 25.8% of the boys).

- 10b. If you were caught what did they do to you?

14.1% reported they were let go without anything being done, and 57.3% reported they were released after being lectured. In 48.6% of the cases a parent was called in.

20.1% of the cases reportedly involved the police (21.6% of the girls and 18.7% of the boys). In only 9.9% of the cases was the person then taken to court; the older then respondent, the more likely his chances of being sent to court. Only 1.4% reported having received fines.

- 10c. As a result of this punishment did you stop taking goods?

73.5% of those caught shoplifting did not stop after apprehension (85.4% of the males and 61.6% of the females continued to shoplift).

11. What do you think would be a good punishment for a person who is caught taking items from a store?

Those who have not shoplifted generally suggest a more severe penalty for shoplifting than do those who shoplift. Of those suggesting jailing those caught, 47% had not shoplifted, and 12.2% had.

Not one of those who had never shoplifted recommended as a 'punishment' not allowing the offender back in the store; 14.2% of those who had shoplifted said they regarded this as an adequate punishment. Paying for the article stolen seemed an adequate punishment to only 4.5% of those who had not shoplifted, but 14.5% of those who had.

## APPENDIX B

## APPENDIX B

## RESULTS OF CREEDEN'S STUDY

List of observations made by Mr. X: Creeden, John J.,  
 "Shoplifting-As Seen By a Professional," Retail Secur-  
 ity, 1977: 6-13.

1. The store hours.
2. Traffic in the store - when heavy, when light, when frequented by students and management.
3. Attitudes of employees at various hours.
4. Ages of employees and their positions.
5. Activities 30 minutes before closing, 10 minutes before closing.
6. Whether young female employees have boy friends and if they visit the girls in the store during working hours? Is there any playing around with the girls?
7. Lack of attention to customers.
8. Store lay-out: how entrances are guarded; space between cashiers and exits; how gondolas are arranged; height of gondolas; position of pharmacist in drug stores; location of manager's office and whether his position is horizontal or perpendicular to the aisles; dead spots or corners; telephone locations; location of fountains and what is served.
9. Attitude of manager. Does he frequent the floor or pay much attention to the customers, other than watching traffic?
10. Does the store have a middle shift to bolster the regular force? If so, when do they come on duty?
11. Does the store employ students in the evenings or on weekends? Do these employees study on the job? If so, the shoplifter should encourage them to keep it up.
12. How often does the store use relief personnel and what type?
13. Changes in store personnel, might be a trap.
14. At a new store opening, has the company brought older employees in from other stores? If not, shoplifting will be easy.
15. The parking area. How many exits does it have? Is it policed?
16. Frequency of police cars in the area.
17. Does the store have a security force? This can be ascertained by using a pretext. Are the employees security conscious?
18. Store gossip, who is shacking up with whom and who is going on vacation, when and for how long. Identify any employee who has a habit of coming to work with a hang-over.
19. Does the store have mirrors, how are they set up and does anyone pay any attention to them. The same goes for CCTV.



20. Who does the gift wrapping and where is she located?
21. Middle aisles, a good spot for a shoplifter to work.
22. Big advertised specials, not general sales.

## APPENDIX C

APPENDIX CQuestionnaire - Part ISection A - Deterrence

1. Which of the following security devices would probably have deterred you from shoplifting and why?

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| A. Store Detectives | D. Convex Mirrors    |
| B. T.V. Scanners    | E. Prosecution Signs |
| C. Two-Way Mirrors  | F. Floor Walker      |

2. Were you ever able to distinguish store detectives from regular customers? How?

3. Which is the easier store detective to distinguish, the male or female?

4. When shoplifting, did you prefer the store to be crowded or nearly empty?

5. If a store has two-way mirrors, do you believe that someone is behind them. Is someone always behind them?

6. Did the fear of going to jail or prison ever deter you from shoplifting?

7. Have you ever successfully shoplifted from a department in a store that had several clerks?

8. Have you ever assaulted a store employee who was arrested you for shoplifting?

9. Has a store employee ever observed you shoplifting and then not reported you? Why?

10. Have you ever been observed shoplifting by a legitimate customer of the store? What would he or she do?

Section B - Methods

1. Have you ever shoplifted with a group? How often? How many in the group?

2. At what age did you first begin to shoplift?

3. During approximately what hours of the day would you usually shoplift?

4. Have you ever pretended to shoplift so when stopped by store officials you could sue for false arrest?
5. Have you ever switched tickets or price tags on merchandise?
6. Do any other members of your family shoplift?
7. How many times a week would you usually shoplift?
8. Where would you usually conceal your shoplifted merchandise?
9. Have you ever been arrested for shoplifting and then discarded the merchandise before it could be found on you?
10. Have you ever used the dressing or fitting rooms to shoplift?
11. Would your shoplifting increase during the holidays?
12. Would you ever "dress up" to go shoplifting? For example, put on an expensive suit or dress?
13. After you had shoplifted an article, how would you exit the store, slowly or quickly?
14. Would you usually enter a store seeking to shoplift a specific item, or just anything that looked easy?
15. Did you ever return your shoplifted merchandise for a refund?
16. How often would you use a sack or bag for shoplifting which you had obtained in another store?

#### Section C - Prosecution

1. Were you prosecuted the first time that you were apprehended shoplifting?
2. If not prosecuted, why were you not prosecuted?
3. If you had been prosecuted the first time you were apprehended, would you have continued to shoplift?
4. Approximately how many times have you been apprehended shoplifting, and not prosecuted?
5. If a store apprehended you shoplifting, then released you without prosecution, would you shoplift in that store again? Would you shoplift in that chain again?

6. Did you ever seek revenge against a store because it prosecuted you for shoplifting?

Section D - Motivation

1. Why would you usually shoplift?
2. Did you consider shoplifting to be a crime?
3. Why would you choose a particular store?

Questionnaire - Part IISection A - Deterrence

1. Which of the following deterrence devices do you feel is the most effective?
  - A. Store Detectives
  - B. T.V. Scanners
  - C. Two-Way Mirrors
  - D. Convex Mirrors
  - E. Prosecution Signs
  - F. Floor Walker
2. Do you feel that your store detectives are inconspicuous? Are they ever spotted by shoplifters?
3. Which do you feel is the more inconspicuous store detective, a male or a female? Why?
4. Do shoplifters prefer the crowds to be light or heavy?
5. Approximately how often are your two-way mirrors manned? Do shoplifters believe they are perpetually manned?
6. Does the fear of jail or prison deter shoplifters. If no, why not?
7. Does the number of clerks in a department affect the frequency of shoplifting in that department?
8. How often are your employees assaulted while apprehending shoplifters?
9. Do you feel that store employees fail to report shopliftings which they may observe? Why? How often?
10. How often do legitimate customers report shoplifters?

Section B - Methods

1. Are your shoplifters primarily stealing alone or in groups?
2. At what age do you feel people begin shoplifting?
3. What do you regard as your peak shoplifting period of the day?
4. Do shoplifters ever "set you up" by pretending to shoplift, then sue for false arrest if you apprehend them?
5. Is ticket or price tag switching a problem, and how often are people successful in this?

6. If a member of a family shoplifts, do you find that many members of that same family shoplift?
7. Approximately how many times a week does the same shoplifter steal in your store or chain?
8. What have you found to be the more common concealment places?
9. After being apprehended, can the shoplifter ever dispose of the merchandise before it can be found in his or her possession?
10. How often are your fitting or dressing rooms used for shoplifting? Why?
11. Do you feel shoplifting increased during the holidays? Why?
12. Do your store detectives watch well-dressed customers as closely as they watch less well-dressed customers?
13. After stealing an item, how do shoplifters exit your store?
14. Do you feel that shoplifters know what they are going to steal upon entering the store, or will they steal whatever looks easiest?
15. Do you require a sales slip on all returned merchandise?
16. How often do shoplifters use sacks or bags which have been obtained in other stores?

#### Section C - Prosecution

1. Do you prosecute all shoplifters?
2. How do you differentiate between those you prosecute and those you release?
3. Do you feel that they will continue to shoplift, even when prosecuted?
4. Approximately how many times do you feel other merchants have released the shoplifter unprosecuted before you apprehended him?
5. How often do you re-apprehend shoplifters whom you have previously released without prosecution? Those you have prosecuted?

6. Do shoplifters ever seek revenge because of prosecution?

Section D - Motivation

1. In your opinion, why do people shoplift?
2. Do you feel that they consider shoplifting to be a crime?
3. Why do you feel that they choose your particular store(s) in which to shoplift?