

BOMBERS AND FIRESSETTERS

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A comprehensive review of the crimes of bombing and arson, this book explores such subjects as bombs and their effects; bombers, arsonists and their motivations; and victims and targets of these crimes. The urban guerrilla, the bombing campaign in Northern Ireland, a psychiatric study of an airplane bomber, bomb threats and disposal, and the investigation and punishment of these crimes are also examined.

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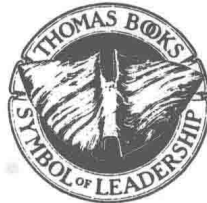
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**BOMBERS
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By the Same Author

THE MURDERER AND HIS VICTIM

HOMICIDAL THREATS

INDECENT EXPOSURE

RAPE: OFFENDERS AND THEIR VICTIMS

ARMED ROBBERY: OFFENDERS AND THEIR VICTIMS

PSYCHIATRY AND THE CRIMINAL

PREFACE

BOMBING and arson are two closely related crimes which involve great threat to life and property. One person, acting alone, can bring death to many people and can destroy buildings or planes worth millions of dollars. Terrorist groups across the world have caused significant loss of life and limb with explosives and incendiary devices. No one is safe from the bomber or firesetter, who strikes without warning and without regard for who may become his victims.

Yet little has been written about the bomber and his motives. The arsonist has received more attention, but the results of most studies are either hidden in specialist journals or out of print.

The author has interviewed more than thirty bombers and over one hundred firesetters. He has talked to members of guerilla groups both in the US and overseas. In Northern Ireland, where at present there are more bombings than in any other country in the world, he gained firsthand experience of this crime, sometimes a little too close for comfort. He saw the bombs explode, talked to the victims, and interviewed leading members of paramilitary groups involved in the bombing campaign.

The information obtained from personal studies of bombers, arsonists, and other sources is the basis for this broad review of these crimes and the persons who commit them. It is hoped that this book will prove useful not only to bomb disposal experts, police officers, and firemen but also to psychiatrists, psychologists, lawyers, and others who may see these offenders in their professional work.

The chapters on bombs, bomb disposal, and criminal investigation are not directed to the experts in these fields but are for

the benefit of the general reader who would like to know something of the dangerous and difficult work of these officers.

JOHN M. MACDONALD

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J.M.M.

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**BOMBERS
AND
FIRESETTERS**

BOMBING AND FIRESETTING

Another, yet the same.

— ALEXANDER POPE, *The Dunciad*.

THE reader may well demand an explanation for a book on two different crimes, bombing and arson. What do these crimes, and the offenders who commit them, have in common? Many firesetters would not think of resorting to the use of bombs, and there are bombers who have never set fires. Nevertheless, the following similarities between the bomber and the arsonist and between the crimes they commit surely justify their consideration together in the same volume.

SIMILARITIES

The Bomber and the Arsonist

Motives

Motives such as anger, hatred, revenge, envy, jealousy, and financial gain contribute to many different crimes, and it is not remarkable that these are among the motives underlying bombing and arson. These two crimes, however, through the destruction of commercial buildings and homes, offer unusual opportunities for very great financial gain from fraudulent insurance claims. Bombers and firesetters have been employed by organized crime to intimidate or punish witnesses and by unions to intimidate contractors who employ nonunion labor. Bombing and arson provide unusual opportunities for the concealment of other crimes such as murder and burglary.

Revolutionary groups have resorted to widespread bombing and firesetting to destroy public buildings, to disrupt the economy, to harm multinational corporations, to intimidate oppo-

nents, and to extort money from business owners and other citizens.

Many crimes provide an element of excitement and daring, especially for the offender who needs to prove his manhood. Sexual excitement is usually considered to be present only in sexual crimes. However, it has long been known that firesetting provides sexual excitement for some offenders. This author has also encountered a number of bombers who have experienced sexual gratification through explosions. This unusual motive in a nonsexual crime is not infrequently encountered in the compulsive bomber and compulsive firesetter.

The Compulsive Offender

The term *pyromania* has been used to refer to a morbid compulsion to set fires. The fires may be set without any wish to harm a specific individual or business, and without any prospect of financial gain. In the childhood backgrounds of these persons there is often found the triad of firesetting, cruelty to animals, and bedwetting. Strong sadistic trends (not confined to cruelty to animals) and sexual gratification from the arson have also been noted. Similar features are sometimes present in compulsive bombers, who may also be firesetters.

Return to the Scene of the Crime

Bombers and firesetters who derive sexual or other excitement from the explosion or the blaze are tempted to remain at the scene and, like many other kinds of criminals (especially murderers), they may return to the scene of the crime. Detectives, aware of this phenomenon, take photographs of spectators at these disasters.

Reluctance to Discuss the Crimes

A certain reticence is to be expected from any criminal under investigation by the police, yet in the company of their friends and associates, some offenders will often take pleasure in de-

scribing their exploits. Bombers, firesetters, and sex offenders are less eager to reveal their felonious activities, especially when they sense disapproval in the listener.

There is a widespread public interest in explosions. In England, Guy Fawkes, who sought to blow up the house of parliament, has become a national hero. On Guy Fawkes Day, the fifth of November, an effigy of Fawkes is burned and blown up amidst scenes of extraordinary, Bosch-like violence and revelry. There is the curious twist that the villain is now the hero and is seen as the only man who ever entered parliament with good intentions!

Every Fourth of July in the US, large crowds gather to watch the fireworks, and a distressing number of persons blow off their hands or otherwise injure themselves. Fires also fascinate many people, and crowd control is a problem for the police at major fires. However, bombers and firesetters correctly sense great public dislike of the do-it-yourself bomber or firesetter who endangers the lives and property of others.

The Agents of Destruction

Fires may result from the use of explosives, and explosions may result from the arsonist's use of incendiary materials. Thus a bomb may cause a fire due to the escape of natural gas from a ruptured pipeline or, rarely, due to the heat of the explosion. A small bomb may be used to ignite a can or drum of gasoline. There may be a slight damage from the explosion itself, and the building may be destroyed by the fire.

The classification of bombs as explosive or incendiary shows one close connection between bombing and arson. A simple firebomb, the Molotov cocktail, is used to set alight persons, vehicles, and buildings.

The use of incendiary materials, such as gasoline, may lead to a major explosion which can destroy a building. Gasoline evaporates quickly, and by the time the arsonist has finished dumping his can of gasoline, there may be sufficient gasoline vapor in the air to result in an explosion when the arsonist throws his match.