

Candle causes Dorm 4 fire; \$1,200 damage, none hurt

A mattress fire in Dorm 4 early Friday morning caused about \$1,200 in damage, Nolan Mears, Corps area coordinator said. The fire, which started at 2:50 a.m. Friday, was caused by a candle that had burned down and ignited a mattress and papers in Room 126.
The two residents living there were not in their room at the time, Mears said.
All residents had to be evacuated during the half hour that it took College Station firemen to extinguish the fire, he said.

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Pictures portray suspects

A&M police use composites

by CATHY SAATHOFF

Two Texas A&M University police officers have taken courses in using the Smith & Wesson Identikit, which produces composites of suspects from witness descriptions.

Detectives William Scott and Ken Nicolas attended a two-day course in June in Austin to learn how to use the Identikit, which is leased from Smith & Wesson for \$210 a year.

"The Identikit itself as a tool is used to give a likeness, not an exact picture," Scott said.

Micolas said, "For someone who is not artistically inclined... it's a good technique of getting a good likeness."

The Identikit consists of a wooden box of transparent "foils" with drawings of different features.

There are foils for hairstyles, chins, age lines, facial tones, eyes, lips, nose, brows, glasses, moustache and beard and head gear.

For example, there are about 200 hairstyles, Scott

said, and 100 sets of eyes.

To make a composite, the foils are stacked on top of each other on a plastic plate.

Scott said he lets the witness select the proper hairstyle for a suspect, then asks questions about the other features.

"After it's finished, you show it to them and ask if anything needs changing," Scott said. "There's a lot of trial and error in this."

The witness is not allowed to look at the foils, Scott said, because seeing the different features might be confusing. The witness's first impression is usually the best, he said.

It takes about 45 minutes to complete a composite, Scott said.

Each foil has a code on it. "With that code you can send it to any other law enforcement agency that has a kit, and they can put it together," Scott said.

Scott said the Identikit has been used for three suspects so far. No arrests have been made, but one of the suspects was identified.



Left, Battalion reporter Uschi Michel-Howell's composite sketch made by Texas A&M police officers. Right, a photograph of Michel-Howell.

Battalion Classifieds

Heat waves could cause rising crime rate

by PAUL BARTON

With heat waves like the one which blistered the central United States this summer, water supplies are not the only things that become imperiled.

People's self-control also grows short.

While they may differ on the extent of the problem, police and criminologists agree that hot weather helps the crime rate to rise.

Nationwide statistics for crimes of violence collected by the FBI nearly always reach their peak during the summer, says Dr. Ben Crouch, who teaches criminology in the sociology department at Texas A&M University.

"Surely we behave differently when it's hot," says Crouch. "When it's awfully hot, a person is quick to get out of sorts."

Another reason for the rise during summer months, he says, is that warmer weather brings people outside more. "They're interacting more," says Crouch. "Police have been known to say that Jack Frost is the best cop."

But Crouch adds it is misleading to say weather alone is responsible for whatever upswing in crime occurs. Everything from how liberal regional gun control laws are to socio-

economic factors figure in his says there has been no definite science research linking weather and crime.

"Researchers normally include weather as a key variable," although few would see it as a factor."

Despite the lack of research, cities are reporting crime rates that are rising during this summer spell. Don Sloan, a spokesman for the Dallas Police Department, says serious crime in that city was up 26 percent in June compared with June 1979. Serious crimes include murder, rape, robbery, burglary and theft. In addition, air-conditioners increased three times.

Sloan says beat officers report effects of the weather are especially bad in those areas of town with air-conditioning, where "nights tend to be lively," as if people are being together in houses all weekend.

Still, says Sloan, "Nobody has on the record that so-and-so committed this murder because he was out from the heat."

Maj. Lee Freeman of the Dallas Police Department thinks weather has its greatest effect on violent family-type disturbances. In 315 reported cases of serious crime in Bryan was the highest of the 12 months.

In College Station, Police Lt. Leonard Kapella says he has not seen any crime problems caused by heat. But he says that is probably due to the population density of the going down at the end of the A&M's spring semester.

Lt. J.E. Kennedy, also of the College Station Police Department, says it is possible that extremely hot weather may act to prevent crime more than to encourage it. He says a robber would not want to be out when it is 109 degrees outside more than other people. He emphasizes that he has no statistics evidence.

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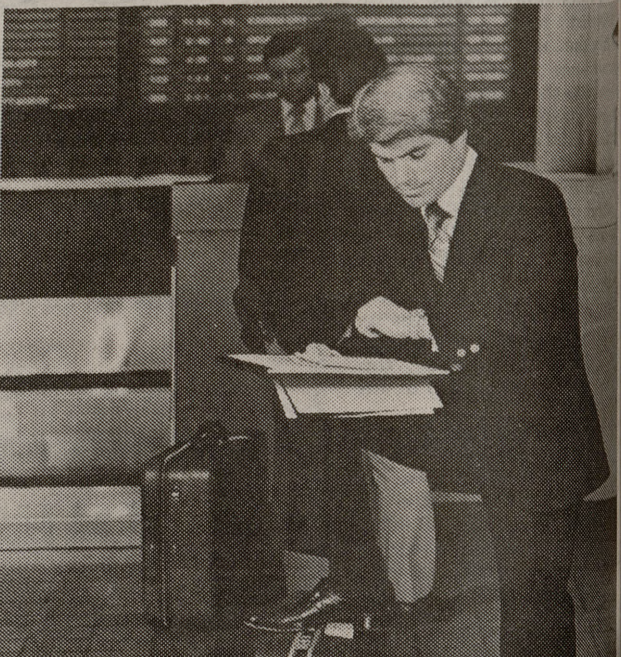
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