



New York State Chapter 23 of the

International Association of Arson Investigators, Inc.

THE ARSON TASK FORCE

Concepts and Principles



New York State Chapter 23 of the
International Association of Arson Investigators, Inc.

NYS IAAI's Awareness Series

- Free series of training modules designed to educate/promote awareness to line fire officers and fire fighters
- Modules address Origin and Cause investigations, role of the fire investigator, multi-agency investigations, role of suppression crews in fire investigations, etc.
- Presentation was developed and disseminated in conjunction with a 2013 FEMA Fire Prevention and Safety Grant awarded to NYS IAAI





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www.nyfireinvestigators.com



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Enabling Objectives

- The importance of Fire Investigation & its purpose
- The Responsibility & Role of Fire Suppression personnel
- Roles and responsibilities of various agencies
- Resources
- The End Product – Arrest & Conviction



The Fire Investigation Unit

Why Do We Have One?

- Fire Prevention & Safety
- Justice
- Financial Cost
- Education



The Fire Investigation Unit

- Roles include investigating the origin and cause of fires
- Often times these investigations involve more than just the single fire or police department
- Any good fire investigator has a long list of contacts to help him/her



NYS Arson Plan

NY General Municipal Law Section 204c



“The governing body of each county except contained wholly within a city, and the governing body of any city in which a county is wholly contained shall develop a plan for arson investigation within such county or city. Such plan shall be submitted to the office of fire prevention and control for approval. No plan shall be approved unless it provides for the coordination of fire, law enforcement and prosecutorial services.”



The Task Force Concept



- Multiple agency participation
- Force multiplier
- Overseen by officers – usually fire or police
- Formal understanding of roles and positions
- Stated objective – i.e. identified begin point and end point
- Who is calling the shots?



Task Force Concept

- Do We Need a Task Force?
- How Formal Should It Be?
- Key is to have in place before you have a major incident
- Can be “dormant” with little activity until the big one hits – then it is in place and ready to go



Task Force Concept



Agencies to include:

- Fire
- Police
- State & County Fire Service
- State & County Law Enforcement
- Federal law enforcement
- Prosecutors
- JTTF



The MOU

- Clear agreement
- Spells out roles and responsibilities
- Subject to annual review and renewal
- Be Specific
- Like all relationships – changes/evolves with time



When to form a Task Force?

BEFORE the big one hits!!!

***This is the
wrong time
to hash it
out!!!***



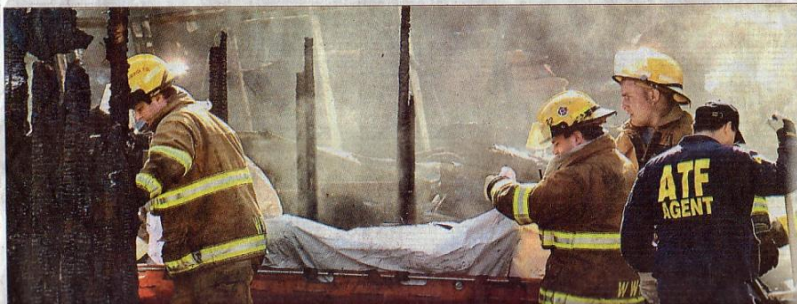
The Perfect Storm – Who Do You Call?

- Must realize that no one agency – Federal, State, Local - has the human/financial/logistical resources to effectively investigate alone for an extended period of time
- Successful investigations are **MULTI-AGENCY** cases!!!



96 die in concert hall fire

Rhode Island club engulfed in minutes as fireworks go wrong



By Mike Dornig and Jill Zuckman
Tribune staff reporters

WEST WARWICK, R.I.—A rock band's pyrotechnics show sparked a fire that quickly turned a popular concert venue into an inferno late Thursday, killing at least 96 people. Almost 200 more were injured.

As firefighters pulled bodies from the rubble, attention focused on members of the 1990s era band Great White, who used pyrotechnic sparklers to open their show before a crowd of more than 350 fans. Moments later, flames leapt from the soundproofing foam at the rear of the stage and rapidly spread across the ceiling, engulfing the room in fire and black smoke and triggering a stampede of frantic patrons.

The fire consumed the night club in three minutes. Vide showed people stacked horizon tally at the front entrance, gasp

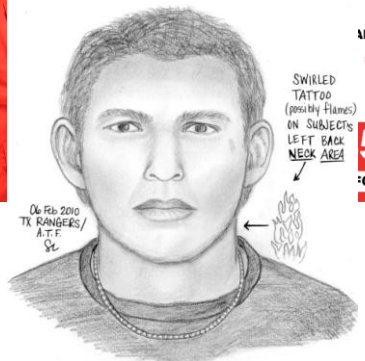


WANTED ARSONIST!

FLORIDA'S FORESTRY ARSON ALERT ASSOCIATION

Everyone loses when wildland arsonists strike!
IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT A WILDLAND FIRE BELIEVED TO BE SET BY AN ARSONIST

CALL ALL THE FLORIDA DIVISION OF FORESTRY AT
1-800-342-5869
CALLER MAY REMAIN ANONYMOUS
UP TO
5,000 REWARD
FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO AN ARREST



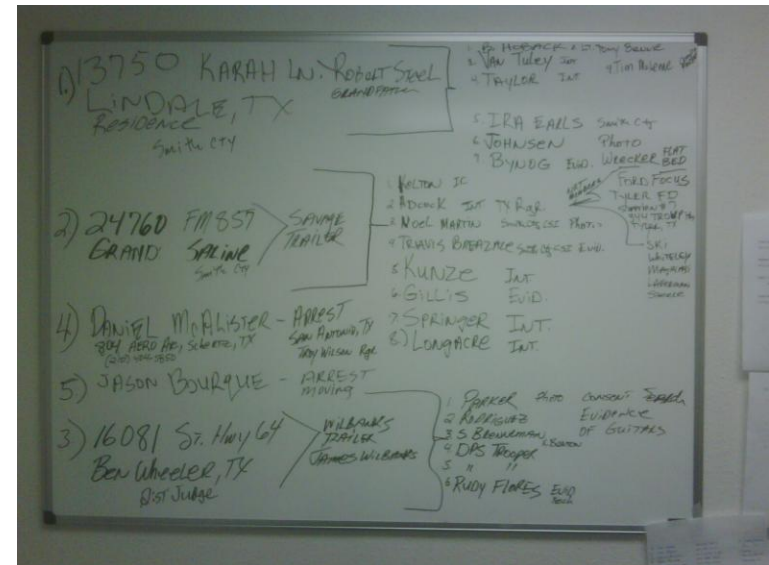
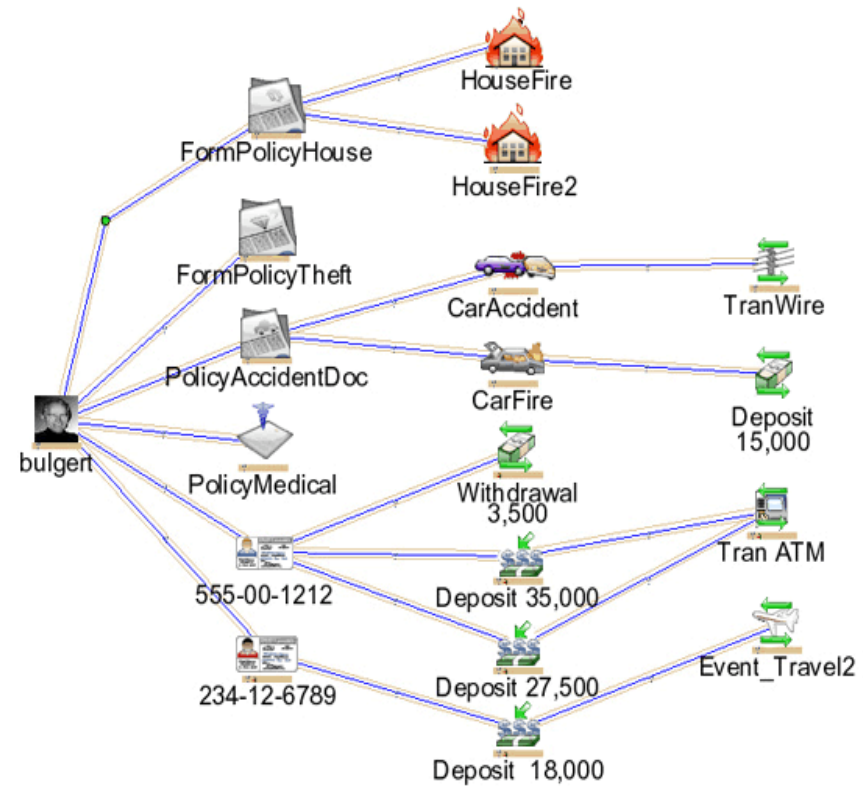
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Advantages

- Leverages multiple agencies and their resources
- Foundation for future working relationships
- Better communication and coordination
- Better overall work product

Advantages

- Intelligence Sharing
- Pooled rewards
- Integrated ICS
- Integrated SOP's
- Integrated Paperwork



Task Force is Designed to see the Product Through to the End...



- Organization maintained until conviction secured
- Some participating agencies will scale down involvement but others will pick up the slack
- Increased chance of success for convictions when you see it through and don't stop investigating



Other Agencies and Arson



- Other agencies bring resources to “bridge the gap” where your FIU can not
- Other agencies are stake holders in the fight against arson
- Do not look at as competitors but as “Partner Agencies”
- Can be law enforcement, other safety organizations, insurance firms, etc.





Other Agencies – Federal



ATF – Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

- ATF is the Federal Government’s “first responder” to fire and explosives incidents and has primary Federal jurisdiction
- Can provide CFI’s, Investigators, Intel analysis, canine operations, fire research laboratory, surveillance operations, laboratory support, DNA analysis, etc.





Other Agencies - State



Office of Fire Prevention and Control's Arson Bureau

- On-scene Technical Assistance - 24 hours / 7 days
 - » Case review & Criminal Trial Preparation
 - » Origin and Cause determination
 - » Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention
- Accelerant Detection Canines
 - » Scene Investigation Services
 - » Training & Certification Program
- Special Records Checks
 - » PILR – Property Insurance Loss Registry
 - » DOS Corporation – Incorporation Information
- Fire Investigation Training



Other Agencies - State

NYSP - New York State Police



Some Investigators and Troopers are NYS CFI's

Can provide investigative follow up, evidence processing, laboratory support, surveillance assets, etc.

NYSIFB – Insurance Frauds Bureau



Investigators are involved in arson for profit investigations

Can provide investigative follow up, documentation and analysis of insurance profiles, financial analysis, etc.



Other Agencies - Local

- Fire Investigation Unit
- Police Department
- Sheriff's Office
- District Attorney's Office
- Bomb Squad



Resources

Task Forces are a “Force Multiplier” – bring many more resources to bear on an investigation when used



Task Force Resources – Three Pillars

O&C Teams
Interviews/Leads
Surveillance
Intelligence
Engineers/Lab
Canine
Legal
PIOs

PERSONNEL

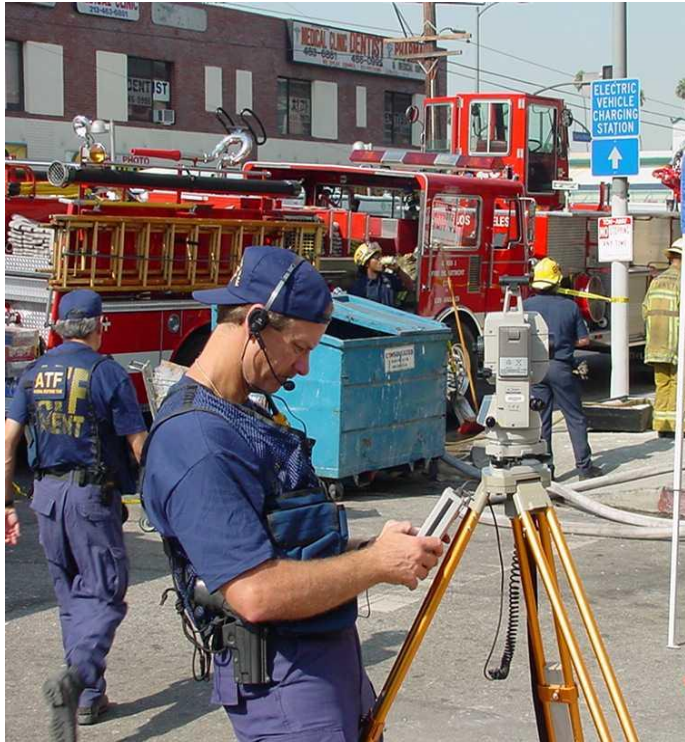
Scene
Processing
Evidence
Trackers
Pole Cameras
Aerial Support
Vehicles
Audio/Video
Enhancement
CI Equipment
Task Force
supplies

EQUIPMENT

MOUs
Overtime
Rewards
CI Management
Tip Line

MANAGEMENT

Investigative Resources



- May simply be in the form of personnel – i.e. more investigators to do interviews and to follow leads
- Temporary surge of investigators to help
- Should have appropriate background and/or training in fire investigation

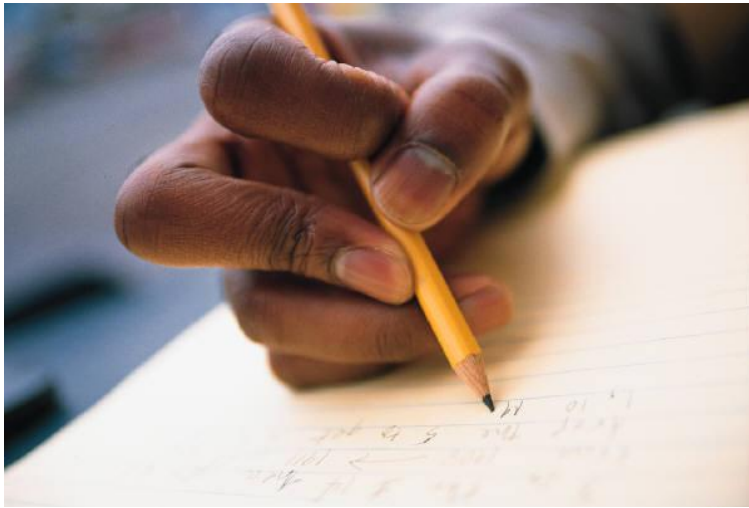


Surveillance Resources

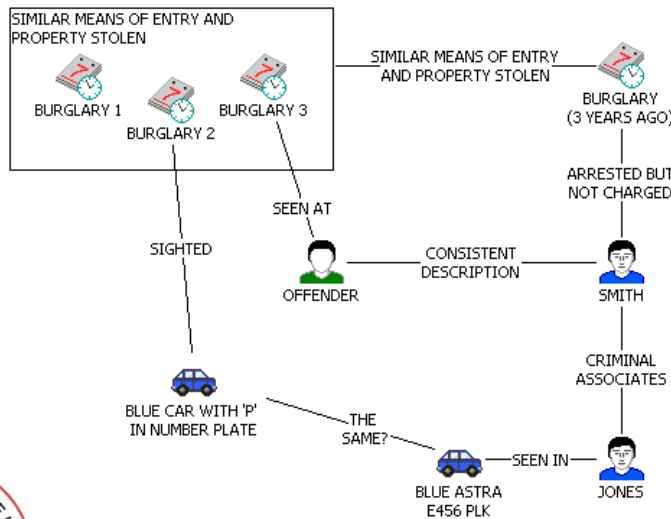
- ATF Field Office – personnel, surveillance vehicles (vans)
- HUD OIG – houses
- Trackers – SO, SP, ATF
- Radios – SO, SP, ATF
- Pole Cameras- SO, SP, ATF
- Aerial assets – SO, SP, ATF, ICE/CBP, DEA, ANG
- Grand Jury Subpoenas – tolls, deliveries, etc.
- Local cameras– DOT, stores, etc.



Intelligence Resources - Analysts

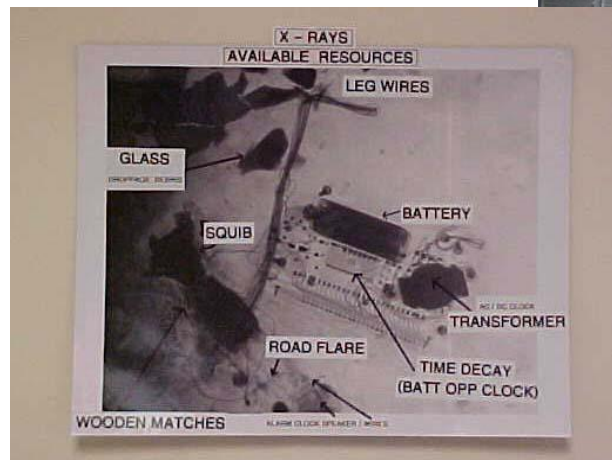


- Analyzing reports, connecting dots
- Social Media Research
- Computer forensics when and if time for search warrant
- Toll record analysis
- Historical research – other localities



Technical Resources

- Forensic Examinations
- Engineers & Testing
- Subject Matter Experts
– i.e. Specialists



Task Forces & “Operational Security”

- Need to know basis only
- Report to Fire/Police Chiefs – other officers if necessary
- Secure facility with locks and limited access
- Control flow of information to the public – interact with PIO(s)



Points of Understanding

- The advantages of an Arson Task Force
 - The MOU
- Roles and responsibilities of various agencies
 - Available Resources





QUESTIONS?