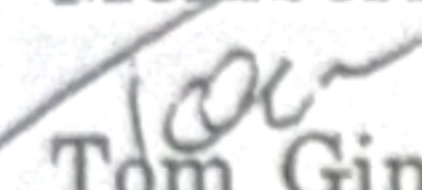


STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

JOHN ENGLER
GOVERNOR

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Judiciary and House Civil Rights Committee
FROM:  Tom Ginster
RE: Juvenile Crime Statistics
DATE: February 21, 1996

Please find attached the most recent juvenile crime statistics from the Michigan State Police Central Records Division. Also enclosed is an article from last Tuesday's *Detroit News* on the spread of juvenile violence.

cc:  Bruce Timmons
Mike Brady
Teresa Plachetka
Nat Johnson

1994 STATE TOTAL INDEX CRIME ARRESTS (JUVENILES 16 & UNDER)

MURDER	109
RAPE	204
ROBBERY	777
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	1,853
BURGLARY	2,742
LARCENY	10,869
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	1,580
ARSON	244
TOTAL	18,215

Young criminals more violent

Teen-agers who show 'no remorse' send hard-core offenses soaring

By Brenda Ingersoll
and Mike Martindale 7/20
The Detroit News

Justin Brownlee, 15, is a big kid now, but it was only a few years ago that he shrank in fear if an older kid asked to "see" one of his possessions.

"I remembered hearing about people being shot for not giving up a coat," the Mt. Clemens teen said. "I was scared to say no."

Even Detroit's suburbs, often viewed as being immune, are rocked by an explosion of teen-age violence that makes growing up a perilous process today.

Witness Oakland County, where the 12 years ending in 1994 saw the number of youngsters charged with violence skyrocket. Kids charged with murder, assault, weapons use and rape leaped 256 percent, from 177 youths to 631.

In Macomb County, criminal charges authorized by prosecutors against juveniles jumped 33 percent in just the last two years, from 1,442 in 1992 to 1,923 in 1994.

"You're seeing a dramatically more vio-

lent juvenile offender," said Joseph P. Cozzolino, chief assistant Macomb County prosecutor.

"Of all the symptoms you see, the most frightening is the lack of conscience, the amorality. You can see the sort of cold, blank looks on too many faces. There's no remorse. No understanding that this violence has an impact on other people."

And it's no longer just males who resort to criminal force, noted Oakland County Chief Probate Judge Joan E. Young.

"We're seeing a tremendous increase in assaultive behavior by girls," she said. "Formerly they came to us on passive-aggressive offenses, like running away or not going to school. Now we're seeing assaults on their classmates."

The local problems mirror national ones. Indeed, guns have become the third-leading cause of death among elementary and middle school students, according to the Children's Defense Fund.

Experts and teens point to the usual array

Please see TEENS, Page 5D

FACT

1,144,244 residents of Metro Detroit, or 26.1 percent, are under age 18.

of causes: TV and movie violence, easily obtained weapons and drugs. But they especially blame poor parenting and a breakdown of moral values.

Said Mike Worrell, director of Oakland County Children's Village detention center, "I can't think of anything better to call it than moral decay."

Justin, who is transferring this fall to Mt. Clemens High, said many of his former classmates at a private, Lutheran school shoplifted — without guilt or shame.

"It's just the day and age we live in now," Justin said. "People think it's funny to commit a crime and get away with it. That needs to be changed."

His mother, Loretta Brownlee, is president of the COMBAT program for at-risk youth and a 28-year custodian in the Mt. Clemens schools. She and her husband, Jesse, believe that even if "parents are teaching their kids right from wrong, they're not coming down on them hard enough."

Some suburban teen-agers — even those charged with serious crimes — are taken back by the level of violence around them. Like

"George", a 17-year-old recovering alcoholic from Rochester Hills, who spent time in Children's Village three years ago on an assault charge.

"A couple years ago, a local party store clerk was killed — shot in a holdup by some boys I knew, who got inspired by the movie *Menace 2 Society*," George said. "We used to fool with those guys and I thought: 'Wow, that could be me.'"

George landed in Children's Village at age 14.

"I was at a party and a kid was supposed to bring a keg, and he didn't, so I hit him," George said. "He hit his head on a car and started convulsing. Man, I'll tell you, I went into some kind of shock. I thought he was dying."

Luckily, the other teen recovered. Worrell, Judge Young and prosecutor Cozzolino agree today's delinquents are more emotionally disturbed and more "system-sophisticated" than five or six years ago.

For explanation, they point to presentencing reports prepared for the court, which show that parents often abuse alcohol or drugs or have criminal records themselves.

Worrell said: "And this is a resource-rich county. By the time the kids get through the system (into Children's Village), they've already had many interventions, maybe two or three short stays in a mental hospital."

He finds that his young charges now are "more disillusioned, pessimistic. If staff tries to work with a kid with those standard, middle-class values, like telling them to finish school, get a job and contribute to society, they look at us like we're reciting Greek mythology."

Youngsters also are more disrespectful, officials said.

"I see it when a young man or young woman comes into court and they're dressed like they're going to a beach party," Judge Paul A. Cassidy of New Baltimore's 42-2 District Court said. "They're not even afraid to stand up and challenge me in court."

Dr. Robert Aranosian, head of emergency medicine at Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital, had a similar comment. He often sees casualties of youth violence.

"Teen-agers are much different than they were even 10 years ago," Aranosian said. "There was a time they were usually polite or at least respectful. Now I go in to see a young patient and ask him how he's doing — he's as likely to lean back, look me over and snarl: 'Why don't you tell me? You're the doctor.'"

The burgeoning violence does not spare the affluent, either.

"I see gun offenses from every corner of the county," Young said. "I've had good kids in here with guns because they're scared. They say 'Judge, he told me he'd kill me.'"

Worrell agreed. "It's not at all uncommon to have kids from Bloomfield Hills, Farmington Hills and Rochester. It just takes them a little longer to get here, because they have better legal help or their families can post the bond."