

# The Washington Monthly

James Fallows  
on Joseph Califano

JULY/AUGUST 1981/\$2



• Special Issue: RONNIE'S WORLD •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



We're doing what has to be done.

# Arson For Profit.

---

The cost in lives and dollars is appalling. That's why  
Property-Casualty insurance companies are doing their part  
to reduce this serious crime.

---

We've all seen the headlines: "Building gutted by fire. 28 dead, scores injured."

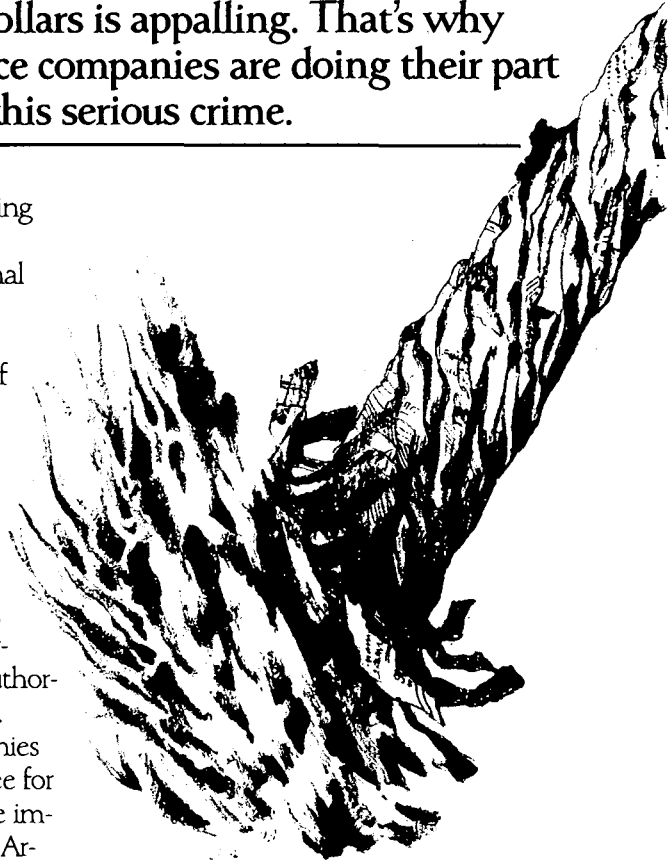
The smoke clears and the fire marshal makes his report. Too often it includes the word: *arson*.

*Arson for profit* is only a small part of the total arson problem. Most fires are *not* set for profit. The largest percentage of arson fires is caused by vandals, revenge seekers, or people in need of psychiatric help.

Arson has become a serious social problem. Its solutions demand innovative, coordinated efforts—not only by the insurance business, but by law enforcement authorities, fire inspectors, builders, and legislators.

Property-Casualty insurance companies—acting through the Insurance Committee for Arson Control—help and encourage those important groups to get together. So far, 125 Arson Task Forces have been formed in 41 states.

Meanwhile, insurance companies themselves have been working to reduce the incidence of arson. A prime example, one aimed specifically at arson for profit, is the



Property Insurance Loss Register. This computerized cross-index of fire claims over \$500 is programmed to react whenever a "match-up" of similar characteristics occurs among current