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News Release

For Release: February 18, 2004

Arson Task Force Update

The Arson Task Force has classified two recent fires as being similar in nature to the serial arsonist offending within our community. These fires occurred on Friday, February 6, 2004, in the 7100 block of Richmond Highway in Fairfax, Virginia and on Saturday, February 14, 2004, in the 7700 block of Blair Road in Silver Spring, Maryland. Once again, we are calling for assistance from the public in helping us to identify this fire setter. We believe he is a member of this community and therefore he is known here. We are providing the traits and characteristics listed below, so that they might aid people who know this arsonist in recognizing him. We are particularly calling out to family members who may recognize him from the following description. As long as he remains at large, our community and the arsonist himself remain in danger.

Again, we remind the public not to discount an individual they suspect if he does not fit this description entirely.

People who know him will likely notice the following traits:

- He may be described as having a “chameleon personality.” When he needs to, he can act charming, and appear caring and genuine. Yet when he is stressed or angered, he may reveal a more callous, uncaring and angry side of his nature.
- At times, he may surprise and disappoint those around him with his indifference to the rights and welfare of others and society at large.
- When things go wrong in his life, or when he misbehaves, it is never his fault. He does not accept responsibility for the results of his actions. He will blame others.
- He can be manipulative and cunning if he needs to be.
- He leads a secretive life and has become skilled at lying.

These traits will cause him problems with his family and other relationships. People close to him will know of his problems and he may even have a known history of setting fires when he is stressed. He has probably been in trouble with the law before.

It is very likely he had a difficult life growing up. He may have been a foster or adopted child. He may have felt that he never “fit in” and that has led him to become a very angry man.

Serial fire setting is a means to relieve stress for him. Stressors that might cause him to set fires can include the following: relationship problems; financial problems; work problems; and legal problems. As we mentioned before, holidays are a particularly stressful time. Valentine’s Day, with all of its related memories and expectations, can also be a stressful holiday. Besides fire setting, this offender may relieve his stress through alcohol.

Serial arsonists usually do not start out setting fires to occupied structures. They generally have a history of arson that began on a much smaller scale. It may be the case that this offender is relatively new to our community – having arrived or returned here within the past year. The public should consider this when reading the fire setter’s description. Also, we know he was out and offending this past Thursday night into Friday morning.

We are re-releasing the sketch of a possible suspect, seen at the site of an attempted arson on September 14, 2003, in the 4100 Block of Anacostia Avenue in Washington, D.C. This is an updated sketch, which has been enhanced using new information and improved investigative techniques. We are also reminding the public of the now \$35,000.00 Reward for information leading to the arrest of this arsonist.

**Citizens may contact the Arson Task Force by:
301-77-ARSON**

E-Mail:
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For additional information contact Mark Brady, Chief Spokesperson, at 240-508-7930.