

# The Color of Crime

**Race, Crime, and Violence in America**

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## Major Findings

- There is more black-on-*white* than black-on-*black* violent crime.
- Of the approximately 1,700,000 interracial crimes of violence involving blacks and whites, 90 percent are committed by blacks against whites. Blacks are therefore up to 250 times more likely to do criminal violence to whites than the reverse.
- Blacks commit violent crimes at four to eight times the white rate. Hispanics commit violent crimes at approximately three times the white rate, and Asians at one half to three quarters the white rate.
- Blacks are twice as likely as whites to commit hate crimes.
- Hispanics are a hate crime victim category but not a perpetrator category. Hispanic offenders are classified as whites, which inflates the white offense rate and gives the impression that Hispanics commit no hate crimes.
- Blacks are as much more dangerous than whites as men are more dangerous than women.

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## Summary

**T**he *Color of Crime*, a New Century Foundation study based on federal crime reports, has found significant differences in violent crime rates for different racial and ethnic groups. Blacks, for example, are many times more likely to commit crimes of violence against whites than vice versa. Of the approximately 1,700,000 interracial violent crimes involving blacks and whites reported every year, blacks commit 90 percent and whites commit only ten percent. Blacks are therefore more than 50 times more likely than whites to commit interracial crimes of violence. The differences are even greater for multiple-offender interracial crimes, with blacks 100 to 250 times more likely to be involved in gang attacks on whites than the reverse. Some people may argue that blacks attack whites because they expect them to be carrying cash or valuables. However, fewer than 20 percent of black attacks on whites are robberies; rape and assault do not usually have economic motives.

There is more black-on-*white* violent crime than black-on-*black* violent crime. When blacks commit violence they attack whites 50 to 55 percent of the time. When whites commit violence they attack blacks only two to three percent of the time.

Hate crimes are thought to be the most serious acts of interracial crime, but there were only 9,861 reported in 1997. Of these, 6,981 were race-related and 4,105 were violent. This very small number of crimes receives a disproportionate amount of attention, but it is likely that the millions of ordinary interracial crimes—90 percent of which are committed by blacks against whites—are more damaging to race relations. Although white-on-black hate crimes

receive a great deal of attention, blacks are approximately twice as likely to commit hate crimes as whites.

Hispanics are considered a victim category for hate crimes but not a perpetrator category. A Mexican who is attacked because of ethnicity is recorded as Hispanic, but if the same Mexican attacks a black or white for racial reasons he is considered white. This inflates the figures for “white” hate crime perpetrators, and gives the impression that Hispanics commit no hate crimes.

For virtually all crimes, there are consistent and pronounced differences in arrest rates for violent crime by race and ethnicity. Blacks are five to ten times more likely to be arrested than whites, Hispanics are approximately three times more likely, American Indians are about twice as likely, and Asians are only one half to two-thirds as likely to be arrested for violent crimes as whites. The very high rates for blacks means that the single best independent predictor of crime rates for an area is the percentage of the population that is black.

Blacks are as much more likely to be arrested for violent crimes as men are more likely to be arrested than women. To the extent that arrest rates are a good indication of actual criminal behavior—and there is very strong evidence that they are—blacks are as much more dangerous than whites as men are more dangerous than women. If people feel more threatened by unknown men than by unknown women and are justified in taking additional precautions against them, from a statistical point of view they are equally justified in making the same distinctions between blacks and whites. ●

# The Color of Crime

## Interracial Crime

On June 7, 1998, white supremacists hitched James Byrd of Jasper, Texas, to the back of a truck, and dragged him to death. This appalling crime reminded the country in the most forceful way that racial hostility and interracial crime continue to be serious problems in the United States. The resulting national outcry demonstrated how deeply Americans feel about racial violence. Outrage over acts of this kind is entirely appropriate. However, to concentrate on one crime, no matter how sickening, is to present a distorted picture of interracial crime. If we are to respond appropriately to the problem of racial violence it is important to know its true nature and proportions.

Most Americans probably believe that whites commit most interracial crimes, and that blacks are the most frequent victims. The reverse is true: In approximately 90 percent of the interracial crimes of violence involving blacks and whites, blacks are perpetrators and whites are victims. In terms of crime rates (calculated as the number of crimes per 100,000 population), blacks are more than 50 times more likely to attack whites than the reverse. To use the common short-hand expression, interracial crime is overwhelmingly "black-on-white." Because statistics of this kind are surprising to most people, it is worth explaining them in some detail.

Every year since 1972, the U.S. Department of Justice has carried out what is called the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) to determine the frequency of certain kinds of crimes. The NCVS survey sample is very large—approximately 100,000 people in some 50,000 households—and is carefully selected on the basis of census data to make it as representative as possible of the nation as a whole. The NCVS is an invaluable record of criminal victimization as reported directly by Americans, and it is the only significant nationwide measure of interracial crime.

Two pages from the NCVS are included as Appendix A of this report.<sup>1</sup> The first page, Table 42, lists various categories of single-offender interra-

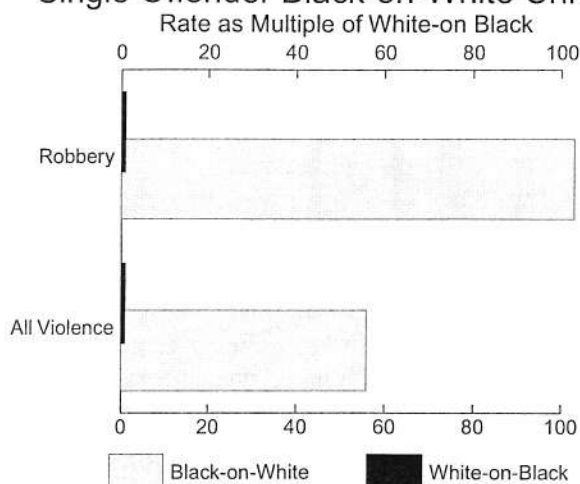
cial violent crimes for 1994 (the NCVS is carried out annually, but the Department of Justice does not issue full reports every year; 1994 is the most recent year for this data).

The group of numbers at the top of the page represents totals calculated for single-offender violent crimes reported for that year. They are extrapolated from the actual crimes reported by the survey sample. We find that in 1994 6,830,360 whites were victims of violent crimes, and that 16.7 percent (1,140,670) reported that the perpetrator was black. Blacks were victims of 1,100,490 violent crimes, of which 12.3 percent (135,360) were committed by whites. Adding these figures for interracial crime together (1,140,670 and 135,360) we get a total of 1,276,030 interracial crimes, of which 1,140,670 or 89 percent were committed by blacks.

To get the *rates* at which blacks and whites commit interracial crime we divide the number of crimes by the population to get crimes per 100,000 population. The Census Bureau reports that the 1994 white and black populations were 216,413,000 and 32,653,000 respectively. Whites therefore committed acts of interracial violence at a rate of 62.55 per 100,000 while the black rate was 3,493.63 per 100,000, a figure that is no less than 55.85 times the white rate. Put in the most easily understood terms, the average black was therefore 56 times more likely to commit criminal violence against a white than was a white to commit criminal violence against a black. Similar calculations show that the black rate for interracial robbery, or "mugging," was 103 times the white rate. These two rates are illustrated in the graph on the next page, and it is important to understand what these figures mean. The multiple of 56 does *not* mean that blacks commit 56 times as much interracial violence as whites. What it means is that if whites commit interracial violence at a rate of 10 crimes per 100,000 whites, the rate for blacks is 560 per 100,000, or 56 times the white rate. This is the kind of calculation that is represented in most of the graphs in this report.

The figures from Table 42 of the NCVS show other facts about interracial violence. If we once

## Single Offender Black-on-White Crime



again concentrate on the group of figures at the top of the table we can calculate the total number of crimes committed by perpetrators of each race, and the percentage that is committed against the other race. We find that the 1,140,670 acts of violence committed by blacks against whites constitute 56.3 percent of all violent crimes committed by blacks. That is to say that when blacks commit violent crimes they target whites more than half the time or, put differently, there is more black-on-white than black-on-black crime. Similar calculations for whites show that of the 5,114,692 acts of criminal violence committed by whites, only 2.6 percent were directed at blacks. (Although homicide is a violent crime, the NCVS does not include it because victims cannot be interviewed. The number of interracial murders is small and does not affect the percentages and ratios presented here.)

Some may argue that blacks commit violence against whites because whites are more likely to have money and are therefore more promising robbery targets. However, of the 1,140,670 black-on-white acts of violence reported in 1994, only 173,374 were robberies. The remaining 84.8 percent were aggravated assaults, rapes, and simple assaults, which presumably were not motivated by profit. Rape, in particular, has nothing to do with the presumed wealth of the victim. More than 30,000 white women were raped by black men in 1994, and about 5,400 black women were raped by white men. The black interracial rape rate was 38 times the white rate.

The second page of Appendix A of this report is another page from the NCVS. Table 48 shows interracial crime data for acts of violence committed by multiple offenders. By doing the same calculations as before, we can determine how much group or “gang” violence (not in the sense of organized gangs) is interracial, and how much is committed by blacks and by whites. Of the total of 490,266 acts of multiple-offender interracial violence, no fewer than 93.9 percent were committed by blacks against whites. Robbery, for which there is a monetary motive, accounted for fewer than one third of these crimes. The rest were gang assaults, including rapes, presumably for motives other than profit.

*Rates* of group violence for each race can be calculated as before, and the difference between the races is stark. The black rate of overall interracial gang violence is 101.75 times the white rate; for robbery it is 277.31 times the white rate. Differences as great as this are seldom found in comparative studies of group behavior, and they cry out for study and explanation. It is probably safe to say that if the races were reversed, and gangs of whites were attacking blacks at merely four or five times the rate at which blacks were attacking whites the country would consider this a national crisis that required urgent attention.

## Hate Crimes in Perspective

Ever since passage of the Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990, the FBI has been charged with collecting national statistics on criminal acts “motivated, in whole or in part, by bias.” The law does not compel local law enforcement agencies to supply the FBI with this information but most do. In 1997, the most recent year for which data are available, the FBI received hate crime information from 11,211 local agencies serving more than 83 percent of the United States population.<sup>2</sup>

In that year, there was a total of 9,861 offenses, of which 6,981 represented bias crimes based on race or ethnic origin. The remainder were for reasons of religion, sexual orientation, or disability.

The FBI reports 8,474 suspected offenders whose race was known. Of that number, 5,344 were white and 1,629 were black. Their offenses—which



included all categories of hate crime, not just racial bias—can, in turn, be divided into violent and non-violent offenses, and by calculating the *rate* of offense by race we find that blacks were 1.99 times more likely than whites to commit hate crimes in general and 2.24 times more likely to commit violent hate crimes.

As for cases of racial bias, there were 718 blacks charged with anti-white (as opposed to anti-homosexual, anti-Semitic, etc.) crimes and 2,336 whites charged with anti-black hate crimes. Although the number of white offenders was larger, the black *rate* per 100,000 was twice as high. A larger number of whites commit these crimes, but blacks are 2.0 times more *likely* to commit them. This overrepresentation of blacks in hate crimes, not just in race bias cases but in all categories, runs counter to the common impression that whites are the virtually exclusive perpetrators of hate crimes and are certainly more likely to commit them than blacks.

But perhaps of even greater significance is the relatively small number of bias crimes to begin with. Of the 6,981 offenses based on race or ethnicity, only 4,105 were violent, involving murder, rape, robbery, or assault. The rest included such offenses as vandalism and intimidation. These numbers are almost insignificant compared to the 1,766,000 interracial crimes of violence (combining both single- and multiple-offender offences) reported in the NCVS.

Needless to say, part of this huge disparity in numbers is explained by the fact that the NCVS covers all crimes—whether reported to police or not—whereas for a crime to be included in the FBI's hate crime statistics it must first be reported to police and then officially classified as a hate crime. No doubt there is some number of crimes never reported to the police that authorities would consider hate crimes if they knew about them.

However, how important is the distinction between interracial crimes that are officially designated as hate crimes and those that are not? For a crime to be considered a hate crime, the perpetrator must make his motive clear, usually by using racial slurs. It is not hard to imagine that of the 1,766,000 interracial crimes committed in 1994, some—perhaps even a great many—were “motivated, in whole

or in part, by bias” but the perpetrators did not express their motives.

Given the realities of race in the United States, would it be unreasonable for a person attacked by someone of a different race to wonder whether race had something to do with the attack, even if his assailant said nothing? Such suspicions are even more likely in the case of the 490,266 acts of *group* violence that crossed racial lines in 1994. What is the psychological effect on a victim set upon by a gang of people of a different race? A white woman gang-raped by blacks or a black man cornered and beaten by whites can hardly help but think he was singled out at least in part because of race, even if the attackers used no racial slurs.

Many states have passed laws that increase penalties for people convicted of hate crimes. These laws recognize the harm done to society when people are attacked because of race or other characteristics. However, one might ask which does more damage to society: the few thousand violent acts officially labeled as hate crimes or the vastly more numerous interracial crimes of violence that go virtually unnoticed?

### Hate Crimes Committed by Hispanics

The government's treatment of hate crimes is misleading in another, even more obvious way, in that the FBI reports hate crimes *against* Hispanics but not *by* Hispanics. Appendix B is the FBI's “Hate Crime Incident Report,” which is used to record bias crimes. Although Hispanics are clearly indicated as a victim category in the “Bias Motivation” section, they are not a perpetrator category in “Suspected Race of Offender.” The FBI therefore forces local law enforcement agencies to categorize most Hispanic offenders as “white” (see “Measuring Hispanic Crime Rates,” below) and the figures for 1997 reflect this. The total number of hate crimes for that year—9,861—includes 636 crimes of anti-Hispanic bias, but not one of the 8,474 known offenders is “Hispanic” because the FBI's data collection method does not permit such a designation.

If a Mexican is assaulted for reasons of ethnicity he is officially recorded as Hispanic. However, he becomes white if he commits a hate crime against

a black. Even more absurdly, if a Mexican commits a hate crime against a white, both the victim and the perpetrator are reported as white. And, in fact, the 1997 FBI figures duly record 214 “white” offenders who committed anti-white hate crimes.<sup>3</sup> The offenders were probably Hispanic, but if that is the case the report should say so. If some of the “whites” who are reported to have committed crimes against blacks are also Hispanic, the report should indicate that, too.

An examination of specific crimes shows that official reports can be misleading. Murder is the most serious and shocking of all hate crimes, and the FBI lists five cases of racially-motivated murder for 1997—three “anti-black” and two “anti-white.” The FBI report does not provide details about the perpetrators or the circumstances of the killings, but the local police departments that reported the crimes to the FBI have this information.

Two of the anti-black killings took place in the same town, a largely Hispanic suburb of Los Angeles called Hawaiian Gardens. Hawaiian Gardens has a history of black-Hispanic tension that is so bad many blacks have been forced to leave. In one of the murders, a 24-year-old black man was beaten to death by a mob of 10 to 14 Hispanics who took turns smashing his head with a baseball bat. In the other, a Hispanic gang member challenged a 29-year-old black man’s right to be in the neighborhood. A few minutes later he returned and shot the man in the chest. In both cases, the victims and killers did not know each other and the motivation appears to have been purely racial.<sup>4</sup> These crimes are typical of what we think of as hate-crime murders, and because no Hispanics are identified as perpetrators in the FBI report, it is safe to assume the killers were classified as white.

The third anti-black killing took place in Anchorage, Alaska. According to press reports, a white man, 33-year-old Brett Maness, killed his neighbor, a 32-year-old black man Delbert White, after a brief struggle. Mr. Maness, who was growing marijuana in his apartment and kept an arsenal of weapons, had been shooting a pellet gun at Mr. White’s house, and the black man had come over to complain. Interestingly, a jury found that Mr. Maness killed Mr. White in self defense, but convicted him

of weapons and drugs charges. The incident was considered a hate crime because Mr. Maness had brandished weapons and shouted racial slurs at Mr. White in the past.<sup>5</sup> A police spokesman adds that racist literature was found in Mr. Maness’ apartment after the shooting.

The remaining two killings were classified as anti-white, but only one fits the usual conception of such crimes. Four white men were walking on a street in Palm Beach, Florida, when a car came to a stop not far from them. Two black men got out with their hands behind their backs and one said “What are you crackers looking at?” One of the white men replied, “Not you, nigger,” whereupon one of the blacks brought a gun from behind his back and fired several times, killing one white and wounding another. Attackers and victims did not know each other, and the criminal motivation appears to have been purely racial.<sup>6</sup> The other anti-white killing involved a Texas businessman from India, Sri Punjabi, who shot his Mexican daughter-in-law because his son had divorced an Indian wife to marry her. Mr. Punjabi was incensed that his son should marry anyone who was not Indian.<sup>7</sup> (Presumably, this crime should have been classified as anti-Hispanic rather than anti-white.)

These five racially-motivated murders reported for 1997 do not fit the popular image of hate crimes, namely, of whites brutalizing non-whites. In fact, only one perpetrator was “white” in the usually accepted sense. What was the nature of the thousands of other officially-reported hate crimes? Without examining all 9,861 of them it is impossible to say.

It is clear, however, that the FBI report gives a false impression. It inflates the number of hate crimes committed by “whites” by calling Hispanics white. At the same time it gives the impression that Hispanics never commit hate crimes. The reason for gathering these data is to arrive at a better understanding of the extent of racial friction and violence in the United States. If statistics are to have any meaning they must reflect American reality, namely, that most Hispanics think of themselves as a separate group, distinct from non-Hispanic whites, and are perceived by others as a different group. It is impossible to understand or alleviate group friction without recognizing this. If the FBI wants to

collect meaningful data, it must recognize Hispanics as a perpetrator category as well as a victim category.

### The Color of Crime

Different racial groups in the United States commit crimes at different rates. Most Americans have a sense that non-white neighborhoods are more dangerous than white neighborhoods—and they are correct. However, it is very unusual to find reliable information on just how much more dangerous some groups are than others.

The *Uniform Crime Reports* (UCR), published annually by the FBI, is the standard reference work for crime and crime rates in the United States. The UCR is a nationwide compilation of criminal offenses and arrest data, reported voluntarily by local law enforcement agencies. In the most recent UCR, which covers 1997, the FBI received reports from 17,000 law enforcement agencies, covering 95 percent of the country's population. The UCR is unquestionably the most comprehensive and authoritative report on crimes brought to the attention of the police. News stories about rising or falling crime rates are almost always based on the UCR.

In trying to determine crime rates for different racial groups, it is important to understand the differences between the UCR and the *National Crime Victimization Survey* (NCVS) referred to above. The NCVS contains only one kind of information: crimes Americans say they have suffered. The UCR includes two different kinds of numbers: crimes reported to the police and arrests of perpetrators. Even for the same year and for the same crime, these three sets of numbers are different. The largest numbers are in the NCVS, because they include crimes not reported to the police. Somewhat smaller are the UCR figures on offenses reported to authorities, and smaller still are arrest figures, which represent offenses for which a suspect is arrested.

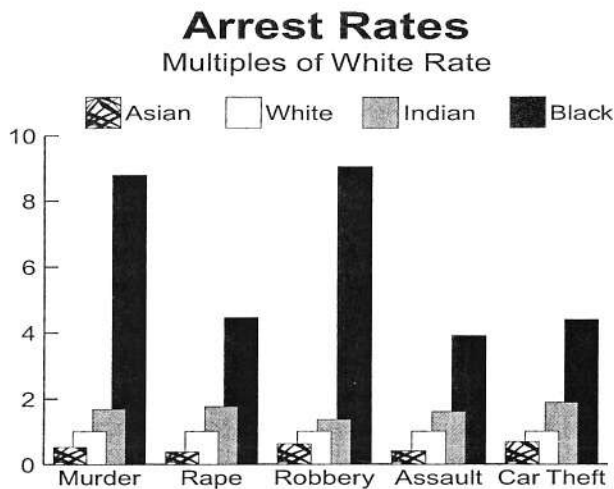
For example, in the 1997 NCVS Americans say they suffered a total of 1,883,000 cases of aggravated assault,<sup>8</sup> but according to the UCR, only 1,022,000 were reported to the police. During that same year, there were only 535,000 arrests for aggravated assault.<sup>9</sup> Racial data enter the UCR fig-

ures only when an arrest is made, so it can be argued that racial comparisons should not be based on UCR data. Different racial groups may report crime to the police at different rates, some groups may be more successful at escaping arrest, and the police may discriminate between racial groups in their arrest efforts. However, there is a great advantage in using UCR data because its racial categories are more detailed. Unlike the NCVS, which reports only on "black," "white," and "other," the UCR compiles arrest data on "black," "white," "American Indian/Eskimo," and "Asian/Pacific Islander." These are the only national crime data that make these distinctions. Also, as we will see later, UCR arrest data can be compared to other data in ways that make it possible to treat Hispanics as a separate ethnic category.

Another good reason to use UCR data is that although the racial proportions vary somewhat between the NCVS survey data (race of perpetrator as reported by victims) and the UCR arrest data (race of persons arrested), they are not that different. For example, according to the UCR, 57 percent of people arrested for robbery in 1997 were black, as were 37 percent of those arrested for aggravated assault.<sup>10</sup> According to NCVS data on *single-offender* crimes, 51 percent of robbers were reported by their victims to be black as were 30 percent of those who committed aggravated assault (once again, using 1994 data).<sup>11</sup> Since there is a greater overrepresentation by blacks in NCVS-reported *multiple-offender* crimes, combining the two sets of figures brings the racial proportions in the NCVS figures extremely close to the racial proportions in UCR arrest figures.<sup>12</sup> Put differently, police are arresting criminals of different races in very close to the same proportions as Americans say they are victimized by people of those races.

By this measure, who is committing crime in America? The graph on the next page shows arrest rates (calculated, as before, as the number of arrests per 100,000 population) as *multiples* of the white arrest rate for various crimes. The white rate is always set to one, so if the black rate is three, for example, it means that blacks are arrested at three times the white rate. Once again, it does not mean that three times as many blacks as whites were ar-





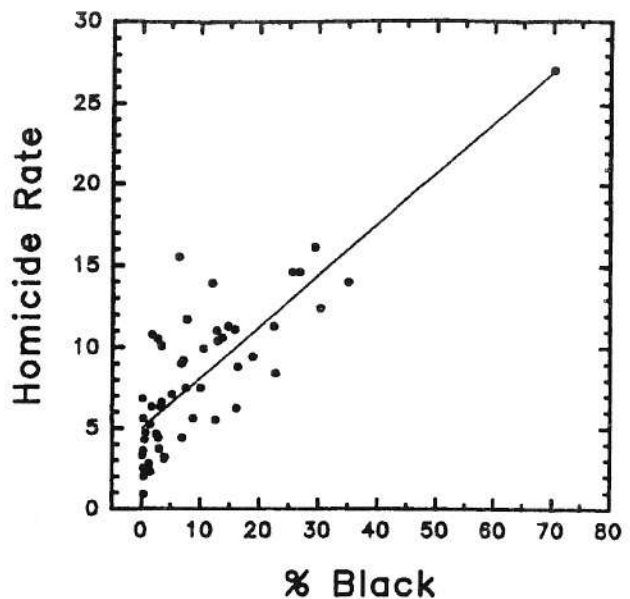
rested; it means that if 100 of every 100,000 whites were arrested for a crime, 300 of every 100,000 blacks were arrested for the same crime.

The data show a very consistent pattern: Blacks are arrested at dramatically higher rates than other racial groups. American Indians and Eskimos (hereinafter "Indians") are arrested at slightly higher rates than whites, and Asians are arrested at consistently *lower* rates. The popular conception of crime in America is correct; rates are much higher among blacks than among whites or other groups.

It is for this reason that the single best independent indicator of a jurisdiction's crime rate is the percentage of its population that is black. The scatter chart to the right plots homicide rate and black percentage of population for all the states and for the District of Columbia (which is the outlying data point at the upper right).<sup>13</sup> The tendency is clear: The higher the percentage of blacks, the greater the number of murders.

It is worth noting that murder rates are a different kind of data from both NCVS reports and UCR arrest data. They are not based on victim reports nor can they be distorted by differences in arrest rates by racial group that could reflect possible police bias. Pure homicide rates tell us nothing about the race of either the killer *or* the victim. They are simply an expression of the level of homicidal violence in a community, and that level increases as the percentage of blacks increases.

Nevertheless, to return to the view that arrest data reflect police bias rather than genuine group differences in crime rates, police actually have very little discretion in whom they arrest for violent crimes.



Except for murder victims, most people can tell the police the race of an assailant. If a victim says he was mugged by a white man, the police cannot very well arrest a black man even if they want to.

For this reason, many people accept that police have little discretion in whom to arrest for violent crime, but still believe drug laws are enforced unfairly against minorities. Drug offenses are beyond the scope of this report but here, too, there is independent evidence that arrest rates reflect differences in criminal behavior, not selective law enforcement. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services keeps records by race of drug-related emergency room admissions. It reports that blacks are admitted at 6.67 times the non-Hispanic white rate for heroin and morphine, and no less than 10.49 times the non-Hispanic white rate for cocaine. (Rates for Hispanics are 2.82 and 2.35 times the white rates; information is not reported on American Indians or Asians).<sup>14</sup> There is only one plausible explanation for these rates: Blacks are much more likely to be using drugs in the first place.

Finally, if racist white police were unfairly arresting non-whites we would expect arrest rates for Asians to be higher than for those for whites. Instead, they are lower for almost every kind of crime.

### Measuring Hispanic Crime Rates

Any study of group crime rates in America is complicated by the inconsistent treatment of His-

panics by different government agencies. For example, the Census Bureau's official estimate for the 1997 population of the United States divides all 268 million Americans into four racial groups: white, black, Indian and Eskimo, and Asian and Pacific Islander. The bureau then explains that among these 268 million people there are 29 million Hispanics who "can be of any race." However, it also counts *non-Hispanic whites*, *non-Hispanic blacks*, Indians, etc. Thus we find that although according to the strictly racial classification, there are 221 million whites in the United States, there are only 195 million *non-Hispanic whites*. When American Hispanics, approximately half of whom are Mexican, are apportioned to the four racial categories, the Census Bureau considers 91 percent to be white, six percent black, one percent American Indian, and two percent Asian.

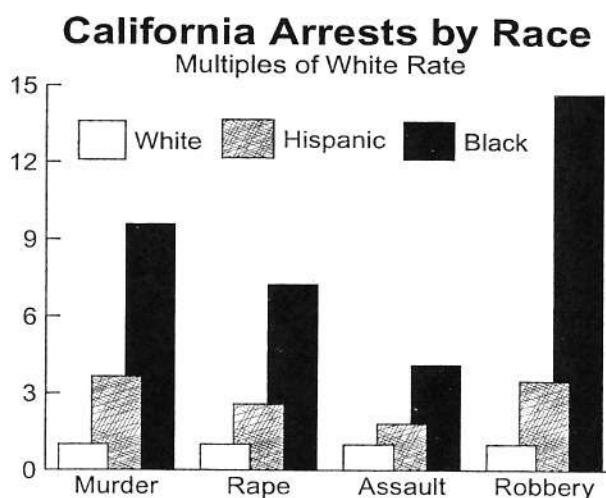
The treatment of Hispanics can make for odd results. For example, according to the 1990 census, the 3,485,000 people of Los Angeles were 52.9 percent white, 13.9 percent black, 0.4 percent American Indian, and 22.9 percent Asian—which adds up to 100 percent. This makes the city appear to be majority white. However, Los Angeles was also 39.3 percent Hispanic, and if we subtract the 91 percent of them who were classed as whites, the non-Hispanic white population suddenly drops to only 16.6 percent.

What does this mean for crime statistics? Because the UCR figures do not treat Hispanics as a separate category, almost all the Hispanics arrested in the United States go into official records as "white." This is contrary to the usual understanding of the word, which is not normally thought to include most Mexicans and Latinos.

If violent crime rates for Hispanics are substantially different from those of non-Hispanic whites, putting Hispanics in the "white" category distorts the results. This is not as serious as in the case of hate crimes, in which the crime itself has to do with the very personal characteristics that are being omitted from the records, but there is no reason not to make ethnic or racial comparisons as accurate as possible. The UCR tabulates separate data on American Indians and Eskimos—who are less than

one percent of the population—but it ignores Hispanics, who are 12 percent of the population.

Some data-gathering agencies do treat Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites separately. The California Department of Justice, which records all arrests within the state, consistently makes this distinction (though it lumps Asians and American Indians into the "other" category). Some of these California figures are included as Appendix C of this report. In conjunction with Census Bureau population figures for Hispanics, non-Hispanic whites, and non-Hispanic blacks living in California in 1997, we can calculate the arrest rates for the different groups for different crimes. In the graph below, these rates are once again represented as multiples of the white rate. As is the case with national UCR data, blacks are arrested at much higher rates than whites, but Hispanics are also arrested at considerably higher rates.



The different rates at which Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites are held in prisons and jails are another indicator of the differences in crime rates between the two groups. Although the UCR does not treat Hispanics as a separate category for arrest purposes, some government reports on the prison population do consider them separately. For example, the Department of Justice has calculated 1996 incarceration rates per 100,000 population for non-Hispanic whites (193), Hispanics (688), and non-Hispanic blacks (1,571).<sup>15</sup> Expressed as multiples of the white rate, the Hispanic rate is 3.56 and the black rate is 8.14. These multiples are close

to those from the California arrest data, and justify the conclusion that Hispanics are roughly three times more likely than non-Hispanic whites to be arrested for various crimes.

If we make this assumption, we can use the following formula to incorporate this differential into the UCR racial data on white arrests so as to calculate more accurate arrest rates for non-Hispanic whites:

$$R(\text{Number of non-Hispanic whites}) + 3R(\text{Number of white Hispanics}) = \text{Actual Number of Arrests}$$

Here, R is the arrest rate for non-Hispanic whites and 3R is the arrest rate for Hispanics who are categorized as white when they are arrested. Calculations of this kind show that if Hispanics are broken out as a separate ethnic category with an arrest rate assumed to be three times the non-Hispanic rate, the rate for non-Hispanic whites decreases by 19.5 percent. The graph below shows arrest rates (as multiples of the white arrest rate) adjusted for this reduction. For lack of more precise information, the multiple for Hispanics is set at three times the white rate for *all* crimes even though there is certain to be some variation in the multiples for different types of crimes. The unadjusted arrest rate chart is also reproduced next to it for purposes of comparison. Because the evidence from national incarceration

rates and California arrest rates suggests that Hispanics commit violent crimes at some multiple of the white rate, the adjusted graph is probably a more accurate indicator of group differences. Both graphs are on the same scale and show the extent to which separating out Hispanics reduces arrest rates for non-Hispanic whites.

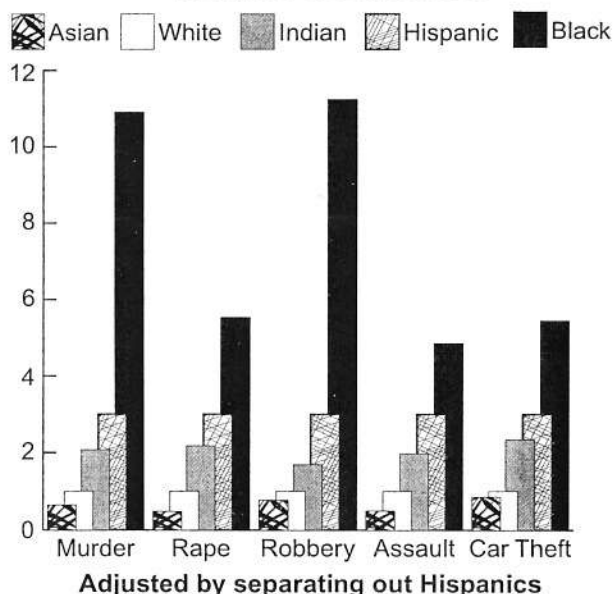
It should be noted here that the NCVS survey data on interracial crime referred to at the beginning of this report also includes Hispanics in the "white" category. It is therefore impossible to know how many of the "whites" who committed violent crimes against blacks were actually Hispanic or how many of the "whites" against whom blacks committed violent crimes were Hispanic. If Hispanics commit violent crimes against blacks at a higher rate than whites—and judging from their higher arrest and incarceration rates for other offenses this seems likely—the NCVS report also inflates the crime rates of non-Hispanic whites.

### Men versus Women

Many people resist the idea that different racial groups can have significantly different rates of violent crime. However, there are several group differences in crime rates that virtually everyone understands and takes for granted. Men in their 20s, for example, are much more prone to violence than men in their 50s, and when they are arrested more

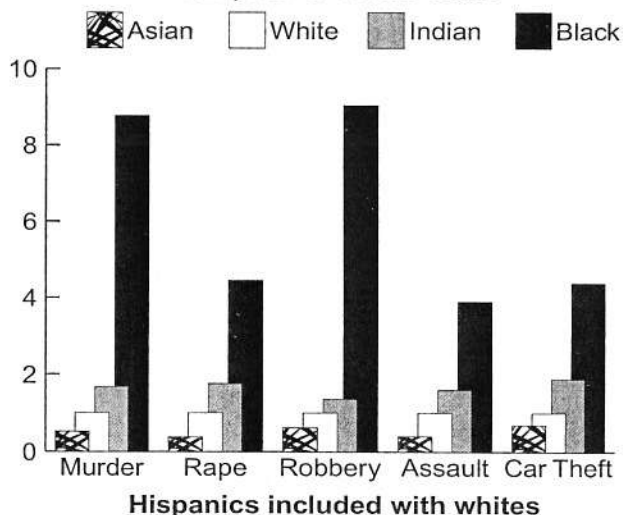
### Adjusted Arrest Rates

Multiples of White Rate



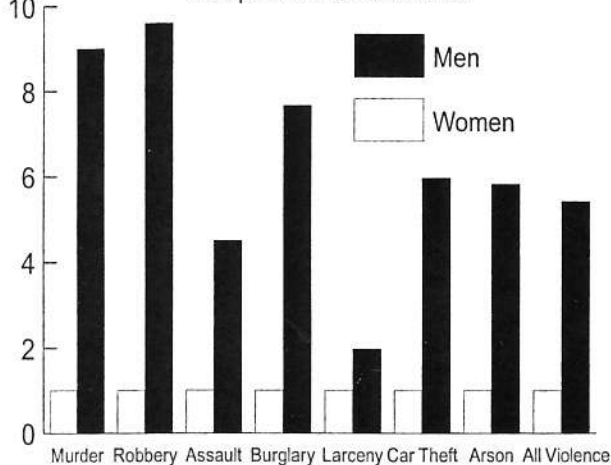
### Unadjusted Arrest Rates

Multiples of White Rate



## Male Arrest Rates

Multiples of Female Rates

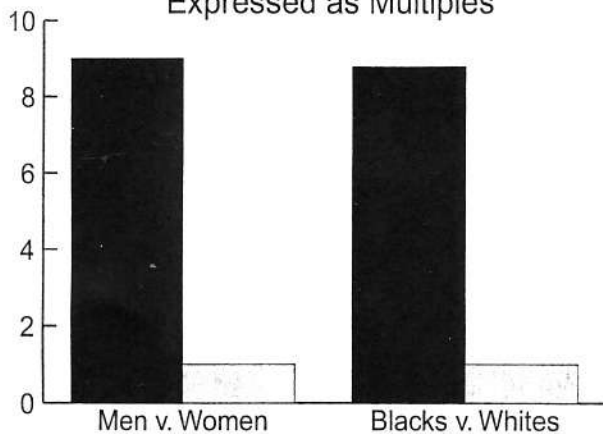


frequently for it, no one doubts that it is because they commit more crime. Likewise, virtually no one disputes the reason for higher arrest rates for men than for women: Men commit more crime than women. This is the case for racial groups as well: Asians are arrested at lower rates than whites because they commit fewer crimes; blacks and Hispanics are arrested at higher rates because they commit more crimes.

When it comes to violent crime, blacks are approximately as much more likely to be arrested than whites, as men are more likely to be arrested than women. The multiples of black v. white arrest rates are very close to the multiples of male v. female arrest rates, suggesting that blacks are as much more dangerous than whites as men are more dangerous than women.

## Arrests for Murder

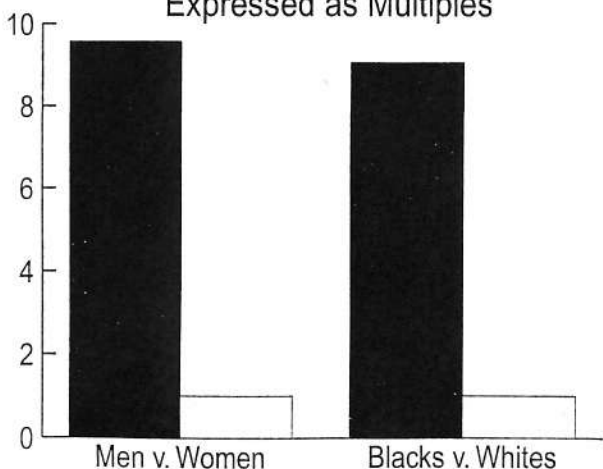
Expressed as Multiples



The first graph on this page shows arrest rates for men as multiples of arrest rates for women for the same crimes.<sup>16</sup> The differentials are roughly similar to those between blacks and whites. The next two graphs compare arrest rates for murder and robbery, and demonstrate that the black/white arrest multiple is almost as great as the male/female multiple. The last graph makes the same comparison for arrest rates for all violent crimes. (These figures have *not* been adjusted for the fact that Hispanics are included with whites. As we have seen, this adjustment lowers the white arrest rate by nearly 20 percent, and would make the black/white multiples *greater* than the male/female multiples.)

## Arrests for Robbery

Expressed as Multiples



## Arrests for All Violent Crimes

Expressed as Multiples





What does this mean? Although most people have no idea what the arrest rate multiples may be, they have an intuitive understanding that men are more violent and dangerous than women. If someone in unfamiliar circumstances is approached by a group of strange men he feels more uneasy than if he is approached by an otherwise similar group of strange women. No one would suggest that this uneasiness is "prejudice." It is common sense, born out by the objective reality that men are more dangerous than women.

In fact, it is just as reasonable to feel more uneasy when approached by blacks than by otherwise similar whites; the difference in danger as reflected by arrest rates is virtually the same. It is rational to fear blacks more than whites, just as it is rational to fear men more than women. Whatever additional precautions a person would feel are justified because a potential assailant was male rather than female are, from a statistical point of view, equally justified if a potential assailant is black rather than white.

Likewise, there is now much controversy about so-called "racial profiling," by the police, that is, the practice of questioning blacks in disproportionate numbers in the expectation that they are more likely than people of other races to be criminals. This is just as rational and productive as "age" or "sex profiling." Police would be wasting their time if they stopped and questioned as many old ladies as they do young men. It is the job of the police to catch criminals, and they know from experience who is likely to be an offender. Americans who do not question the wisdom of police officers who notice a possible suspect's age or sex should not be surprised to learn that officers also notice race.

### Conclusions

Two things can be said about most of the information in this report: It is easily discovered but little known. Every year, the FBI issues its report on hate crimes, and distributes thousands of copies to scholars and the media. Why does no one find it odd that hundreds of whites are reportedly committing hate crimes against whites? And why does no one question the wisdom of calling someone white when he

is a perpetrator but Hispanic when he is a victim? (An FBI spokesman refused to discuss the reasons for this by telephone and insisted on an exchange of letters. His reply is provided below.<sup>17</sup>)

For some years there has been an extended national discussion about the prevalence of black-on-black crime—and for good reason. Blacks suffer from violent crime at rates considerably greater than do Americans of other races. And yet, amid this national outcry over the extent of black-on-black crime, there appears to be little concern about the fact that there is actually more black-on-white crime. Nor does there seem to be much interest in the fact that blacks are 50 to 200 times more likely than whites to commit interracial crimes of violence.

Everyone knows that young people are more dangerous than old people and that men are more dangerous than women. We adjust our behavior accordingly and do not apologize for doing so. Why must we then pretend that blacks are no more dangerous than whites or Asians? And, of course, it is no more than pretense. Everyone knows that blacks are dangerous, and everyone—black or white—takes greater precautions in black neighborhoods or even avoids such neighborhoods entirely.

The answer to these questions lies in the current intellectual climate. Americans are extremely hesitant to "perpetuate stereotypes," and generally take care not to draw or publicize conclusions that may reflect badly on racial minorities. This is understandable, but has reached the point that certain subjects can no longer be investigated without bringing down charges of "racism." Needless to say, research that reflects badly on the majority population is not constrained by the same fears. However, our willingness to ignore sensibilities should not be selective. Violent crime and interracial violence are important, agonizing concerns in this country, and we cannot begin to formulate solutions unless we understand the problems. ●

### References

<sup>17</sup>U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1994* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1997), pp. 41, 45.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Hate Crime Statistics 1997* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1999).

<sup>3</sup>*Hate Crime Statistics 1997*, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>Ron Russel and Victor Mejia, "City of Fear," *New Times* (Los Angeles), Feb. 12-18, 1998, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup>Patty Sullivan, "Anchorage Man Gunned Down in Spenard," *Anchorage Daily News*, Nov. 22, 1997, p. D1. Peter Porco, "Murder Suspect Acquitted," *Anchorage Daily News*, Dec. 12, 1998, p. E1.

<sup>6</sup>Offense Report, Case No. 97123655, Palm Beach County (Fla.) Sheriff's Office.

<sup>7</sup>Gloria Padilla, Murder Trial Defendant Misses Court Appearance, San Antonio Express-News, March 11, 1997.

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Criminal Victimization 1997* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1998), p. 3.

<sup>9</sup>U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States 1997* [known as Uniform Crime Reports or UCR] (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1998), pp. 33, 36.

<sup>10</sup>Arrest information by race is from *Crime in the United States 1997*, p. 240.

<sup>11</sup>*Criminal Victimization in the United States*, 1994, p. 40.

<sup>12</sup>According to the UCR, blacks are arrested for violent crimes at 4.72 times the rate at which whites are arrested. This multiple is shown on the graph on page 10. How does this figure compare with the number of blacks who are reported to be committing crimes in the NCVS? In order to make a comparison we must make certain assumptions about the NCVS figures. Since police concentrate their efforts on making arrests in cases of completed rather than threatened or attempted violence, it makes sense to use the NCVS numbers for completed violence. At the same time, NCVS figures pose a problem in that they do not report the number of offenders in multiple-offender crimes (see Appendix A, page 2.) In comparing UCR arrest figures to NCVS reported offenses, we are comparing the racial proportions of persons arrested with the racial proportions of people reported by the public to be committing crimes. It is therefore necessary to make an assumption about the average number of assailants in multiple-offender crimes. Since the

black disproportions in NCVS-reported violent crimes are even greater in multiple-offender crimes, a high estimate for the number of offenders in such crimes increases the number of black offenders as compared to white. All multiple-offender crimes have at least two perpetrators, and an estimate of three participants in each such crime is probably conservative, and keeps the black disproportion lower than a higher estimate would.

Using this figure of three, and using NCVS-reported data for completed crimes of violence, we find that blacks are reported by the public to be committing such crimes at 4.77 times the white rate (the reader can make this calculation himself, using the data in Appendix A.). This figure is extremely close to the 4.72 multiple of the white rate at which blacks are arrested. It would be hard to find stronger support for the view that police are not racially biased in their arrests but are simply arresting people of different races in essentially the same proportions as people of those races are reported by the public to be committing crimes of violence.

<sup>13</sup>Glayde Whitney, "Ideology and Censorship in Behavior Genetics," *Mankind Quarterly*, Summer, 1995, p. 338.

<sup>14</sup>U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1997* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1998), p. 253.

<sup>15</sup>*Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1997*, p. 494.

<sup>16</sup>*Crime in the United States 1997*, p. 239.

<sup>17</sup>"First, you ask why 'Hispanics are a distinct victim category but are not a distinct perpetrator category?' The answer to your question is that under the current Hate Crime Data Collection Program we do not collect information concerning ethnicity for either the victim or the offender. The primary focus of the hate crime program is on the type of offense and the bias motivation. Ethnicity is of interest only as it relates to the bias motivation for a particular criminal offense. The fact that an anti-Hispanic hate crime was reported does not necessarily imply that the victim was of Hispanic origin. Only the offender's perception or bias motivation is being reported." [David R. Loesch, Deputy Assistant Director (FBI), letter dated March 30, 1999.]

Table 42. Personal crimes of violence, 1994:

**Percent distribution of single-offender victimizations,  
based on race of victims, by type of crime  
and perceived race of offender**

Type of crime and race of victim	Number of single-offender victimizations	Total	Percent of single-offender victimizations Perceived race of offender				Not known and not available
			White	Black	Other		
<b>Crimes of violence</b>							
White	6,830,360	100 %	72.9 %	16.7 %	8.8 %		1.6 %
Black	1,100,490	100 %	12.3	80.4	5.4		1.9 *
<b>Completed violence</b>							
White	1,804,450	100 %	74.4	14.8	9.3		1.5
Black	389,040	100 %	6.7	89.3	1.3 *		2.7 *
<b>Attempted/threatened violence</b>							
White	5,025,910	100 %	72.4	17.3	8.6		1.7
Black	711,450	100 %	15.4	75.5	7.7		1.4 *
<b>Rape/Sexual assault:</b>							
White	313,080	100 %	78.4	10.1	8.5		2.9 *
Black	53,670	100 %	10.1 *	83.5	6.4 *		0.0 *
<b>Robbery</b>							
White	472,410	100 %	45.5	36.7	13.6		4.3 *
Black	180,430	100 %	6.2 *	89.1	1.4 *		3.3 *
<b>Completed/property taken</b>							
White	235,670	100 %	48.3	36.6	11.0		4.1 *
Black	144,570	100 %	5.9 *	88.2	1.8 *		4.1 *
<b>With injury</b>							
White	83,990	100 %	58.5	24.6 *	5.5 *		11.4 *
Black	43,030	100 %	5.9 *	88.1	6.0 *		0.0 *
<b>Without injury</b>							
White	151,680	100 %	42.6	43.3	14.1 *		0.0 *
Black	101,540	100 %	5.8 *	88.3	0.0 *		5.9 *
<b>Attempted to take property</b>							
White	236,740	100 %	42.7	36.7	16.1		4.5 *
Black	35,870	100 %	7.5 *	92.5	0.0 *		0.0 *
<b>With injury</b>							
White	60,490	100 %	42.1	32.1 *	18.7 *		7.1 *
Black	10,740 *	100 %*	25.1 *	74.9 *	0.0 *		0.0 *
<b>Without injury</b>							
White	176,260	100 %	42.8	38.3	15.2		3.7 *
Black	25,130	100 %	0.0 *	100.0	0.0 *		0.0 *
<b>Assault</b>							
White	6,044,870	100 %	74.8	15.4	8.5		1.3
Black	866,390	100 %	13.7	78.4	6.2		1.7 *
<b>Aggravated</b>							
White	1,346,850	100 %	66.3	20.4	11.2		2.1
Black	288,750	100 %	14.9	80.8	4.3 *		0.0 *
<b>Simple</b>							
White	4,698,020	100 %	77.2	14.0	7.7		1.1
Black	577,630	100 %	13.1	77.2	7.1		2.5 *

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding.

\* Estimate is based on about 10 or fewer sample cases.

Includes verbal threats of rape and threats of sexual assault.

Table 47. Personal crimes of violence, 1994:

**Percent distribution of multiple-offender victimizations,  
by type of crime, age of victims and perceived age of offenders**

Type of crime and age of victim	Number of multiple- offender victimizations	Percent of all multiple-offender victimizations						
		Total	Perceived age of offenders					Not known and not available
			All under 12	All 12-20	All 21-29	All 30 and over	Mixed ages	
<b>Crimes of violence</b>								
12-19	984,590	100 %	0.5 % *	71.0 %	3.4 %	1.1 % *	18.0 %	6.0 %
20-34	879,580	100 %	0.5 *	30.9	23.8	6.5	31.5	6.7
35-49	445,530	100 %	0.0 *	29.5	8.8	16.4	33.0	12.3
50-64	91,290	100 %	0.0 *	47.6	12.0 *	17.3 *	16.0 *	7.2 *
65 and over	43,530	100 %	5.0 *	55.5	9.4 *	5.3 *	10.3 *	14.4 *
<b>Robbery</b>								
12-19	193,760	100 %	1.1 *	81.1	5.6 *	0.0 *	9.0 *	3.2 *
20-34	216,800	100 %	0.0 *	31.7	21.5	6.6 *	34.3	5.9 *
35-49	124,200	100 %	0.0 *	29.5	7.5 *	11.9 *	40.7	10.4 *
50-64	27,640	100 %	0.0 *	32.9 *	15.2 *	33.1 *	10.6 *	8.3 *
65 and over	24,040	100 %	0.0 *	55.5 *	17.1 *	0.0 *	18.7 *	8.7 *
<b>Assault</b>								
12-19	778,500	100 %	0.3 *	69.0	2.9	1.4 *	19.6	6.8
20-34	646,180	100 %	0.7 *	31.1	24.7	6.6	30.1	6.9
35-49	312,250	100 %	0.0 *	29.7	8.8	17.9	30.2	13.4
50-64	63,650	100 %	0.0 *	54.0	10.6 *	10.4 *	18.3 *	6.8 *
65 and over	17,520 *	100 % *	12.5 *	61.7 *	0.0 *	13.3 *	0.0 *	12.6 *

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding.

\* Estimate is based on about 10 or fewer sample cases.

Includes data on rape and sexual assault, not shown separately.

Table 48. Personal crimes of violence, 1994:

**Percent distribution of multiple-offender victimizations  
by type of crime, race of victims and perceived race of offenders**

Type of crime and race of victim	Number of multiple- offender victimizations	Percent of multiple-offender victimizations					
		Perceived race of offenders					Not known and not available
		Total	All white	All black	All other	Mixed races	
<b>Crimes of violence:</b>							
White	1,894,160	100 %	47.4 %	24.3 %	7.9 %	15.5 %	5.0 %
Black	434,570	100 %	6.9	72.9	4.3 *	13.1	2.9 *
<b>Robbery</b>							
White	374,080	100 %	28.0	40.8	8.9	18.2	4.1 *
Black	173,700	100 %	2.1 *	87.2	1.5 *	7.1 *	2.1 *
<b>Assault</b>							
White	1,492,130	100 %	52.0	20.2	7.6	14.9	5.3
Black	248,850	100 %	9.2	64.5	6.4 *	16.4	3.5 *

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding.

\* Estimate is based on about 10 or fewer sample cases.

Includes data on rape and sexual assault, not shown separately.



# Appendix B

11-1 (12-1-92)

<b>HATE CRIME INCIDENT REPORT</b>																																																																																							
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2 Business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6 Society / Public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																																																																											
3 Financial Institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7 Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																																																																											
4 Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8 Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																																																																											
						Total # of Victims	<input type="text"/>																																																																																
*Indicate the total number of individual victims involved in the incident. <input type="text"/>																																																																																							
<b>Number of Offenders</b> <input type="text"/> (Use "00" for "Unknown")																																																																																							
<b>Suspected Offenders' Race as a Group (Check one)</b>																																																																																							
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%;">           1 <input type="checkbox"/> White            2 <input type="checkbox"/> Black         </div> <div style="width: 30%;">           3 <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian / Alaskan Native            4 <input type="checkbox"/> Asian / Pacific Islander         </div> <div style="width: 30%;">           5 <input type="checkbox"/> Multi - Racial Group            6 <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown         </div> </div>																																																																																							

FBI, *Hate Crime Resource Book*, 1990, p. 74.

PAGE 5959  
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04/15/93

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