

## Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report

# Violent State Prisoners and Their Victims

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ACQUISITIONS

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The 1986 Survey of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities, in interviews with a nationally representative sample of inmates, collected information from the violent offenders about their victims. The 245,562 offenders serving time in State prisons for crimes of violence had victimized an estimated 409,000 persons: about 79,300 victims killed, 51,100 victims sexually assaulted, 201,200 victims robbed, 56,400 assaulted, and 20,400 victims suffering other types of violence.

While nearly a third of violent male offenders reported that they were serving a sentence for robbing a stranger, more than a quarter of the violent female offenders were in prison for killing a relative or intimate. Eighty-nine percent of white offenders said that they had victimized another white, compared to 49% of black inmates who reported victimizing another black.

Other findings from the survey include:

- Violent offenders did not differ significantly from nonviolent offenders in sex, ethnicity, age, marital status, or education. However, violent offenders were more likely to be black (51%) than were nonviolent offenders (42% black).

- About 1 in 4 violent offenders (27%) was imprisoned for an offense that had led to a victim's death. Nearly half of the violent female inmates had killed their victim.

- Of all violent offenders, 59% reported not knowing their victim, 24% said they knew the victim very well or as an acquaintance, 10% said the victim was a relative, and 7% described the victim as an intimate (exspouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend).

- More than 5 out of 10 violent offenders reported that the victim or victims were male, almost 4 out of 10 had only female victims, and 1 out of 10 reported both male and female victims. Three-quarters of the violent victimizations involving both sexes were robberies.

- Almost 65% of violent prisoners reported that the victim was white, 28% reported having black victims only, and 3% identified their victims as Native American or Asian. Another 5% said their crimes involved multiple victims of differing races: 76% of these multiple-race victimizations were robberies.

- Imprisoned violent offenders reported victimizing more than 40,000 persons under age 18. Of these young victims, 71% were raped or sexually assaulted.

- Violent offenders with the most extensive criminal histories were the most likely to have victimized a stranger. Conversely, first-time offenders were the most likely to have victimized a relative or intimate.

- About a quarter of the women serving time for a violent offense said that a spouse or relative was their victim. Nearly 35% of the women without a prior criminal

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Victims of violence and violent offenders are topics of increasing importance to policymakers and the public at large. This Special Report provides the first detailed examination of the characteristics of persons victimized by violent offenders in State prisons. Analysis of the responses from a nationally representative sample of State prisoners furthers our understanding of victim risks and helps to define more precisely the nature of violent crime.

Data obtained from the 1986 Survey of State Prison Inmates are available through the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the University of Michigan. We gratefully acknowledge the cooperation of State prison officials who made this survey possible and look forward to their continued participation in the next survey to be conducted in 1991.

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history reported victimizing a spouse or relative, compared to 13% of the female inmates with a prior criminal history.

- Over two-thirds of the violent inmates reported that either they or the victims were using alcohol or drugs at the time of the crime.

## Surveys of State prison inmates

National surveys of inmates of State correctional facilities were conducted in 1974, 1979, and 1986. The Bureau of the Census carried out the interviews and collected the data under the sponsorship and direction of the Bureau of Justice Statistics. In each survey, a sample of inmates responded to questions about personal background, employment, criminal history, and drug or alcohol use.

### Victimization research

Surveys of crime victims dramatically changed the nature of research on crime. Before the introduction of the surveys, researchers had only selected information on crimes reported to authorities. Survey interviews, however, allowed a sample of the general public to tell their own experiences as victims of crime.

Since 1972 the main source of victim information has been the continuing National Crime Survey (NCS). Fueled by the NCS data, a substantial body of research on criminal victimization has developed.

Research results have shown that victimization is not evenly distributed across the general population but is strongly affected by such factors as sex, race, and age. For instance, significantly higher rates of victimization have been documented for males, younger people, and non-whites.\* Information from victims has thus been used to describe how the pattern of risk of being a crime victim is associated with components of the population and how those risks have changed over time.

This report relies on another source of information about crime victims: the self-reports of offenders convicted of violently victimizing others. The unique contribution of the survey of State prison inmates is that it provides substantial detail on those victimizations that are the most serious for victims but that occur the least often. This approach complements the data from victim surveys and allows a more precise description of the pattern of violent crime.

\*See *Criminal victimization in the United States* (annual), BJS Bulletin and tome.

In 1986 inmates who were serving a sentence for a violent offense were asked about their victims. This report presents the information from the inmates about their victims' sex, age, race, and relationship to them, as well as the offenses involved. This inmate survey is the first to use a national sample to collect information comparable to that from victim surveys. (See the box on this page about research on victims of crime.)

### Violent and nonviolent offenders in State prisons

A previous BJS report indicated that an estimated 55% of State prison inmates in 1986 were serving time for a violent offense (*Profile of State prison inmates, 1986*, January 1988, NCJ-109926). These offenders who were convicted of a violent crime differed only slightly from the nonviolent inmate population in their sex, ethnicity, age, marital status, and education (table 1). Among inmates sentenced for a violent offense, however, a larger percentage were black (50.7%) than white (45.5%); among those sentenced for a nonviolent offense, white inmates predominated (54.7% white versus 42.3% black).

Violent offenders of different sexes and races also tended to be serving time for different types of crimes (table 2).

**Table 1. Characteristics of inmates in State prison for violent or nonviolent offenses, 1986**

Inmate characteristic	All inmates	Current offense	
		Non-violent	Violent
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	95.6%	94.3%	96.7%
Female	4.4	5.7	3.3
<b>Race</b>			
White	49.7%	54.7%	45.5%
Black	46.9	42.3	50.7
Other	3.4	2.9	3.8
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
Hispanic	12.6%	13.3%	12.1%
Non-Hispanic	87.4	86.7	87.9
<b>Age</b>			
Younger than 18	.5%	.6%	.4%
18-24	26.7	29.8	24.4
25-34	45.7	45.8	45.6
35-44	19.4	17.5	21.0
45-54	5.2	4.8	5.6
55-64	1.8	1.4	2.2
65 or older	.8	.4	.8
<b>Marital status</b>			
Married	20.3%	21.8%	19.1%
Widowed	1.9	1.0	2.6
Divorced	18.1	16.9	19.0
Separated	6.0	5.9	6.1
Never married	53.7	54.4	53.2
<b>Education</b>			
Less than 12 years	61.6%	60.1%	62.9%
12 or more years	38.4	39.9	37.1
<b>Number of inmates</b>	450,416	204,854	245,562

**Table 2. Violent offenders in State prisons, by race and sex, 1986**

Most serious violent offense	State prison inmates serving a sentence for a violent offense							
	All inmates	Male			Female			
		Total	White	Black	Other	Total	White	Black
<b>Total</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Homicide</b>	26.5%	25.7%	26.6%	25.0%	24.4%	48.7%	51.2%	45.9%
Murder	20.8	20.2	21.1	19.5	18.7	32.0	35.7	27.2
Manslaughter	5.9	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.7	16.7	15.5	18.7
<b>Sexual assault</b>	16.0%	18.5%	21.0%	12.1%	19.8%	2.7%	4.5%	.9%
Forcible rape	7.7	8.0	7.6	8.2	9.1	.6	.9	0
Statutory rape	.4	.4	.8	.2	.4	.2	.4	0
Sexual assault	5.5	5.6	8.3	3.0	7.4	.9	1.4	.5
Lewd act with child	2.4	2.4	4.3	.7	2.9	1.0	1.6	.4
<b>Robbery</b>	38.2%	38.6%	31.6%	45.3%	33.0%	26.0%	25.1%	27.9%
Armed robbery	34.3	34.7	28.7	40.4	31.1	22.0	22.4	22.5
Unarmed robbery	3.9	3.9	2.9	4.9	2.0	4.1	2.7	5.4
<b>Assault</b>	14.7%	14.6%	15.4%	14.0%	15.2%	17.4%	12.6%	21.1%
Aggravated assault	13.8	13.7	14.2	13.2	14.4	16.6	12.3	19.8
Simple assault	.5	.5	.6	.5	.4	.4	0	.8
Assault on police officer	.4	.4	.6	.3	.4	.4	.3	.5
<b>Other violence</b>	4.5%	4.5%	5.5%	3.5%	7.6%	5.1%	6.6%	4.1%
Kidnaping	3.1	3.2	3.4	2.7	5.6	2.2	3.2	1.4
Extortion and intimidation	.4	.5	.5	.3	1.6	.1	.2	0
Child abuse	.5	.4	.6	.2	0	2.7	2.9	2.5
Other	.5	.5	.8	.3	.4	.2	.3	.2

Note: The table excludes 147 cases for which race, sex, or offense was not reported. The table columns exclude women of "other" races (weighted n = 343)

because of the small number of unweighted cases; "other" females are included in the total for all inmates.

Regardless of race, nearly half of all women in prison for a violent offense had been convicted of homicide. The men in prison for a violent offense were most likely to be serving time for robbery. Of the black men convicted of a violent crime, 45.3% were in prison for robbery, compared to 31.6% of the violent white male offenders. Of the white men convicted of a violent crime, 21.0% were convicted of rape or other sexual assaults, compared to 12.1% of violent black male inmates.

### Victims of violence

Inmates serving time for homicide, robbery, or assault, representing nearly 80% of violent offenders, were more likely than other violent offenders to report having victimized males (table 3). Those who were convicted of a sexual assault or "other violent offense," which includes kidnapping and child abuse, more often reported that their victim was female. Inmates serving time for a sexual assault were also more likely than inmates convicted of other violent offenses to report that their victim was a minor; approximately half of the sex offenders reported that their victim was younger than age 18.

Inmates serving time for homicide, sexual assault, or assault were more likely than convicted robbers to report a close relationship with their victim. Almost a quarter of the inmates serving time for homicide or assault, and a third of those sentenced for a sexual assault, were convicted of attacking a relative or an intimate acquaintance such as an exspouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend. Another third of inmates serving time for homicide, assault, or sexual assault said that they had known their victim.

Robbery, the largest of the violent crime categories, primarily involved victims who were strangers to the offenders (85.4%). Less than 3% of imprisoned robbers reported that the victim had been a relative or intimate acquaintance. Overall, robbers accounted for an estimated 55% of all the imprisoned violent offenders who reported having victimized strangers.

Violent State prison inmates described the characteristics of over 400,000 victims, when multiple victimizations are taken into account. (See the box on page 8 for additional detail.) About a quarter of the in-

**Table 3. Violent offenders in State prisons, by offense and selected victim characteristics, 1986**

Victim characteristics	Type of current offense					
	All violent offenses	Homicide*	Rape/sexual assault	Robbery	Assault	Other
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sex of victim(s)						
Males	53.0%	70.4%	11.0%	55.6%	68.2%	39.4%
Females	39.0	26.4	67.0	29.4	24.6	52.3
Both	8.1	3.2	2.0	14.9	7.2	8.4
Race of victim(s)						
White	64.6%	59.6%	73.6%	66.7%	55.3%	70.9%
Black	27.5	36.0	21.6	20.7	36.3	20.8
Other	3.3	3.0	3.5	3.7	2.8	1.9
Mixed	4.7	1.4	1.3	8.8	3.6	6.3
Age of victim(s)						
Minor	12.5%	6.1%	50.7%	1.7%	5.1%	19.9%
Adult	83.9	90.6	46.8	94.3	91.0	76.1
Both	3.6	3.3	2.5	4.0	3.9	4.0
Relationship of victim(s) to the inmate						
Close	17.2%	23.7%	34.4%	2.6%	23.0%	18.1%
Relative	10.3	15.3	24.6	.4	9.7	11.0
Intimate	6.9	8.5	9.8	2.2	13.2	7.1
Known	24.0%	33.5%	30.0%	12.0%	32.5%	21.4%
Well known	10.2	16.5	14.9	3.2	11.1	10.7
Acquaintance**	13.8	17.0	15.2	8.7	21.3	10.7
Stranger	58.8%	42.7%	35.6%	85.4%	44.6%	60.5%

Note: For sex, race, and age of the victim the categories "both" and "mixed" refer only to multiple victim crimes where the characteristics of the victims differed. The relationship of the victim to the offender is based on the closest relation from among the multiple victims, if they differed. See *Methodology* for further details.

\*Includes murder and negligent and nonnegligent manslaughter.  
\*\*Includes acquaintances and persons known by sight only.

**Table 4. Number of victims per offender, by offense, 1986**

Offenses	Number of offenders	Percent of offenders with:			Average number of victims per offender
		1 victim	2 victims	3 or more victims	
All	245,562	74.0%	15.7%	10.3%	1.67
Murder	50,552	85.6	10.2	4.2	1.23
Manslaughter	14,421	88.4	7.8	3.8	1.20
Rape/sexual assault	39,307	82.5	12.0	5.5	1.30
Robbery	93,838	61.7	21.7	16.6	2.15
Assault	36,191	73.1	15.7	11.2	1.56
Other	11,253	75.8	14.9	9.3	1.82

Note: The average number of victims per offender was rounded to two decimal places. The estimated

total number of victims was 408,936.

mates reported that there was more than one victim of their offense (table 4). Nearly 40% of the imprisoned robbers reported being sentenced for robbing multiple victims.

### The victims of violent male offenders

Most men serving a State sentence for a violent crime reported that they had victimized other adults, men, and persons who were strangers to them (table 5).

Among men, nearly 90% of the white inmates said they had been sentenced for victimizing another white, compared to about 49% of the black inmates who reported having victimized another black. The black inmates were more likely than the whites to report having victimized a stranger — 63.8% of the violent black offenders versus 54.7% of the violent white inmates. The white inmates were more likely than the black inmates to report being convicted of victimizing relatives (14.6% of violent white inmates versus 5.6% of violent black inmates) or of victimizing minors (18.8% versus 6.8%).

Nearly a third (32.6%) of the men in State prisons were serving time for the robbery of a stranger (table 6). The black inmates were more likely than the whites to report that they were serving time for robbing a stranger. The next largest group of violent male inmates, those sentenced for killing a stranger, represented about 12% of all such inmates. A higher percentage of white male inmates (21.8%), compared to black male inmates (11.9%), had victimized someone with whom they had a close relationship — a relative or intimate acquaintance. Most of this difference came from the higher percentage of white male inmates who had been convicted of killing or sexually assaulting a relative or intimate.

### The victims of violent female offenders

Women in State prison for a violent crime were more likely to report that they had victimized adults and men. The women were equally likely to have victimized a stranger or someone with whom they had a close relationship (table 7).

The white women were more likely than the black women to report having victimized someone of the same race. An estimated 92% of the white women reported victimizing a white, and 68% of the black women reported victimizing a black. As among the men, the white female inmates were more likely than the black female inmates to have been convicted of harming a minor.

**Table 5. Violent male State prison inmates, by race of offender and selected victim characteristics, 1986**

Victim characteristic	Violent male inmates			
	All	White	Black	Other
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sex of victim(s)				
Male	52.7%	49.9%	55.2%	52.6%
Female	39.1	41.8	36.7	40.5
Both	8.2	8.4	8.1	6.8
Race of victim(s)				
White	64.8%	89.4%	43.1%	59.6%
Black	27.1	4.7	46.7	8.2
Other	3.3	2.4	2.4	26.8
Mixed	4.7	3.5	5.8	5.4
Age of victim(s)				
Minor	12.5%	18.8%	6.8%	11.9%
Adult	83.9	76.8	90.5	82.3
Both	3.6	4.5	2.6	5.8
Relationship of victim to offender				
Close	16.5%	21.8%	11.8%	15.1%
Relative	9.8	14.6	5.6	8.6
Intimate	6.7	7.2	6.3	6.6
Known	24.0%	23.4%	24.4%	25.2%
Well known	10.1	10.3	9.9	11.3
Acquaintance*	13.8	13.1	14.4	13.9
Stranger	59.5%	54.7%	63.8%	59.6%

Note: Sex, race, age, and relationship to offender have been categorized as in table 3.  
\*Includes acquaintances and persons known by sight only.

**Table 7. Violent female State prison inmates, by race of offender and selected victim characteristics, 1986**

Victim characteristic	Violent female inmates		
	All	White	Black
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sex of victim(s)			
Male	61.4%	63.3%	60.4%
Female	34.1	32.7	34.6
Both	4.5	4.0	4.9
Race of victim(s)			
White	57.1%	91.7%	26.5%
Black	38.9	3.5	68.4
Other	3.3	2.7	2.0
Mixed	2.6	2.2	3.0
Age of victim(s)			
Minor	12.6%	16.6%	9.4%
Adult	84.8	80.1	88.5
Both	2.6	3.3	2.1
Relationship of victim to offender			
Close	36.7%	40.5%	33.3%
Relative	23.9	32.1	16.5
Intimate	12.8	8.3	16.0
Known	26.2%	23.4%	26.5%
Well known	12.4	11.0	13.7
Acquaintance*	13.8	12.4	14.8
Stranger	37.1%	36.1%	38.2%

Note: Sex, race, age, and relationship to the offender have been categorized as in table 3.  
Women of "other" races are not shown separately because of the small number of cases.  
\*Includes acquaintances and persons known by sight only.

**Table 6. Relationship of violent male offenders to their victims, by offense and race of State prison inmates, 1986**

Victims' relationship to offender	Violent male inmates			
	All	White	Black	Other
Total	100.0	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Close	16.6%	21.8%	11.9%	15.2%
Homicide*	5.8	6.9	4.7	6.1
Sexual assault	5.9	9.5	2.7	5.3
Robbery	1.0	.9	1.1	.8
Assault	3.0	3.4	2.8	1.9
Other	.9	1.1	.6	1.3
Known	24.0%	23.5%	24.4%	25.2%
Homicide*	9.0	6.7	9.2	6.2
Sexual assault	5.2	6.0	4.2	6.1
Robbery	4.5	3.8	5.4	2.8
Assault	4.2	3.7	4.7	4.8
Other	1.1	1.3	.9	1.3
Stranger	59.5%	54.7%	63.7%	59.6%
Homicide*	11.6	11.4	12.0	8.4
Sexual assault	6.1	6.2	5.9	7.4
Robbery	32.6	26.5	38.3	29.3
Assault	8.0	6.9	5.0	8.3
Other	3.2	3.7	2.5	6.2

\* Includes murder and negligent and nonnegligent manslaughter.

Female violent offenders of all races, but especially whites, were more likely than male counterparts to report that they had had a close relationship with their victim. Almost 37% of the violent female inmates had victimized a relative or an intimate acquaintance (table 8). Among women convicted of a violent offense against a relative or intimate acquaintance, nearly three-fourths (26.3% of all violent women) had been convicted of homicide.

Among the white women in prison for a violent offense, 28.6% reported having killed a relative or intimate; among the black women, 24.7%. Except for robbery of a stranger, reported by nearly 20% of the female violent offenders, killing a stranger (11.2%) or someone known casually (13.2%) were the most commonly reported offenses. In contrast to the association of race, offense, and victim-offender relationship for male inmates, the white and black female inmates differed little in the type of offense and in how well they knew their victim.

#### Interracial violence and the relationship of offender and victim

The victim-offender relationship for each type of offense helps to account for differences in the pattern of interracial violence. Among white inmates of both sexes sentenced for killing one person, over 90% had a victim of their own race; over 86% of black women convicted of the murder of one person reported having killed a black victim (table 9).

By contrast, among black men serving time for a single victim murder about a third reported having a nonblack victim. Nearly a fourth of black men (24.2%) sentenced to prison for a murder said that their victim was a stranger of a different race. Compared to black men in prison for murder, white men convicted of murder were about as likely to have killed a stranger but were far less likely to report that the victim differed from them in race (4.5% of the white male inmates serving time for murder versus 24.2% of the black male inmates).

Single victim robberies resembled murder in interracial patterns of victimization described by the inmates. About 90% of white men and women serving time for robbery reported that their victims were also white. Among black inmates about a third of both sexes said that their victims were of their own race.

Among male robbers of all races, 80% said they had robbed a stranger. Among the black male robbers, 57.3% — or about 7 of every 10 robbers who had victimized strangers — reported robbing a stranger of a different race. Among the white male

robbers, 9.5% — or about 1 in every 8 robbers who had victimized strangers — reported robbing a stranger of a different race.

#### Prior convictions, offenses, and victims

Among inmates serving a sentence for a violent offense, men were more likely than women to have been convicted previously and to have accumulated multiple prior convictions (table 10). About three-quarters of the male violent offenders had at least one prior conviction and over a third

**Table 8. Relationship of violent female offenders to their victims, by offense and race of State prison inmates, 1986**

Victims' relationship to offender	Violent female inmates		
	All	White	Black
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Close	36.7%	40.4%	33.3%
Homicide*	26.3	28.6	24.7
Sexual assault	1.9	3.5	0
Robbery	1.8	1.8	1.8
Assault	4.1	3.9	4.0
Other	2.7	2.6	2.8
Known	26.2%	24.3%	26.6%
Homicide*	13.2	13.2	14.0
Sexual assault	1.0	1.2	.8
Robbery	3.9	4.5	3.2
Assault	6.8	3.7	9.6
Other	1.3	1.7	1.0
Stranger	37.2%	36.1%	38.2%
Homicide*	11.2	11.0	10.2
Sexual assault	.2	.2	.2
Robbery	19.7	19.1	21.4
Assault	4.3	3.9	4.7
Other	1.8	1.9	1.7

Note: Women of races other than white or black are not shown separately because of the small number of cases. They are included in the total. \*Includes murder and negligent and nonnegligent manslaughter.

**Table 10. First-time offenders, recidivists, and number of prior convictions, by sex, for State prison inmates, 1986**

	All inmates	Male inmates	Female inmates
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
First time offender	24.2%	23.3%	49.6%
Recidivist	75.8%	76.7%	50.4%
First violent offense	40.5	40.8	31.7
Prior violent offense	35.3	35.9	18.8
Number of prior convictions			
1	20.8%	20.9%	19.4%
2	16.2	16.4	10.6
3-5	22.7	23.0	12.3
6-10	10.7	10.9	5.4
More than 10	5.5	5.6	2.3

Note: The number of prior convictions is the sum of the number of prior sentences to probation, jail, youth institutions, and prison.

**Table 9. Selected characteristics of single victims of murder or robbery, by the sex and race of the offenders responsible, 1986**

	Sentenced for murder of one person				Sentenced for robbery of one person			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Race of victim								
White	92.1%	31.3%	92.3%	12.4%	89.4%	61.7%	90.7%	59.8%
Black	6.1	66.6	4.9	86.4	7.9	35.2	3.4	34.6
Other	1.9	2.2	2.8	1.1	2.8	3.1	5.9	5.5
Victim-offender relationship								
Close	22.1%	15.4%	55.5%	51.1%	.6%	.9%	4.2%	4.1%
Same race	21.6	14.1	53.3	49.6	.6	.7	4.2	4.1
Different race	.5	1.4	2.2	1.5	0	.2	0	0
Known	36.5%	39.4%	25.6%	30.3%	19.1%	18.4%	27.1%	16.6%
Same race	33.1	30.5	22.5	27.1	18.9	10.2	22.8	8.4
Different race	3.4	8.8	3.2	3.2	2.2	6.2	4.3	8.2
Stranger	41.4%	45.2%	18.7%	18.6%	80.3%	80.8%	68.7%	79.3%
Same race	36.8	21.0	15.7	9.6	70.8	23.5	61.5	18.3
Different race	4.5	24.2	3.0	8.9	9.5	57.3	7.2	61.0

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

had been previously convicted of a violent crime. Almost 50% of the female violent offenders were serving their first sentence, and 18.8% reported a previous conviction for violence. About 40% of the male inmates, but 20.0% of the female inmates, reported three or more prior convictions.

The type of offense for which inmates were serving time and their relationship to the victim varied with the extent of their reported criminal history. Men with an extensive conviction record were more likely than first-time offenders to have victimized a stranger (table 11). While 49.0% of violent male inmates serving their first sentence said that they had victimized a stranger, 62.8% of the recidivists in prison for a violent crime said that they had been convicted of an offense in which a stranger was the victim. Nearly 26% of the male first-time offenders committed their violent offense against a relative or intimate acquaintance, compared to 13.6% of recidivists.

More than half of the recidivists who had victimized a stranger (35.2% of all recidivists convicted of a violent offense) were serving a sentence for robbery of a stranger. Almost 4 of every 10 men with the most extensive criminal history, having been convicted at least 11 times, reported that they had robbed a stranger.

Female offenders, regardless of criminal background, were less likely than the men to report having victimized a stranger. About 30% of first-time offenders and 45.0% of recidivists said that their victim was a stranger (table 12). Nearly 35% of the violent women serving their first sentence — versus 13.0% of the female recidivists — reported that they had

victimized a spouse or relative. An estimated 41.4% of those women whose conviction for homicide was their first conviction reported that they had killed a spouse or relative, compared to less than 20% of the female recidivists serving time for homicide.

**Table 11. Victim-offender relationship and the offense, by the number of prior convictions for violent male State prison inmates, 1986**

Victim-offender relationship of offense	First timers	All recidivists	Male recidivists in prison				
			Number of prior convictions				
			1	2	3-5	6-10	More than 10
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Close	25.9%	13.6%	16.7%	11.7%	13.4%	12.0%	12.5%
Homicide	11.3	4.1	6.0	3.2	3.4	2.6	2.4
Sexual assault	6.6	5.0	6.8	4.4	5.2	2.9	3.5
Robbery	1.1	.9	.7	.9	1.1	.8	1.3
Assault	3.8	2.8	1.7	2.4	3.0	4.3	4.2
Other	1.0	.9	.8	.8	.7	1.4	1.0
Known	25.1%	23.6%	25.8%	25.4%	21.9%	21.7%	20.2%
Homicide	13.0	7.7	8.9	7.3	7.3	8.0	5.7
Sexual assault	6.0	4.9	5.6	6.0	3.8	3.8	5.8
Robbery	1.8	5.3	4.3	7.2	5.3	5.3	4.2
Assault	3.3	4.5	5.5	4.1	4.5	4.0	3.3
Other	1.0	1.1	1.5	.8	1.0	.6	1.3
Stranger	49.0%	62.8%	57.5%	62.9%	64.8%	66.2%	67.3%
Homicide	14.1	10.9	11.6	10.1	10.6	10.6	12.0
Sexual assault	5.2	6.4	7.0	5.7	6.5	6.4	2.3
Robbery	24.3	35.2	30.5	37.2	37.0	35.7	36.8
Assault	3.1	6.6	5.6	6.1	7.7	7.6	6.4
Other	2.4	3.5	2.8	3.7	3.1	3.9	5.7

**Table 12. Victim-offender relationship, by recidivism and offense for violent female State prison inmates, 1986**

Relationship of victim to offender-inmate	All female inmates	All first time inmates	First time offenders			Recidivists			
			Current offense			All recidivists	Current offense		
			Homicide*	Robbery	Assault			Homicide*	Robbery
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Spouse	10.3%	16.1%	23.1%	1.0%	13.3%	4.3%	7.5%	0	2.6%
Relative	13.7	18.6	18.3	2.3	11.3	6.7	11.8	1.8%	6.3
Ex-spouse	.5	.6	.8	0	1.9	.4	.5	0	.9
Intimate	12.2	11.0	14.0	3.4	10.0	13.5	22.9	5.7	11.3
Other well known	12.5	10.1	9.8	4.4	18.2	15.0	18.3	6.0	24.5
Acquaintance	13.7	14.1	14.7	5.5	22.5	13.2	11.0	12.0	21.7
Stranger	37.2	29.6	19.7	63.5	22.8	45.0	26.0	74.7	32.6

\*Includes murder and negligent and nonnegligent manslaughter.

## Drugs and alcohol

Most inmates reported that they, their victim, or both were drinking or using drugs at the time of the crime. Over half (54.3%) of the violent offenders said they had committed the offense while under the influence of drugs or alcohol (table 13). Drug use was highest among those violent offenders who victimized strangers and lowest among offenders victimizing a relative or intimate.

Nearly 30% of the violent inmates said they had perceived the victim to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the offense (table 14). Nearly 31% of the inmates who reported they were under the influence of alcohol said their victim was as well. Overall, an estimated 19.1% of violent offenders reported that both they and their victims had been using drugs or alcohol at the time of the offense, 34.4% of offenders reported that only they were using drugs or alcohol at the time of the offense, and 10.7% reported that only the victim had been using drugs or alcohol. Drug or alcohol use by the offender or victim figured in 64.2% of the violent offenses reported by the inmates.

Manslaughter was the crime for which the largest percentage of inmates described drug or alcohol use by the victim, by themselves, or by both — 75.7%. The smallest percentage of drug or alcohol use by the victim or offender at the time of the offense was reported by inmates serving time for a sexual assault; about half the inmates sentenced for sexual assault reported such involvement.

For those violent offenders who could identify their victim's drug or alcohol use, a majority of victims were using neither drugs nor alcohol, regardless of the offenders' use. When the victims were under the influence, however, inmates and victims had somewhat similar patterns of drug or alcohol use. For example, 25.6% of the offenders using drugs at the time of the crime had victimized someone also on drugs, and 40.3% of the offenders who were drinking had committed the crime against someone also drinking.

Victim using	Violent offenders who were using:			
	Drugs	Alcohol	Both	Neither
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Drugs	19.1	7.4	11.0	12.1
Alcohol	7.9	29.5	15.1	12.4
Both	6.5	10.8	17.2	6.0
Neither	66.5	52.3	56.7	69.5

**Table 13. Whether State prison inmates committed violent offenses under the influence of drugs or alcohol, by characteristics of the victims and victim-offender relationship, 1986**

	Total	Percent of inmates who committed offense under the influence of:			
		Drugs	Alcohol	Both	Neither
All cases	100%	13.6%	20.4%	20.3%	45.7%
Sex of victim(s)					
Male	100%	13.9%	20.5%	19.1%	46.5
Female	100	11.0	21.8	21.5	45.7
Both	100	23.7	13.3	22.3	40.7
Race of victim(s)					
White	100%	13.2%	21.2%	22.5%	43.1%
Black	100	11.5	19.8	15.8	53.3
Other	100	19.3	21.8	20.4	38.8
Mixed	100	25.0	9.4	18.8	47.0
Age of victim(s)					
Minor	100%	6.7%	18.5%	18.1%	56.6%
Adult	100	14.9	20.4	20.7	44.0
Both	100	9.6	19.0	25.0	48.4
Relationship					
Close	100%	6.3%	23.8%	16.0%	53.9%
Known	100	10.4	25.1	19.4	45.2
Stranger	100	16.9	17.5	21.9	43.7

**Table 14. Use of drugs or alcohol by State prison inmates and perceived use of drugs or alcohol by their victims at the time of the violent offense, 1986**

	Total	Murder	Man-slaughter	Rape	Sexual assault	Robbery	Assault	Other violent
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Offender using only drugs and victim using:	13.4%	9.3%	7.2%	6.8%	5.3%	20.7%	10.7%	13.3%
Drugs	2.1	1.8	2.4	1.2	.6	2.5	2.7	1.7
Alcohol	.8	.7	1.1	0	.5	1.1	.7	1.0
Both	.7	.6	1.2	.4	.4	.6	1.0	1.0
Neither	9.8	6.1	2.4	5.2	3.8	16.5	6.4	9.6
Offender using only alcohol and victim using:	20.1%	23.6%	32.4%	24.7%	20.9%	13.4%	24.5%	20.9%
Drugs	1.2	1.3	1.5	2.4	1.0	.8	1.7	1.0
Alcohol	4.9	7.3	14.1	5.0	3.0	1.8	7.6	2.7
Both	1.8	2.7	5.1	2.2	.7	.5	3.0	2.2
Neither	12.1	12.3	11.8	15.2	16.1	10.3	12.1	15.0
Offender using both drugs and alcohol and victim using:	20.0%	19.0%	12.8%	25.2%	19.6%	21.2%	17.9%	22.1%
Drugs	1.9	2.9	1.3	2.8	1.3	1.7	1.4	1.7
Alcohol	2.6	3.2	3.5	3.6	2.7	1.8	2.9	2.7
Both	3.0	4.2	3.3	4.2	3.4	1.4	4.2	3.4
Neither	12.5	8.8	4.7	14.7	12.2	16.3	9.4	14.3
Offender not using drugs or alcohol and victim using:	46.5%	48.1%	47.6%	43.3%	54.2%	44.7%	46.8%	43.6%
Drugs	4.3	5.7	6.5	2.3	1.5	3.7	6.7	1.6
Alcohol	4.3	5.2	10.4	2.4	1.6	3.3	7.0	1.4
Both	2.1	2.5	6.5	2.0	.9	1.0	3.5	1.4
Neither	35.6	34.7	24.3	36.7	50.2	36.8	29.8	39.2
Number of offenders	245,562	50,552	14,421	19,047	20,260	93,838	36,191	11,253

Note: When offenders reported they did not know whether the victim had been using drugs or alcohol, the victim was assumed not to have been using either.

### Characteristics of victims of violence

The estimated 245,562 violent offenders in State prisons in 1986 accounted for an estimated 408,936 victims of their offenses.

Offenders were asked to report on the characteristics of single and multiple or serial victims separately so that the characteristics of all reported victims could be described. Overall, 74% of the offenders reported one victim on their current imprisonment offense, 15.7 reported two victims, and 10.3% reported victimizing three or more persons. Weighting the descriptive information about the victims by the number of victims associated with each offender provides estimates of the crimes most likely to have been committed against victims with particular characteristics.

The percentage of murder victims of State prisoners was highest among

black victims, men, victims age 45 or older, and victims who were related to the offender (see table). Among black and male victims, manslaughter accounted for a higher percentage of offenses than among other groups of victims. Similarly, the percentage of manslaughter was higher among victims of violence age 18 to 29 and among victims who were relatives or intimates.

Sexual assault was most frequent among white violent crime victims, females, and children or youth younger than age 18. Victims who were related to the offender were substantially more likely than strangers to have been sexually assaulted.

Robbers, who accounted for 38.2% of violent offenders in State prisons, were responsible for nearly half (49.2%) of the victims of violence described by State prisoners. Robbery reflected the highest number of victims per offender,

2.1, compared to 1.2 victims per offender convicted of murder or manslaughter, 1.3 victims per offender serving time for rape or sexual assault, and 1.6 victims per assault offender. Approximately three-quarters of the victimizations involving multiple victims of different races or sexes were robberies.

An estimated 11.6% of the 408,936 victims of violence were robbed in incidents in which victims of both sexes and multiple races were victimized. Victims age 30 to 44 and strangers were also more likely than other victims of violence to have been robbed. Overall, about 41% of the victims of prisoner violence were stranger-robbery victims.

Assault was most prevalent among black victims, male victims, and victims age 30 to 44. Intimate victims were an estimated three times as likely as stranger-victims to have been victimized by an assault.

### Victims of violent offenses, by victim characteristics, 1986

Victim characteristics	Number of victims	Total	Type of offense					Other violence*
			Murder	Man-slaughter	Rape and other sexual assault	Robbery	Assault	
All victims	408,936	100%	15.2%	4.2%	12.5%	49.2%	13.6%	5.0%
<b>Race of victims</b>								
White	234,173	100%	17.6%	3.6%	17.0%	44.3%	13.0%	4.5%
Black	89,407	100	22.9	9.0	11.1	32.4	20.3	4.2
Other	11,158	100	16.9	6.2	13.7	50.7	10.0	2.6
Mixed**	74,198	100	3.0	1.4	2.9	78.4	10.0	6.3
<b>Sex of victims</b>								
Male	170,213	100%	24.2%	7.6%	4.3%	40.5%	20.9%	2.5%
Female	116,104	100	13.7	3.2	38.2	30.0	8.6	6.2
Both**	122,619	100	5.5	1.4	2.6	75.2	9.3	6.1
<b>Age of victims</b>								
<b>Single victims</b>								
Less than 12 years	12,269	100%	12.4%	6.6%	63.7%	1.2%	4.9%	11.1%
12-17	13,749	100	9.8	1.8	67.3	8.0	7.0	6.3
18-29	70,133	100	23.6	8.3	17.4	29.1	16.5	4.9
30-44	61,856	100	23.5	7.5	6.7	40.8	18.6	2.8
45 or older	31,258	100	37.6	7.4	5.0	30.0	8.8	2.1
<b>Multiple victims</b>								
Minors only	15,238	100	1.8	2.4	60.3	5.0	4.8	5.8
Adults only	180,358	100	7.9	2.1	3.0	67.7	14.8	4.5
Both**	24,273	100	19.0	1.2	10.3	46.7	11.4	11.3
<b>Relationship to offender***</b>								
Strangers	259,544	100%	10.7%	2.2%	7.2%	65.2%	10.2%	4.6%
Casual acquaintances	63,323	100	20.5	6.2	13.5	35.5	20.0	4.3
Well-known acquaintances	47,829	100	24.5	8.8	23.8	16.7	22.0	4.4
Relatives	27,915	100	29.7	9.5	41.3	1.3	12.7	5.5
Intimates	10,325	100	24.9	10.6	22.5	8.9	27.6	5.3

Note: Detail may not sum to total because of rounding.

\*Other violence includes extortion, intimidation, kidnapping, child abuse, hit-run driving with bodily injury,

and reckless endangerment.

\*\*For sex, race, and age of the victim the categories "mixed" and "both" refer only to multiple victim crimes where the characteristics of the victims differed.

\*\*\*Casual acquaintances include victims known by sight only. Well-known acquaintances include friends and former friends. Intimates include ex-spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends.



## Methodology

The Inmate surveys are conducted using a sample of inmates in State correctional facilities. The data are collected by the Bureau of the Census with the sponsorship of the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The sample design employed is a stratified two-stage selection with the probabilities proportional to the size of the correctional facility. The sample is selected independently from two frames, one for males only, and a second to allow an oversample of females. Within each frame, facilities are stratified by type (prison versus community corrections facility) and by census region. In the second stage, interviewers visit each selected facility and select a sample of inmates using predetermined sampling procedures. In 1986, plans called for 275 facilities and a sample of about 15,000. Of a total of 14,649 inmates selected for the survey, 13,711 were successfully interviewed.

With the information drawn from interviews with inmates, estimates of the entire inmate population can be developed. The development of such estimates requires a multistage process which begins with a basic weighting factor. This weighting factor is based upon the original probability of selection in the sample. The basic weight is then adjusted for variable rates of response, and with two different ratio adjustments. The first accounts for sample effects, and the second is intended to bring the sample population as closely as possible into agreement with the known distribution of the entire population.

The set of questions about victims was asked of each inmate whose "controlling offense" was a violent crime. The controlling offense is the most serious current offense, defined as the one with the longest sentence attached to it. Inmates were asked if there was one or more than one victim present and then were asked a series of questions tailored to the situation.

In the tables of this report, the victim's sex, race, and age are reported as they were by the inmate. In cases of multiple victims who all had the same characteristics, the victims were coded with single victims of the same type. The category of "males," for example, refers to one male alone or to a group of male victims. The category of "both" is reserved for more than one victim when all victims were not of the same sex. A similar technique was used in analyzing data on race and age of victims.

In the cases of victim relationship to the offender, the victim with the closest relation to the offender defined the relationship. For example, when more than one victim was present and a relative of the offender was among them, then the case was defined as the victimization of a relative.

Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Reports are principally prepared by BJS staff. This report was written by Christopher A. Innes and Lawrence A. Greenfeld. James Stephan provided statistical review. Thomas Hester edited the report. Marilyn Marbrook administered production, assisted by Yvonne Boston, Betty Sherman, Lallis Cotton, and Jayne Pugh. Data collection was carried out by the Bureau of the Census with the assistance of Marilyn Monahan, Susan Schecter-Ryan, Gregory Wells, and Rita Williamson under the supervision of Larry McGinn, Gertrude Odom, and Robert Tinarl.

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