SECTION V

Bank Robbery in the United States

Introduction

According to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, robbery is the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. The focus of this study, bank robbery, is a subtype of robbery targeted at banks. Because of this element of force or the threat of force, bank robbery is highly feared among the population.[1]

Some view robbery in the context of violence; others maintain that robbery offenders come from a subculture of theft.[2] Sometimes it is difficult to separate the two. The UCR Program classifies robbery as a crime against property and includes robbery in its violent crime total.

A bank robbery is indicated when the crime is robbery and the location is a financial institution. UCR-National Instant-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) standards state that the victims in a robbery can be either persons or entities, i.e., businesses, financial institutions, etc., or both.[3] In a bank robbery, the primary victim is the bank itself, but the teller being threatened or injured is also a victim.

A computation of UCR Summary data showed that a bank robbery occurred just under every 52 minutes in 2001, accounting for 2.4 percent of all robbery in the United States.[4] This represented a total loss of approximately $70 million. While this seems like a large amount of money taken, the average amount of money taken in a bank robbery over the period 1996 through 2000, according to NIBRS data is less than $5,000.

The crime of robbery showed a clearance rate of only 24.9 percent in 2001. The clearance for bank robbery was 57.7 percent in 2001.[5] This is a relatively high clearance rate when compared with that of other Part I crimes.[*] Only murder, at 62.4 percent, has a higher percentage of crimes cleared by arrest.

Even with such a high clearance rate, bank robbery remains prevalent. Bank robbery has been the subject of many studies.[6] Because of the number of incidents, the amount of money taken, and the fear engendered in the public, bank robbery is a serious problem in the United States. Dr. Yoshio Akiyama of the FBI addressed this question in 1983 in the *Crime Indicators System, Fourth Semiannual Briefing on Crime*. That study used a 10-year time series to show the prevalence and characteristics of bank robbery incidents, a profile of offenders, and an analysis of the length of time from the incident until clearance.

The present study will update and extend parts of that earlier study.

Objectives

The general objective of this study is to examine three different criminal justice databases maintained by the FBI. Their similarities and differences are pointed out and discussed with the purpose of producing a fuller picture of bank robbery than that created when using only one of these databases. A further and no less important objective is to provide some assessment of the NIBRS bank robbery data by comparing it with the Bank Crime Statistics database, even though the collection methods, the scope, and content of these databases are different.

To address these objectives, a time series from the Bank Crime Statistics (BCS), collected by the Violent Crimes/Fugitive Unit of the FBI, covering the period 1973 to 2001 was generated and compared to the time series for Summary UCR data and to NIBRS data. NIBRS data on bank robbery incidents used for this analysis is for 1996-2000. Although Summary data have been collected by the FBI since 1930, its comprehensiveness concerning bank robbery is limited. Therefore, only the crime counts and estimates from 1990 through 2001 were examined for comparison to BCS data from the same period.[†]

The study questions in this analysis are designed to compare and contrast the databases on the subject of bank robbery as it is reported to the FBI and are divided into two areas, characteristics of the incident and characteristics of the offender(s).

Further, this study will discuss the general compatibility of the Summary UCR data, the historical BCS database, and bank robbery incidents identified in the NIBRS. By using data from all three of these databases it will be possible to present a fuller picture of the crime of bank robbery in the United States and how it is reported.

Study Question 1— Characteristics of the Incident

The level of analysis here is the incident itself. Variables that describe the incident, such as the number of bank robbery incidents per year, the state, the region, the time of day and day of the week, the violence—deaths, injuries, hostages taken—and the type of weapons used are addressed in question 1.

Study Question 2—Offenders

Question 2 concerns the offender characteristics. What is the age, sex, and race of the offender (or offenders)? What is the average number of offend-

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* Part I crimes are murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. The first seven of these crimes make up the Crime Index. The Modified Crime Index consists of all eight Part I crimes.

† See Data & Methodology Section for a more complete discussion of the databases discussed in this section.

ers per incident? What is the previous bank robbery experience of offenders?

Data and Methodology

Data for the study come from three sources.

The UCR Program's data collections for the years 1990 and 2001. (Summary data)

The UCR Program is a law enforcement initiative that gives an annual depiction of crime in the United States. It is a nationwide cooperative statistical effort of over 17,000 city, county, and state law enforcement agencies that voluntarily report data on crimes that have been reported to them. The FBI has collected Summary data since 1930 with little change in the type of data collected and disseminated. Today, law enforcement agencies active in the UCR Program cover approximately 93.4 percent of the population of the United States.

The UCR's NIBRS data from 1996-2000

The NIBRS is the redesigned, expanded version of the Summary UCR system. NIBRS data differ from Summary data in that the NIBRS contains data on each single incident and arrest. While the Summary data are individual counts of seven Part I crimes, NIBRS collects data on 22 crime categories. Incident, offense, victim, offender, and arrest data are collected on each incident reported by a law enforcement agency. NIBRS is a richer, disaggregated database than the Summary database that can be used to enhance law enforcement and crime research as well as strategic and administrative decision-making. A limited number of agencies began submitting NIBRS data to the FBI's UCR Program in January 1989.

### The BCS data collected by the FBI from 1970-2001

In 1934 Congress enacted the Bank Robbery and Incidental Crimes Statute, making it a federal crime to rob any national bank or state member bank of the Federal Reserve System. This statute was expanded to include bank burglary and bank larceny and similar crimes committed against federally-insured savings and loan associations and Federal credit unions. The investigative jurisdiction under this statute has been delegated to the FBI, which today investigates a bank crime concurrently with local law enforcement.[7]

The Violent Crimes/Fugitive Unit of the FBI has collected descriptive data on bank robberies since 1970. This is a database that FBI Special Agents in the 56 field offices use when investigating bank robberies. The variables concern the incident, the solution, the mode of operation, and offender characteristics. Although these data are primarily meant to be used as an investigative tool to clear the particular crime, much of the data contained in the BCS can be used for quantitative research as well. These data can be used alone by the researcher or in concert with other statistical databases, specifically, the NIBRS database, to present a fuller rendering of the bank robbery incident.

The BCS database contains a more comprehensive representation of the U.S. population than the NIBRS database. It also includes several incident-level elements not included in the

Figure 5.1

Number of Bank Robbery Incidents Reported in BCS Database and the Summary UCR, 1990–2001
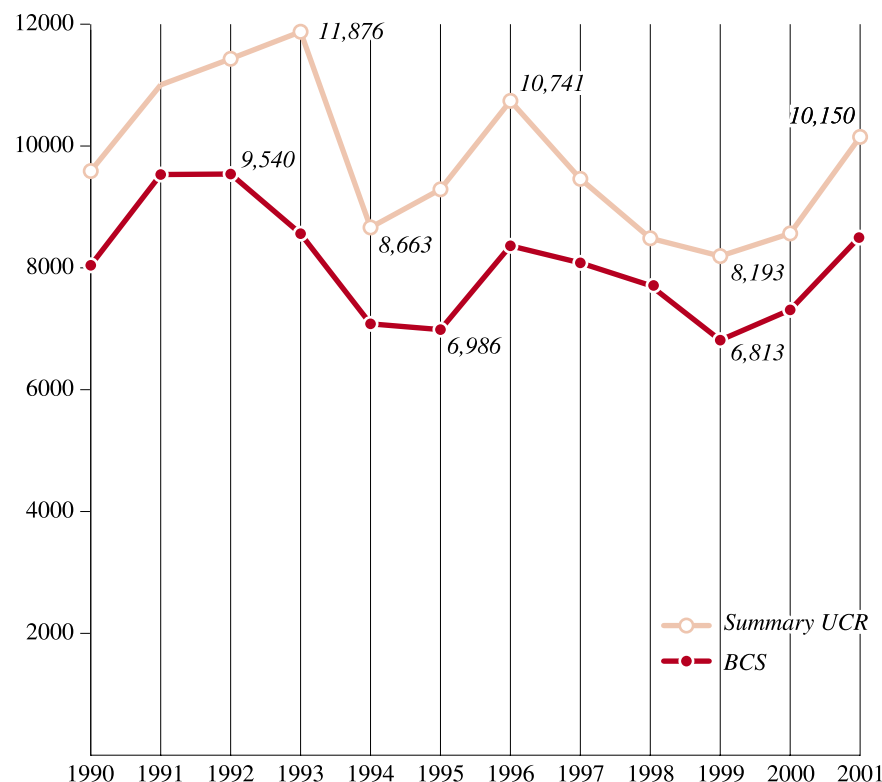
Table 5.1

Number of Bank Robbery Incidents Reported in BCS Database and the Summary UCR, 1990–2001

Year	BCS	Summary UCR
1990	8,042	9,589
1991	9,532	11,004
1992	9,540	11,432
1993	8,561	11,876
1994	7,081	8,663
1995	6,986	9,289
1996	8,362	10,741
1997	8,082	9,461
1998	7,711	8,486
1999	6,813	8,193
2000	7,310	8,565
2001	8,516	10,150

NIBRS. These are institution type, facility type, modus operandi, solution rates (analogous to clearance rates in the UCR Program definitions), types of security devices present in the incident, disguises used by the perpetrator(s), information on hostages that may have been taken, and the contents of any robbery notes.

Since the focus of BCS is a subset of all bank robberies collected by the UCR Program, care must be exercised when BCS statistics show deviations from those of Summary/NIBRS statistics. The definitions in the BCS data differ from those established by the UCR Program. It will be seen, however, that the two sets of statistics show striking similarities.

Methods

Frequency distributions and graphs are used to explore the consistencies and unique aspects of the databases to address the Study Questions.

Findings

Incident characteristics

Although the amount of money taken overall in any given year may seem high, approximately $70 million according to the BCS data for the period 1996 through 2000, the average amount netted from an individual bank robbery is less than $8,000 (BCS). The NIBRS data, covering less population than BCS, indicate an average of less than $5,000 per incident.

BCS reports the amount of money recovered is quite small. Over the period 1996-2000, $469,815,218.10

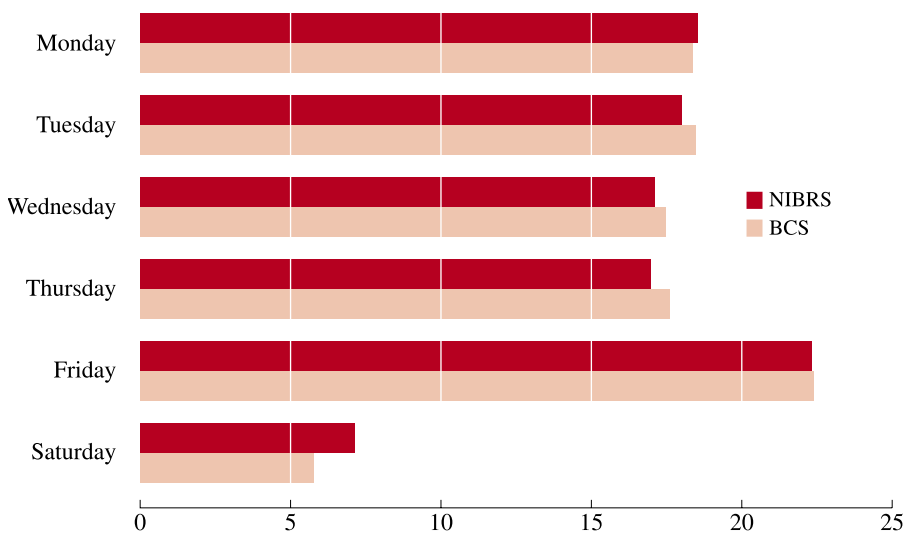was reported as being taken and only $94,407,085.90 was recovered. This is only a 20 percent recovery rate.

Number of incidents

Table 5.1 shows the number of bank robbery incidents reported in the Summary UCR Program and in the BCS database of the FBI from 1990 through 2001. Figure 5.1 graphs the same data and makes the pattern easier to see. There was a substantial increase in the early 1990s, followed by an even more substantial decrease in the mid-1990s. Through 1999, the overall trend was down, but beginning in 2000 there was an upturn. The Summary UCR data always shows a greater number of incidents than the BCS database. There are two reasons for this. The first is measurement error, present in any data collection. The second reason may be
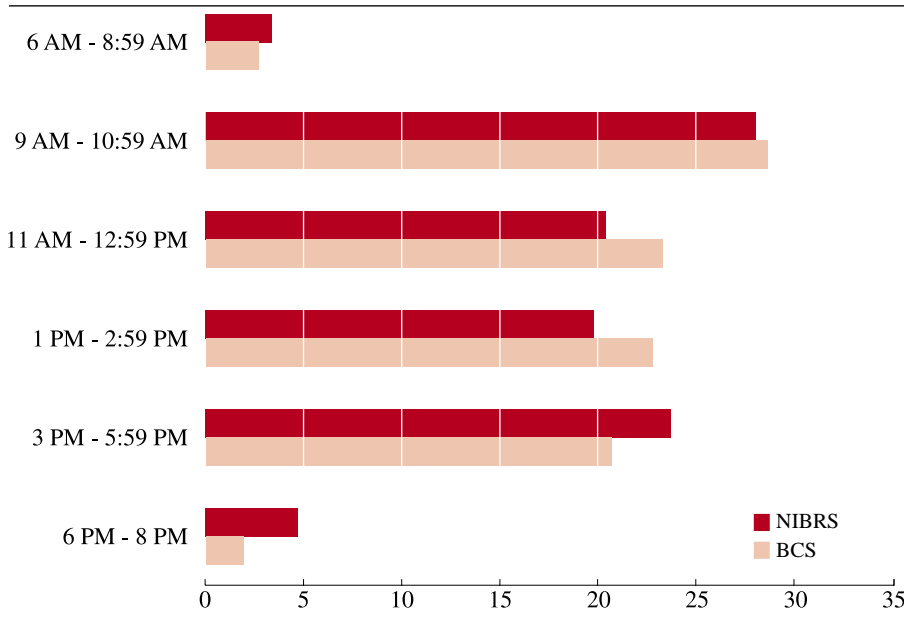
Table 5.2

Number of Bank Robbery Incidents, NIBRS Data and BCS by State and Region, 2000

Region, State	BCS robberies 2000	NIBRS robberies 2000	Region, State	BCS robberies 2000	NIBRS robberies 2000
Southern (South)			**Northeastern (Northeast)**		
Alabama	77		Connecticut	41	26
Arkansas	18	1	Massachusetts	156	47
DC	12		Maine	4	
Delaware	24		New Hampshire	15	
Florida	559		New Jersey	140	
Georgia	175		New York	304	
Kentucky	66	2	Pennsylvania	339	
Louisiana	87		Rhode Island	13	
Maryland	174		Vermont	13	7
Mississippi	64		**Regional Total**	**1,025**	**80**
North Carolina	288		**Regional %**	**14.18**	**7.70**
Oklahoma	31				
South Carolina	122	164	**Midwestern (North central)**		
Tennessee	138	127	Iowa	50	44
Texas	342	32	Illinois	181	
Virginia	149	161	Indiana	137	
West Virginia	17	23	Kansas	49	14
Regional Total	**2,343**	**510**	Michigan	328	181
Regional %	**32.41**	**49.04**	Minnesota	88	
			Missouri	96	
Western (West)			North Dakota	1	1
Alaska	3		Nebraska	47	3
Arizona	184		Ohio	402	89
California	1,291		South Dakota	3	
Colorado	149	79	Wisconsin	115	
Hawaii	37		**Regional Total**	**1,497**	**332**
Idaho	12	16	**Regional %**	**20.71**	**31.92**
Montana	4				
New Mexico	54		**GRAND TOTAL**	**7,289**	**1,040**
Nevada	178				
Oregon	150				
Utah	47	23			
Washington	314				
Wyoming	1				
Regional Total	**2,424**	**118**			
Regional %	**33.53**	**11.35**			

Figure 5.2

**Bank Robbery Incidents by Day of the Week,
NIBRS Data and BCS, 1996–2000, in percent**

Table 5.3

**Bank Robbery Incidents by Day of
the Week, NIBRS Data and BCS,
1996–2000 (in percentages)**

Day	NIBRS	BCS
Monday	18.53	18.36
Tuesday	17.99	18.46
Wednesday	17.10	17.45
Thursday	16.96	17.59
Friday	22.29	22.37
Saturday	7.13	5.77
Total	100.00	100.00

because of the different, but overlapping, missions of the two databases. The Summary UCR number consists of all bank robbery incidents reported to the Program by local law enforcement. The BCS data includes bank robbery incidents reported to the Violent Crimes/Fugitive Unit of the FBI by the individual FBI field offices. Only in incidents where the FBI has investigative jurisdiction are the field offices required to collect and report data. FBI field offices do not report crime statistics to the UCR Program. Summary UCR data should contain these BCS incidents reported to UCR by the state or local law enforcement entity collaborating with the FBI on the investigation of the incident. Additionally, Summary data include incidents in which the FBI had no jurisdiction and, thus, no role. Therefore, the FBI became involved in the investigation of approximately 85 percent of all bank robbery incidents reported in the United States in 2000.

Although the time series of BCS is considered to reflect bank robbery trends in the Nation, the undulations in the number of bank robberies are also a result of the FBI involvements in the bank robbery investigations. The two time series track each other quite closely as we would expect. When one is moving downward, the other is moving downward as well, and when one turns up, so does the other.

Participation in the NIBRS has been more volatile over the period of the system's existence than either the Summary UCR or BCS participation over this same period of time. With only 17 percent of the U.S. population cov-

Table 5.4

Time of Day of Bank Robbery Incidents, NIBRS Data & BCS, 1996–2000

	NIBRS	NIBRS Percent	BCS	BCS Percent
6 AM - 8:59 AM	87	3.4	1,018	2.66
9 AM - 10:59 AM	711	28.0	10,955	28.65
11 AM - 12:59 PM	518	20.4	8,902	23.28
1 PM - 2:59 PM	502	19.8	8,710	22.78
3 PM - 5:59 PM	601	23.7	7,911	20.69
6 PM - 8 PM	119	4.7	741	1.94
Total	2,538	100.0	38,237	100.00

Figure 5.3

**Time of Day of Occurrence of Bank Robbery Incident,
NIBRS Data and BCS, 1996–2000, in percent**

ered in 2000, the NIBRS reported 1,040 bank robberies. Summary UCR data showed approximately 8,565 bank robberies reported to the UCR Program by police agencies. The BCS recorded 7,310 bank robbery incidents with FBI involvement. A comparison of NIBRS data to Summary data to BCS data of this type is not meaningful. The Summary data and BCS data will drown out NIBRS data. However, other comparisons may be more fruitful between NIBRS and BCS data.

Regional breakdown

Table 5.2 shows a regional breakdown for NIBRS and BCS bank robberies in 2000. The UCR Program defines four

regions in the United States and calls them Northeastern, Midwestern, Southern, and Western. The BCS also places states into four regions called Northeast, North Central, South, and West. The states in the UCR regions Northeastern, Southern, and Western are placed in the BCS regions Northeast, South, and West, respectively. The BCS region, North Central, contains the states that the UCR Program defines as Midwestern.

The percentages of bank robberies within the regions correspond somewhat between the two databases. Monotonically, they track from a low in the Northeastern, then the Midwestern, or North Central, through the South. The Western, or West region, is the odd one here, with the NIBRS showing it with only 11.3 percent of the bank robberies in 2000, while the BCS shows it with 33.3 percent. These disparities are due to the absence of major cities' participation in the NIBRS. It may also be that even though the Western region contains

13 states, only three of these report NIBRS data. Further, at least two of these three, Idaho and Utah, have small populations and thus would be expected to have fewer bank robberies. Moreover, California alone has more than one-half of the bank robberies in the entire 13-state region reported to BCS. California's 1,291 bank robbery incidents in 2000 are more than twice its closest competitor, Florida, and more than the entire Northeastern region. California drives the numbers in the Western region but is not represented in the NIBRS. On the other hand, 9 of 16 (17 when the District of Columbia is included) states in the Southern [South] region report NIBRS data. Further, 8 of 12 states in the Midwestern [North Central] region are NIBRS states.

Day of the week

Table 5.3 and Figure 5.2 show different presentations of the same data—bank robbery incidents by day of the week. The data are presented as percentages, i.e., the percentage of bank robberies reported in the NIBRS that happen on Sunday, on Monday, etc., and the same for the BCS data. In this way we can begin to make some comparisons between the two databases even though the difference in the absolute number of bank robberies in the two databases is quite high. The striking finding here is how closely the data in the two programs coincide. In both data series, Friday is the day on which most bank robbery incidents occur. Substantively, this may be because Friday has historically been payday for much of the United States and, thus, has required large deliveries of cash to branch banks. This may still be the case even in the modern world of electronic banking with direct deposit of paychecks and bill-paying either as an automatic withdrawal, by posted check, or over the Internet.

The second most prevalent days are Monday and Tuesday. The NIBRS reports a few more incidents on Monday than on Tuesday and BCS reports the opposite. Still, these differences are

Table 5.5

BCS Incidents Involving Shooting

Year	Incidents	Shooting	Percent
1996	8,362	172	2.06
1997	8,082	155	1.92
1998	7,711	159	2.06
1999	6,813	119	1.75
2000	7,310	132	1.81

Table 5.6

BCS Incidents Involving Firearms, 1996–2000

Year	Incidents involving firearms	Percentage of incidents in which firearm used	Incidents involving handguns	Percentage of incidents in which handgun used	Total incidents
1996	2,707	32.37	2,571	30.75	8,362
1997	2,718	33.63	2,539	31.42	8,082
1998	2,505	32.49	2,385	30.93	7,711
1999	2,047	30.05	1,953	28.67	6,813
2000	2,190	29.96	2,105	28.80	7,310
Total	12,167	31.79	11,553	30.18	38,278

Table 5.7

NIBRS Incidents Involving Firearms, 1996–2000

Year	Incidents involving firearms	Percentage of incidents in which firearm used	Incidents involving handguns	Percentage of incidents in which handgun used	Total incidents
1996	127	47.57	109	40.82	267
1997	206	46.29	156	35.06	445
1998	312	50.49	252	40.78	618
1999	312	46.43	238	35.42	672
2000	525	51.12	411	40.02	1,027
Total	1,482	48.93	1,166	38.49	3,029

negligible and speak well for the integrity of the NIBRS data.

Most bank robberies from 1996 through 2000 happened on workdays, Monday through Friday, with very few occurring on the weekend. The NIBRS reports that workdays accounted for 89.83 percent of bank robbery incidents, while in the BCS the percentage was 93.85 percent for the period.

Time of day

Both the NIBRS data and the BCS data show that the time period during which most bank robberies occur is 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. Table 5.4 and Figure 5.3 present the time of occurrence of bank robberies reported in the NIBRS and BCS from 1996 through 2000 as a percentage of bank robbery incidents reported. The prominent detail presented here is the clear similarity of the two databases on this variable.

Weapons, violence, injury, and other crimes

One obvious reason for an individual to engage in bank robbery is economic where the motive is to obtain money. Another is that because of the low amounts of cash actually stolen per robbery, bank robbers are interested in projecting a persona of violence.[8] Whichever is the case, the threat of violence is always present. Information on weapons used in the commission of a bank robbery, violence, injuries sustained, and other crimes is contained in the NIBRS data as well as the BCS data. The percentage involving an actual shooting reported in BCS is around 2 percent. Table 5.5 shows this percentage over the 1996–2000 period. BCS data displayed in Table 5.6 show that over this period, a firearm was present in about 32 percent of all bank robbery incidents. In almost all of those cases, 30 percent overall, that firearm was a handgun.

Table 5.7 presents NIBRS firearms data. Over the period 1996–2000, NIBRS reports firearms (including handguns) use in 49 percent of the 3,029 bank robbery incidents reported. Handguns were used in 38.5 percent of NIBRS incidents in which a firearm was used over the period.

It may be surprising that only between one-third and one-half of bank robbery incidents involve firearms. The perception one would tend to get from television or the movies is that a bank robber would never attempt a holdup without a firearm—and the more the better.

Table 5.8 holds another surprise. The incidence of violence and injury is very low. NIBRS data show that violence occurred in only 2.34 percent of incidents and BCS shows 4.84 percent over the time period. Given the low

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Table 5.8

Percent of Bank Robbery Incidents Involving Violence, Injury, and Other Crimes, NIBRS Data & BCS, 1996–2000

Incidents Involving	NIBRS Incidents	Total NIBRS	Percent*	BCS Incidents	Total BCS	Percent*
Injury	169		5.58	764		2.00
Violence	71		2.34	2151		5.62
Explosives/Explosions	60		1.98	1557		4.07
Kidnapping/Hostages	49		1.62	230		0.60
Assault	19		0.63	1285		3.36
Murder	5		0.17	34		0.09
Total NIBRS Incidents		3,029				
Total BCS Incidents					38,278	

* Will not add to 100% because some incidents involved more than one other crime or weapon.

Figure 5.4

Race of Bank Robbers in Percentage, NIBRS Data and BCS, 1996–2000

Legend:
- White, NIBRS
- White, BCS
- Black, NIBRS
- Black, BCS
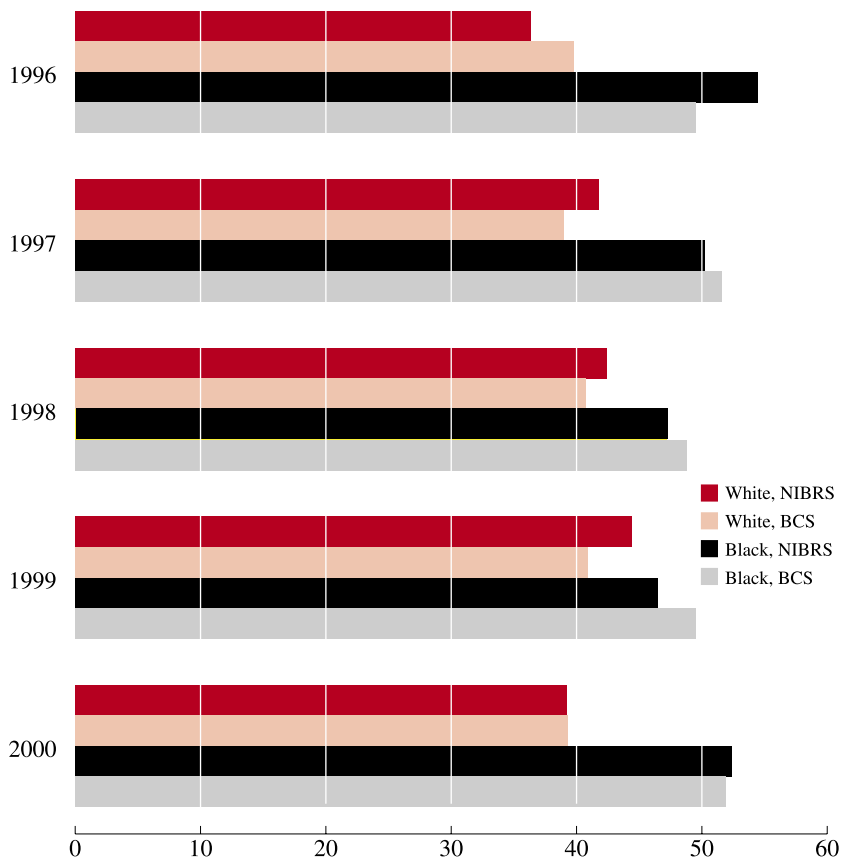
rates of violence, it should not be unexpected that the injury levels displayed in Table 5.8 are also quite low—5.58 percent for NIBRS data and 2.00 percent for BCS.

Regarding other crimes present in the incident, murder is very low at less than 1.0 percent in both databases, as are kidnapping and hostage-taking. Both NIBRS data and BCS data show that kidnapping/hostage-taking occurs in less than 2.0 percent of reported bank robberies.

Overall, the percentages in the table are close with neither database showing wildly divergent numbers; however, the numbers are so small for the NIBRS that we cannot take total comfort in the only-slight discrepancies the two databases show on these variables.

Offender characteristics

Despite what may be the popular perception, most bank robbery incidents, 79.9 percent in the NIBRS data over the period 1996–2000, were carried out by only one offender. Another

15 percent involved two offenders. Thus, over 95 percent of all the bank robbery incidents reported were attempted by two or fewer offenders.

Race

Bank robbery offenders may not be as many or as varied as one might at first think. Using NIBRS and BCS data, we can analyze their race, and sex, and using NIBRS data we can examine age. Figure 5.4 shows the race of bank robbers from NIBRS data and BCS from 1996 through 2000 as a percentage of all offenders. There are similar patterns evident in the figure. Whites account for between 35 and 45 percent of all offenders in each of the years. Both NIBRS and BCS data bear this out and overall show the same level. Black offenders are responsible for between 45 percent and 55 percent over the period. If we average offenders by race over the 5 years, there is virtually no difference with whites averaging 40.84 percent in the NIBRS data and 39.45 percent in the BCS data. Similarly, the percentage of black offenders in the NIBRS data is very close to that in the BCS at 50.14 percent and 50.26 percent, respectively.

Sex

There is a great disparity between the number of male bank robbery offenders and the number of female offenders in both the NIBRS and the BCS databases. However, there is very little discrepancy when comparing the percentage of male offenders in NIBRS data to that in BCS and when comparing the number of female offenders. Figure 5.5 shows both of these comparisons. Male offenders are shown in dark red (NIBRS) and light red (BCS) and female offenders are shown in either black (NIBRS) or gray (BCS). In both databases, over 95 percent of the offenders are males, and less than 5 percent are females.

The percentage of male offenders in both NIBRS data and BCS is virtually the same. Table 5.9 shows the percentages of offenders that are identified as male in NIBRS data and BCS as well

Table 5.9

Percentage of Offenders in NIBRS Data and BCS, by Sex, 1996–2000

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Male - NIBRS	94.79	94.55	94.66	92.53	92.75
Male - BCS	95.56	94.83	94.41	94.75	93.99
Female - NIBRS	5.21	5.45	5.34	7.47	7.25
Female - BCS	4.44	5.17	5.59	5.25	6.01

Figure 5.5

Sex of Bank Robbers as Percentages, NIBRS Data and BCS, 1996–2000
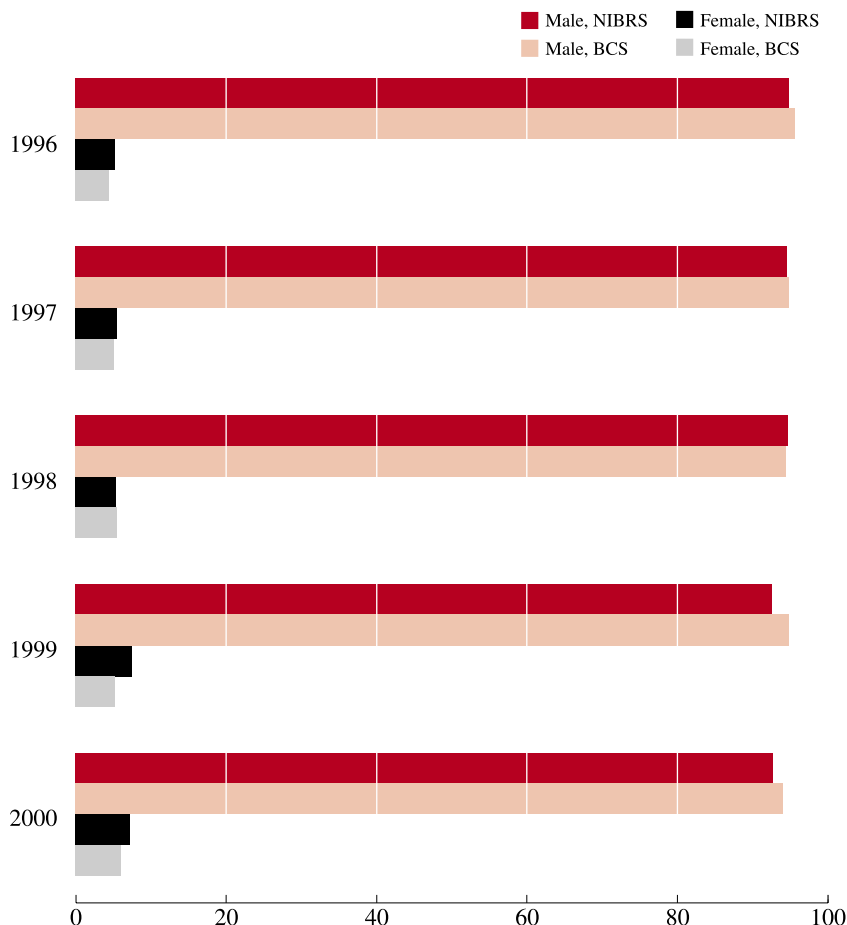
as the percentage identified as females. There is a strong correspondence between the two databases here.

Age

Figure 5.6 displays the age and gender of offenders reported to the NIBRS from 1996–2000. The same information is contained in Table 5.10. Nearly 20 per-cent of all offenders are male, between the ages of 18 and 24. Males, aged 25–29 account for another 14 percent. Summing the two groups, we see that one-third of all bank robbery offenders are between 18 and 29 years of age. This is all the more astonishing because there are 703 offenders contained in the denominator that are either unknown or listed as missing data. If we drop the unknown and missing data from the denominator and recalculate the percent-age, we find that 41.7 percent of bank robbery offenders reported in NIBRS data are 18–29-year-old males.

An examination of only male offenders shows these two age groups account for more then 45 percent of all male bank robbery offenders. Figure 5.6 shows a clear pulse in the late teens and early twenties that damps down in every subsequent age group.

Females show the same general pattern except that the numbers of female bank robbery offenders is much smaller than that of males.

Age, race, and sex are combined and presented in Table 5.11. The same patterns are visible in this table as shown earlier and separately. There are more males than females in every age group. There are more black males than white males in younger age groups and more white males than black in older (>35) age groups. There are more white females than black females. The number of Asian/Pacific Islanders and American Indians/Alaskan Natives are presented but are too small to analyze.

Prior bank robbery convictions

In *Crime Indicators System, Fourth Semiannual Briefing on Crime* (1983), Akiyama discussed the bank robber classifications of "professional" and "amateur." His discussion was based on a previous FBI report from 1977 that divided bank robbers into these cate-

Figure 5.6

Age and Gender of Offender, NIBRS Data, 1996–2000, in percent
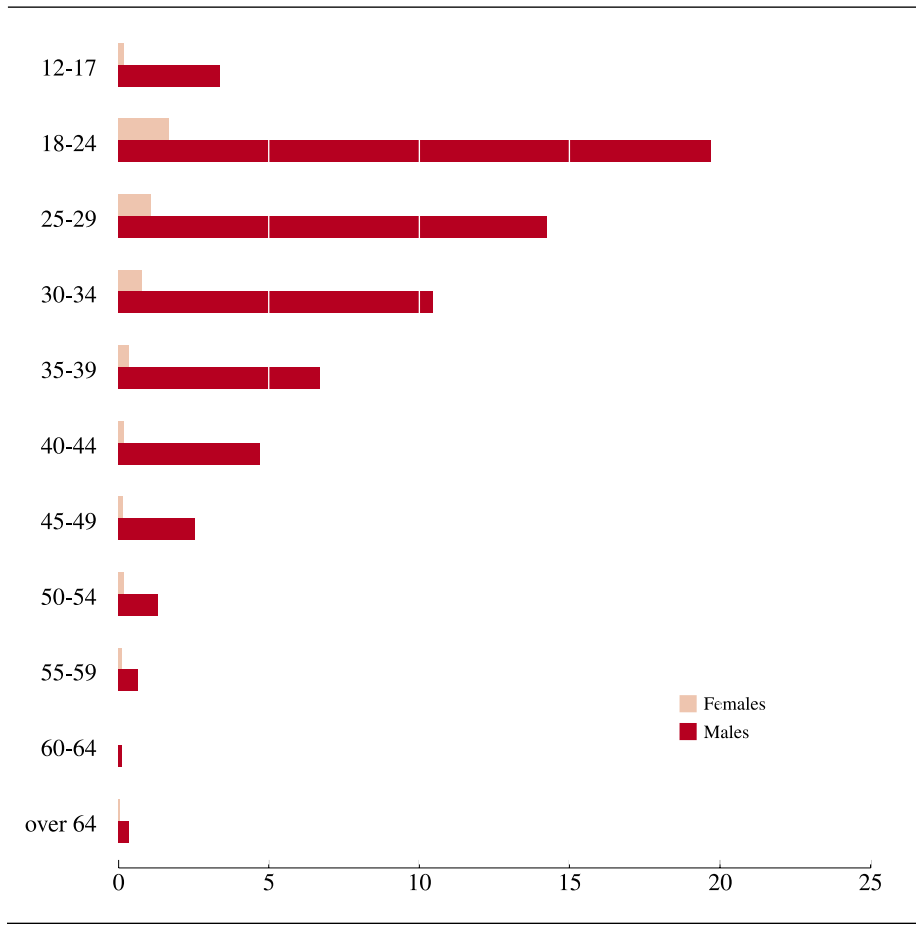
Table 5.10

Age and Gender of Offender, NIBRS Data, 1996–2000

Age	Female	Female %	Male	Male %	Unknown	Unknown %	Missing Values	Missing Values %	Total
12–17	8	0.21	131	3.39	1	0.03		0.00	140
18–24	65	1.68	766	19.80	5	0.13		0.00	836
25–29	42	1.09	554	14.32	7	0.18		0.00	603
30–34	31	0.80	406	10.49	4	0.10		0.00	441
35–39	14	0.36	261	6.75		0.00		0.00	275
40–44	8	0.21	183	4.73	1	0.03		0.00	192
45–49	6	0.16	99	2.56		0.00		0.00	105
50–54	7	0.18	51	1.32	8	0.21		0.00	66
55–59	5	0.13	25	0.65	1	0.03		0.00	31
60–64		0.00	5	0.13		0.00		0.00	5
over 64	2	0.05	14	0.36	1	0.03		0.00	17
Unknown	16	0.41	467	12.07	167	4.32	508	13.13	1,158
Total	204	5.27	2,962	76.56	195	5.04	508	13.13	3,869

gories. A "professional" in this classification scheme is a bank robber with a prior criminal record, despite his or her lack of success as evidenced by his/her incarceration. This professional is a bank robbery specialist. The "amateur" bank robber is a bank robber with no prior record. The amateur is presented as acting almost on a whim. The bank robbery to the amateur is almost a spur-of-the-moment undertaking with the robber engaging in very little planning. This individual robs banks to get the means to fulfill some more fundamental need, such as the need for drugs. Table 5.12 displays BCS data concerning the number and percent of subjects taken into custody for bank robbery who already have a conviction for bank robbery, bank burglary, bank larceny, or bank extortion. From 1996–2000, the average percent of "professional" bank robbers is 20 percent. This was more than the average in the earlier period from 1978–1982. Over that time period the average percent of "professional" bank robbers was 14 percent. This is still a clear indication that the great majority of bank robbers are amateurs and have not been convicted of a bank crime in the past.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. Although Summary data have been collected by the FBI since 1930 and cover virtually the entire population of the United States, their comprehensiveness concerning bank robbery is limited. The only information available is the number of bank robberies, the percent of total robberies that that number represents, region of occurrence, bank robberies by population group, month of occurrence, and the amount of money taken in the aggregate. It is not possible to disaggregate Summary data to the individual incident.

Some bank robberies may not be captured in the database because of the Hierarchy Rule that limits reporting of only that crime in the incident that is highest in the "hierarchy" of Part I crimes as defined by the UCR Program. Both murder and rape are higher on this ordering of crimes than robbery. Therefore, if a bank robbery included a murder, the only crime entered into the Summary database is the murder. This would also be the case for a rape occurring within the bank robbery incident. Only the rape would be recorded and the bank robbery would be lost information.

Table 5.11

Age, Race, and Sex of Offender, NIBRS Data, 1996–2000

| Sex/Age of Offender | Race of Offender | | | | | |
	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Unknown Race	White	Total
Total Unknown Age, Sex, and Race						508
Female 12–17					8	8
18–24		26			39	65
25–29		22			20	42
30–34		13			18	31
35–39		6			8	14
40–44		2			6	8
45–49		1			5	6
50–54		2			5	7
55–59		1			4	5
over 64		1			1	2
unknown age		5		2	9	16
Total Female		79		2	123	204
Male 12–17		92		2	37	131
18–24	5	465	1	8	287	766
25–29		327		15	212	554
30–34		221		6	179	406
35–39	1	103		3	154	261
40–44		61		1	121	183
45–49		36	1	3	59	99
50–54		15		1	35	51
55–59		9		1	15	25
60–64					5	5
over 64		5			9	14
unknown age	1	262		65	139	467
Total Male	7	1,596	2	105	1,252	2,962
Unknown sex 12–17					1	1
18–24				5		5
25–29		2		4	1	7
30–34				4		4
40–44				1		1
50–54		1		7		8
55–59				1		1
over 64				1		1
unknown age				163	4	167
Total unknown sex		3		186	6	195

Further, the bank robbery totals are collected on the form entitled Supplement to the Monthly Return of Offenses Known To The Police (Return A), but not on the Return A itself. If the supplement is not submitted, a robbery on the Return A cannot be counted as bank robbery. Thus, it may be the case that some robberies listed on the Return A and, therefore, in *Crime in the United States*, are bank robberies and are not captured in the Summary data.

Even though the NIBRS has distinct benefits as a data source, it is limited in its scope. Currently, agencies from 24 states, representing 17 percent of the U.S. population, participate in the program. These data lack the cross-sectional representation of incidents and cannot be treated as a sample. There are no cities participating that have populations greater than 1 million inhabitants. There are only 11 cities or consolidated counties that contribute NIBRS data whose population is more than 250,000. With this limitation, NIBRS data may not represent the crime experience in the entire United States.

Like the Summary UCR and NIBRS data, the BCS database also has its limitations. Only robberies of banks and financial institutions covered under the Bank Robbery and Incidental Crime Statute and its progeny are included. Further, the NIBRS includes, but BCS does not, specific information on each victim, offender, and arrestee. Finally, BCS is an investigative system; consequently the data are not available for use by the public.

Summary and Conclusions

The objective of depicting bank robbery from the data collected by the FBI has been met. Further, this realization of bank robbery through the use of these data has been an opportunity to compare and contrast elements in the databases—particularly the NIBRS data and the BCS data. These are preliminary findings and require further study.

The presentation of incident characteristics has emphasized the similarity of data submitted to the FBI's NIBRS program by local and state law enforcement to that submitted to the Violent Crimes/Fugitive Unit of the FBI by the separate FBI field offices. Both Summary UCR data and BCS indicate the same trends in the numbers of bank robberies over a 12-year period, 1990–2001.

Further, NIBRS data showing days of the week on which the greatest number of bank robberies occur and the hours during which they are most prevalent are very similar to BCS data, with Friday mornings generally the modal day and time for bank robberies.

In both databases, violence and injury are very low, an unexpected finding since one element of the crime is force or the threat of force. The similarity between the two databases concerning this unanticipated result adds further validation to the quality of NIBRS data.

Evidence of offender race and gender is also quite comparable between the two databases, with the number of whites committing bank robbery reported in NIBRS data very close to the number reported in BCS and the

same for blacks. Reported gender of bank robbers is virtually identical in both databases.

Presenting the age data reported in NIBRS shows that a plurality of bank robberies are committed by offenders between 18 and 30 years of age.

Offenders are clearly amateurs and not bank robbery specialists as evidenced by the low number with previous convictions for a bank crime shown in the BCS statistics. That bank robberies do not involve the meticulously planned caper carried out by a group of highly experienced criminals is further borne out by the significant number of incidents involving only one or two offenders. NIBRS and BCS data show that the money obtained in a bank robbery is low, especially considering the amount of physical risk and the high probability of apprehension involved for the offender.

The money recovered is also not a very high percentage of that stolen. Both databases bear this out. This indicates that Akiyama (1983) was correct in his conclusion that most of these amateur bank robbers committed the crime to fulfill some more immediate need. More research is required, particularly into the aspect of drugs associated with this crime.

These findings are interesting and have significant implications for policymakers. This study and other research, such as which banks are most likely to be robbed, and which are more likely to be robbed more than once, in addition to spatial analyses adding variables such as location of the bank relative to escape routes, entrances to freeways, traffic patterns, location of nearest police station, etc., will allow law enforcement policymakers to develop better, more effective strategies for use in dealing with bank robberies.

The present study is also good news for the NIBRS program. The NIBRS has only 24 states that participate covering 17 percent of the population. Nevertheless, the percentages on

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Prior Bank Robbery Convictions, BCS, 1996–2000

Year	Subjects previously convicted		Subjects not previously convicted		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1996	1,127	21.04	4,230	78.96	5,357	100.0
1997	917	18.03	4,169	81.97	5,086	100.0
1998	964	19.40	4,005	80.60	4,969	100.0
1999	912	20.75	3,483	79.25	4,395	100.0
2000	957	20.79	3,646	79.21	4,603	100.0
Total	4,877	19.98	19,533	80.02	24,410	100.0

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the NIBRS variables examined here clearly accord with the percentages reported in the BCS. This should assure those who do not yet participate in the NIBRS program that they may reap large benefits from becoming a contributor to the Program.

Finally, since 9/11 the government has realized that information-sharing is a powerful tool with which to fight lawlessness. Databases such as those examined here should be examined to derive the maximum information toward this end.

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[1] Garofalo, J. 1977. Public Opinion About Crime: The Attitudes of Victims and Nonvictims in Selected Cities. Washington, DC: USGPO.

[2] Wolfgang, M.E. and F. Ferracuti. 1967. The Subculture of Violence. London: Tavistock; Normandeau, A. 1968. "Patterns in Robbery," Criminoligica.

[3] U.S. Department of Justice. Federal Bureau of Investigation. (December 1999). NIBRS, Volume 1: Data Collection Guidelines, Washington D.C.: The Government Printing Office, p. 33.

[4] U.S. Department of Justice. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Crime in the United States, 2001, Washington D.C.: The Government Printing Office.

[5] Bank Crime Statistics Data, 2001.

[6] Baumer, T. and M. Carrington, 1986. The Robbery of Financial Institutions. U.S. Department of Justice; Tavistock; Normandeau, A. 1968. op. cit.; Katz, J. 1991. "The Motivation of the Persistent Robber." In Michael Tonry (Ed.), Crime and Justice: A Review of Research (Vol. 14, pp. 277–306). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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[8] Katz, J. 1991. op. cit.

Reported Sniper Attacks, 1982–2001

Introduction

For 23 days in October 2002, the world was shocked by media reports of attacks in and around the Nation's capital—a Metropolitan Statistical Area of nearly five million inhabitants—resulting from the actions of snipers. The first six victims were killed within the first 27 hours of the ordeal. By the end of the 23 days, 10 people would be dead, three others injured, and two men would be in police custody. (Cannon, A. and staff of U. S. News and World Report, (2003). *23 Days of Terror*. New York: Pocket Books.)

Because of the nationwide interest in sniper attacks and the terror the attacks in the fall of 2002 wreaked on the people living in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program decided to look at the data law enforcement agencies throughout the United States submitted to the Program for the past 20 years and prepare a report summarizing that data. Several limitations to these data must be stated so that one can put this report in perspective. First, it must be noted that the data in this report are limited to those sniper attacks reported by law enforcement agencies participating in the UCR Program. Further, there is no uniform definition of sniper attack for law enforcement to follow, so the interpretation of this circumstance is left to the agency's discretion. The sniper-attack designation is a circumstance available on the Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR), a form law enforcement agencies voluntarily submit for the offense of murder only. Consequently, the UCR database does not contain those instances of sniper attacks in which the victim survived. Finally, even though there are other circumstances on the SHR from which the reporting agency can select, the agency is limited to reporting only one. It may be that a sniper attack occurred in conjunction with another circumstance, for example a romantic triangle or a gangland killing, and the agency selected that other circumstance to report, not the sniper attack.

Caution is urged when trying to draw any conclusions from the data presented in this report. The data are presented as a compilation of statistics and are of informational value only. The statistics in this report include only those instances in which 1) sniper attack was selected as the circumstance, 2) the victim was killed, and 3) the weapon reported by the agency on the SHR was a firearm.

Purpose of Report

The report presents the information submitted on the SHR about the characteristics involved in homicide incidents limited to murder by sniper attack with a firearm. Specifically, this report looks at:

1. the number of sniper attack incidents with a firearm involving murder, the number of victims, and the number of instances in which at least one characteristic (age, sex, race) of the offender was reported.

2. the number of incidents by situation.

3. the number of incidents by firearm type.

4. the number of incidents by geographical region of the United States.

Table 5.13

Sniper-attack Murder Incidents, Victims, and Offenders, 1982-2001

Year	Number of Incidents	Number of Victims	Offenders[1]
Total	327	379	224
1982	12	15	8
1983	17	17	8
1984	18	37	16
1985	10	10	5
1986	9	9	4
1987	28	36	17
1988	47	55	32
1989	46	49	28
1990	40	41	24
1991	10	12	5
1992	31	33	14
1993	6	6	3
1994	2	2	5
1995	11	12	6
1996	8	8	13
1997	4	4	1
1998	10	15	15
1999	5	5	4
2000	8	8	5
2001	5	5	11

[1] This represents the number of instances in which the age, sex, and/or race of the offender was reported by law enforcement.

Table 5.14

Sniper-attack Murder Incidents
 by Year and Situation, 1982-2001

Year	Total	Single Victim			Multiple Victims		
		Single Offender	Multiple Offenders	Unknown Offender(s)	Single Offender	Multiple Offenders	Unknown Offender(s)
Total	327	102	39	165	12	3	6
1982	12	5	0	5	1	1	0
1983	17	8	0	9	0	0	0
1984	18	9	1	5	3	0	0
1985	10	3	1	6	0	0	0
1986	9	4	0	5	0	0	0
1987	28	9	3	13	2	0	1
1988	47	13	6	25	1	0	2
1989	46	12	6	25	0	1	2
1990	40	13	5	21	1	0	0
1991	10	4	0	5	1	0	0
1992	31	5	4	20	1	0	1
1993	6	3	0	3	0	0	0
1994	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
1995	11	5	0	5	1	0	0
1996	8	2	4	2	0	0	0
1997	4	1	0	3	0	0	0
1998	10	0	2	6	1	1	0
1999	5	1	1	3	0	0	0
2000	8	5	0	3	0	0	0
2001	5	0	4	1	0	0	0

5. the number of incidents by population group.

6. the characteristics (age, sex, and race) of the victims and offenders when at least one characteristic is known.

7. the victim-to-offender relationship.

Focus of Report

This report focuses on incidents of criminal homicide in which the law enforcement agency has reported the circumstance as sniper attack in which the weapon was a firearm. Any murders involving a sniper in which the weapon was reported as something other than a firearm were excluded. For this report, 20 years (1982 to 2001) of SHR data were examined in order to acquire specific information regarding the victim, offender, their relationship, the weapon used, and the circumstance surrounding those incidents. The race categories considered in this report are the standard UCR categories of White, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native and unknown. Agencies submitting data on the SHR identify the age, sex, and/or race of the offender, if it is known. If none of these characteristics of the offender can be identified, the offender is, obviously, unknown. The selection of firearm categories available to law enforcement on the SHR are firearm, type not stated; handgun (pistol, revolver, etc.); rifle; shotgun; and other/unknown gun. The data in the tables are limited to those reported to UCR by law enforcement on the SHR.

Table 5.15

Sniper-attack Murder Incidents
by Year and Firearm Type, 1982–2001

Year	Total[1]	Firearm (type not stated)	Handgun (pistol, revolver, etc.)[1]	Rifle[1]	Shotgun	Other/Unknown Gun
Total	327	19	208	75	23	3
1982	12	2	6	2	2	0
1983	17	2	7	4	4	0
1984	18	0	7	7	4	0
1985	10	0	5	5	0	0
1986	9	2	1	6	0	0
1987	28	2	12	12	2	0
1988	47	0	32	9	6	0
1989	46	0	37	8	1	0
1990	40	4	29	4	3	0
1991	10	0	7	3	0	0
1992	31	2	26	3	0	0
1993	6	0	4	2	0	0
1994	2	0	1	0	0	1
1995	11	0	6	2	1	2
1996	8	3	4	1	0	0
1997	4	0	4	0	0	0
1998	10	0	7	3	0	0
1999	5	0	5	0	0	0
2000	8	0	7	1	0	0
2001	6	2	1	3	0	0

[1] In 2001, one incident involved more than one weapon type.

Table 5.16

Sniper-attack Murder Incidents
by Year and Region, 1982–2001

Year	Total	Northeast[1]	Midwest[2]	South[3]	West[4]
Total	327	35	83	60	149
1982	12	1	2	6	3
1983	17	1	4	6	6
1984	18	3	3	1	11
1985	10	1	2	3	4
1986	9	2	1	3	3
1987	28	3	1	4	20
1988	47	0	3	4	40
1989	46	1	0	2	43
1990	40	2	22	4	12
1991	10	1	4	4	1
1992	31	1	29	1	0
1993	6	0	2	3	1
1994	2	0	2	0	0
1995	11	0	5	6	0
1996	8	2	0	6	0
1997	4	2	0	2	0
1998	10	5	0	4	1
1999	5	1	1	0	3
2000	8	7	0	1	0
2001	5	2	2	0	1

[1] Includes incidents reported by Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

[2] Includes incidents reported by Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

[3] Includes incidents reported by Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

[4] Includes incidents reported by Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Discussion

Incidents

During the 20-year period from 1982 to 2001, law enforcement agencies contributing data to the UCR Program submitted supplemental information on 364,648 homicides in the United States. According to data from the SHRs from 1982 to 2001, there were a total of 327 incidents involving murder during a sniper attack in which the weapon was a firearm, or 0.1 percent of the 20-year total of 364,648 homicides for which supplementary data were received. Within those 327 incidents, there were 379 victims and 224 instances in which the age, sex, and/or race of the offender was identified. Law enforcement agencies nationwide reported as few as 2 incidents in 1994 and as many as 47 incidents in 1988 that fit the aforementioned criteria. (See Table 5.13.)

Single sniper victim incidents accounted for 306, or 93.6 percent, of

the total incidents. Of the 306 single sniper victim incidents, most (53.9 percent) were committed by an unknown offender, 33.3 percent by a single offender, and the remaining by multiple offenders. Of the 21 incidents that involved multiple victims, 57.1 percent involved a single offender. (See Table 5.14.)

All but 1 of the 327 incidents involved a single firearm type. A handgun was involved in 63.6 percent (208) of the incidents. The next most commonly used firearm was a rifle (75 incidents), followed by shotgun, firearm (type not stated), and other/unknown gun, in that order. One incident involved two firearm types, a handgun and a rifle. (See Table 5.15.)

An analysis of the data by region showed that nearly one-half (45.6 percent) of the total instances of sniper attack reportedly occurred in the West. The Midwest followed in frequency with 25.4 percent, and then the South and Northeast with 18.3 percent and 10.7 percent, respectively. (See Table 5.16.)

A breakdown of the data by population showed that Population Group I, which includes cities with the population range of 250,000 and over, had the highest number of reported sniper attack murders with a firearm with 43.7 percent. Agencies classified as Group IX, Suburban Counties, reported 12.5 percent of the incidents. The remaining 143 of the 327 total incidents were reported by agencies in other population group sizes. (See Table 5.17.) (Refer to Appendix III of this publication for an explanation of the Population Groups.)

Victims

Of the 379 reported murder victims of a sniper attack with a firearm, 77.8 percent were male and 22.2 percent were female, dispersed over all age groups. (See Table 5.18.) More victims (55) were killed in 1988 than in any other year of the 20-year period under consideration. (See Table 5.13.) Fifty of the total number of victims were under the age of 18 (juveniles); the remaining 329 victims (86.8 percent) were age 18 or over or of unknown age. Of the 295 male victims, 155 (52.5 percent) were between the ages of 25 and 49. Females in that age range comprised 47.6 percent of the 84 total number of female victims. (See Table 5.18.)

A breakdown of the data by race of victims showed that 52.5 percent were white, 44.1 percent were black, and the remaining 3.4 percent were other races (American Indian/Alaskan Native or Asian/Pacific Islander) or unknown. (See Table 5.18.)

Offenders

There were 224 instances in the 327 reported sniper attacks in which at least one characteristic (age, sex, race) of the offender was reported. Of the 224 instances in which a characteristic was reported, 96.9 percent of the time the

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Table 5.17

Sniper-attack Murder Incidents
by Year and Population Group, 1982–2001

Year	Total	Group I[1]	Group II[2]	Group III[3]	Group IV[4]	Group V[5]	Group VI[6]	Group VIII[7]	Group IX[8]
Total	327	143	37	34	20	20	11	21	41
1982	12	3	1	1	2	0	0	4	1
1983	17	4	2	2	1	4	3	0	1
1984	18	7	1	2	2	1	1	1	3
1985	10	3	1	0	1	1	0	2	2
1986	9	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	2
1987	28	6	4	7	2	2	0	4	3
1988	47	16	8	5	2	2	1	1	12
1989	46	22	8	3	3	2	1	2	5
1990	40	26	2	3	3	2	1	0	3
1991	10	5	0	2	0	0	1	0	2
1992	31	29	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
1993	6	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	1
1994	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
1995	11	3	1	2	0	1	0	2	2
1996	8	2	4	0	1	0	1	0	0
1997	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
1998	10	2	0	2	1	1	1	2	1
1999	5	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
2000	8	5	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
2001	6	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	2

[1] Includes cities with population range 250,000 and over.

[2] Includes cities with population range 100,000 to 249,999.

[3] Includes cities with population range 50,000 to 99,999.

[4] Includes cities with population range 25,000 to 49,999.

[5] Includes cities with population range 10,000 to 24,999.

[6] Includes cities with population range 9,999 and under and universities and colleges to which no population is attributed.

[7] Includes rural counties, population range not applicable and state police to which no population is attributed.

[8] Includes suburban counties, population range not applicable and state police to which no population is attributed.

Table 5.18

Sniper-attack Murder Victims

by Age, Sex, and Race, 1982–2001

		Sex			Race				
Age	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	White	Black	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Unknown
Total	379	295	84	0	199	167	1	9	3
Under 10	8	4	4	0	3	5	0	0	0
10 to 12	13	8	5	0	11	2	0	0	0
13	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
14	3	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	1
15	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
16	9	6	3	0	5	3	0	1	0
17	15	13	2	0	7	8	0	0	0
18	20	15	5	0	11	8	1	0	0
19	14	12	2	0	6	8	0	0	0
20	13	13	0	0	5	7	0	1	0
21	9	4	5	0	5	4	0	0	0
22	15	12	3	0	6	9	0	0	0
23	17	13	4	0	10	7	0	0	0
24	15	13	2	0	6	7	0	1	1
25 to 29	59	48	11	0	28	30	0	1	0
30 to 34	55	46	9	0	28	26	0	1	0
35 to 39	35	26	9	0	19	15	0	1	0
40 to 44	31	24	7	0	20	10	0	0	1
45 to 49	15	11	4	0	8	6	0	1	0
50 to 54	8	7	1	0	3	3	0	2	0
55 to 59	8	5	3	0	5	3	0	0	0
60 to 64	6	5	1	0	6	0	0	0	0
65 and over	7	4	3	0	5	2	0	0	0
Unknown	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0

Table 5.19

Sniper-attack Murder Offenders

by Age, Sex, and Race, 1982–2001

		Sex			Race				
Age	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	White	Black	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Unknown
Total	224	217	7	0	117	94	2	2	9
Under 10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 to 12	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
13	5	4	1	0	5	0	0	0	0
14	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
15	8	7	1	0	5	1	0	0	2
16	6	6	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
17	7	7	0	0	2	5	0	0	0
18	15	15	0	0	7	5	1	0	2
19	20	19	1	0	7	12	0	0	1
20	17	17	0	0	5	10	0	2	0
21	9	9	0	0	1	7	0	0	1
22	15	14	1	0	5	9	1	0	0
23	6	6	0	0	5	1	0	0	0
24	12	12	0	0	8	4	0	0	0
25 to 29	36	35	1	0	19	17	0	0	0
30 to 34	17	16	1	0	13	4	0	0	0
35 to 39	11	11	0	0	7	4	0	0	0
40 to 44	6	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
45 to 49	6	6	0	0	5	1	0	0	0
50 to 54	5	5	0	0	3	2	0	0	0
55 to 59	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
60 to 64	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
65 and over	3	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
Unknown	14	13	1	0	5	6	0	0	3

offender was reported as male and the remainder, female. Of the 217 instances in which the offender was reported to be male, 42.4 percent of the time the male was reportedly between the ages of 18 and 24. No particular age group was most frequent for those offenders reported to be female. The youngest identified female offender was reported to be 13 years old and the oldest was reported to be in the 30- to 34-year-old age group. The youngest reported offender overall was in the 10- to 12-year age category. (See Table 5.19.)

Of the 224 instances in which at least one characteristic of the offender was known, 215 of those instances identified the race of the offender. An analysis of the data by race showed that of the 215 instances in which the race was identified, 54.5 percent of the time the offender was white and 43.7 percent of the time the offender was black. In 4 instances the offender was either an American Indian/Alaskan Native or Asian/Pacific Islander. Of the 211 instances in which the offender was iden-tified as either white or black, 87.2 percent showed the offender to be an adult (18 and over) or unknown and 12.8 percent a juvenile. (See Table 5.19.)

Confrontations

For this report, a confrontation is defined as the relationship of one or more victims to one or more offenders within the sniper attack. Of the 444 confrontations in the 327 total sniper attacks during the 20-year period, only 1 showed the relationship of the victim to the offender to be a family member—a father.

Stranger was reported as the relationship of victim to offender in 207 (46.6 percent) of the confrontations, and in 166 (37.4 percent) the relationship was reported as unknown. The remaining reported confrontations were dispersed over various victim-to-offender relationships. (See Table 5.20.)

Summary

The SHR data collected by the UCR Program show that sniper attack is a unique circumstance that occurs infrequently in everyday life. The stealth of the offender and the randomness of the victim contribute to the uniqueness of those incidents. In the 20-year period studied in this report, there were a total of 327 circumstances of murder by a sniper with a firearm, involving 379 victims and 224 instances in which a characteristic about the offender was reported by law enforcement. Fifty-two percent of the incidents involved unknown offenders; the victims were dispersed over all age groups. The data show that most victims were between the ages of 25 and 49, male, and white. The offenders followed a similar pattern in that in most instances in which age, sex, and/or race were reported, the offender was reported as being between the ages of 25 and 49, male, and white. Most incidents involving snipers were reported by law enforcement agencies in the Western region, and the majority of the attacks involved a handgun.

Table 5.20

Sniper-attack Murder Victim/Offender Relationship
by Year, 1982–2001

| | | Within Family¹ | Outside Family but Known to Victim | | | | | | | | | | | | |
Year	Total Confrontations	Father	Neighbor	Acquaintance	Boyfriend	Girlfriend	Ex-Husband	Ex-Wife	Employee	Employer	Friend	Homosexual Relationship	Other	Stranger	Unknown Relationship
1982	18	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	2
1983	17	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	8
1984	40	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	3
1985	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	5
1986	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5
1987	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	7
1988	67	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	3	27	31
1989	57	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	7	23	25
1990	46	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	19	22
1991	12	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	5
1992	37	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	22
1993	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
1994	5	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
1995	12	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6
1996	15	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	2
1997	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
1998	22	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	6
1999	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3
2000	8	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
2001	12	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	1
Total	444	1	2	40	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	20	207	166

¹ Possible relationships within the family are Husband, Wife, Common-Law Husband, Common-Law Wife, Mother, Father, Son, Daughter, Brother, Sister, In-Law, Stepfather, Stepmother, Stepson, Stepdaughter, and Other Family. All entries except Father were zero; therefore, they were omitted from the table.