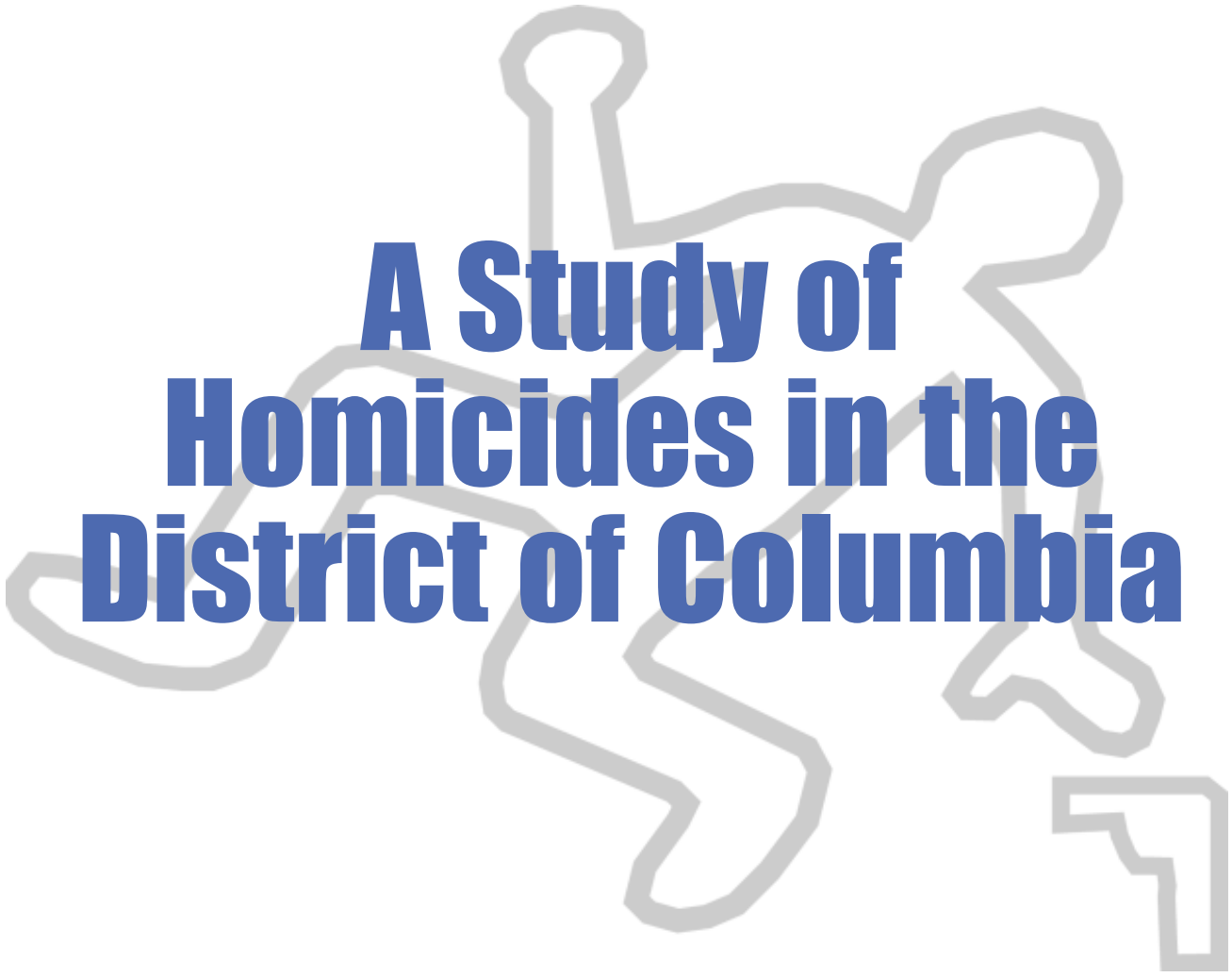


Murder Analysis



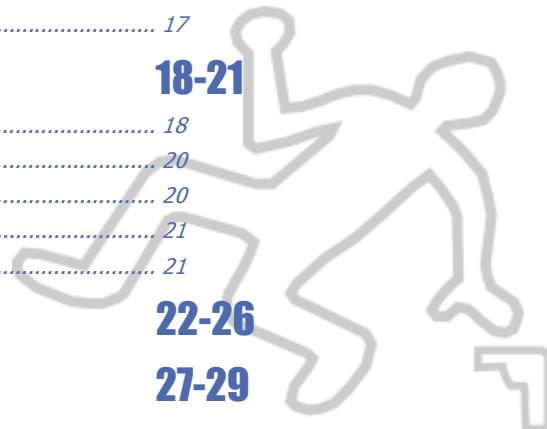
A Study of Homicides in the District of Columbia

**Metropolitan Police Department
District of Columbia**

October 2001

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Message from Chief Ramsey

Over the last decade, the District of Columbia has experienced a dramatic decline in homicides, from 474 murders in 1990 to 242 in 2000 – a decrease of nearly 50 percent. This encouraging trend has continued – even accelerated – into 2001: through the first nine months of the year, homicides were down another 20 percent. If this trend continues, DC will likely end the year with its lowest homicide total since the mid-1980s.

But while these homicide reductions are encouraging, our Police Department and our community cannot be satisfied with the number of murders taking place in our city. The District of Columbia is still far too violent a city, and our clearance rate for those homicides that do occur is still far too low. During the same 11 years in which our homicide rate was nearly cut in half, our homicide clearance rate fluctuated from year to year, with a disturbingly low clearance rate in the last few years.

There is no one factor that can explain the dramatic decline in DC homicides during the 1990s. An improved economy, reductions in unemployment, favorable demographic trends, and certainly more focused and effective policing have all contributed to the overall trend. By the same token, there is no one factor that can explain fluctuations in the homicide clearance rate during this same period. The changing nature of homicide in our city, the manner in which criminal investigations are organized and managed, the capabilities of individual detectives, and the quality of their training and supervision have all influenced the clearance rate to some degree.

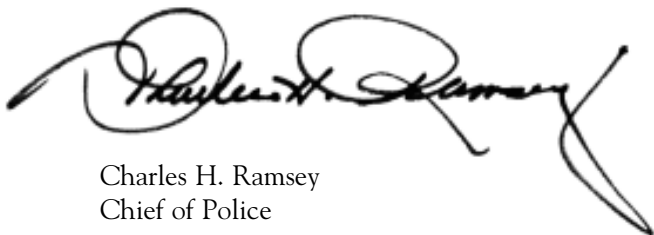
In response to this complex and shifting environment, the Metropolitan Police Department over the last three years has instituted a number of reforms aimed at reducing homicides and improving our investigative efforts. We reorganized our investigative function, placing most detectives in the communities they serve. We expanded our violence prevention efforts, particularly those focused on young people. We provided investigators with better training and facilities. We upgraded our investigative intelligence system. We created a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure for homicide investigations that focuses on consistency and accountability. And we centralized the command and control of criminal investigations, through a newly established Superintendent of Detectives.

In addition, we have taken steps to improve our data collection efforts in this important area. To do a better job of both investigating and preventing homicide, we need to know more about the “who, what, when, where and why” of the homicides occurring in our city. In this regard, we have joined the FBI’s ViCAP program (Violent Criminal Apprehension Program), which captures detailed information about violent crimes and supports detailed analysis of violent crime trends.

This report represents an important step in our efforts to better understand homicide trends in the District and, as importantly, to share our findings with the community and other partners in “Policing for Prevention.” When it comes to community policing, an informed partner is an active and effective partner. Only by analyzing and sharing the type of information contained in this report can we hope to achieve our dual goals: to further reduce DC’s homicide rate, while simultaneously increasing our homicide closure rate.

This report summarizes what we have learned about homicides occurring in DC over the last decade, with a particular focus on the three years from 1998 through 2000. The information in this report was developed by a Homicide Review Team, which has been working diligently to code homicide information into ViCAP booklets. The result is a rich source of information from which our Department will be able to develop more effective investigative, intervention and prevention strategies. The findings of this analysis are already being used to guide some immediate changes in the organization and management of homicide investigations, as well as other enforcement, prevention and research initiatives. I am confident these and other changes in the future will improve our Department’s ability to solve homicides, bring offenders to justice and make our communities safer.

As always, I welcome the community’s input and ideas on this report and on our ongoing reform program within the Metropolitan Police Department.



Charles H. Ramsey
Chief of Police

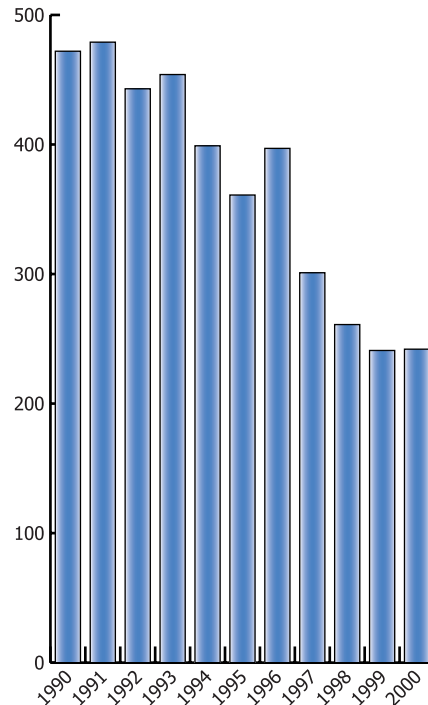
The Offenses

Homicide Trends

During the 1990s, the number of homicides in the District of Columbia declined sharply. In fact, the year 2000 total of 242 homicides was half the number that occurred in 1991. Through the first nine months of 2001, there were 154 homicides, according to preliminary figures, compared with 195 during the same period of 2000, a reduction of 21 percent.

Between 1998 and 2000, the three-year period that is the subject of this report, a total of 744 homicides took place in the District. By comparison, there were 1,399 homicides from 1990 to 1992, a decrease of almost 47 percent.

Homicides: 1990-2000

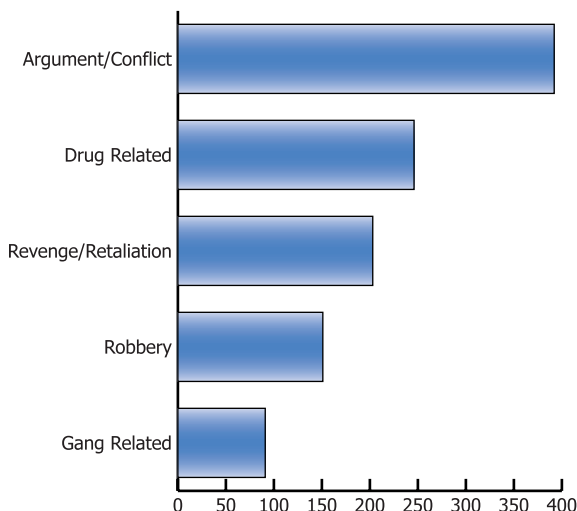


Motives Behind the Homicides

One of the most important questions to ask – and answer – is what causes homicides in the District. Knowing the motives behind homicides serves to inform the type of intervention and prevention strategies that will be most effective in reducing the level of violence.

To address this issue, members of the Homicide Review Team coded all the motives that could be determined from their review of homicide case jackets. One immediate and obvious finding from this analysis is that many homicides

Homicide Motives: 1998-2000



have more than one motive. Of the 744 homicides that occurred between 1998 and 2000, 407 (54.7 percent) had only one motive, while 189 (25.4 percent) had two motives, 88 (11.8 percent) had three motives, and 60 (8.1 percent) had four or more motives. (Definitions of different motives are provided in the appendix to this report).

Between 1998 and 2000, slightly more than half of the homicides – 392, or 52.7 percent – involved arguments or conflicts. Drug-related homicides (246, 33.1 percent) were the second most common type, followed by the motives of revenge or retaliation (203, 27.3 percent), robbery (151, 20.3 percent), and gang-related (91, or 12.2 percent).¹

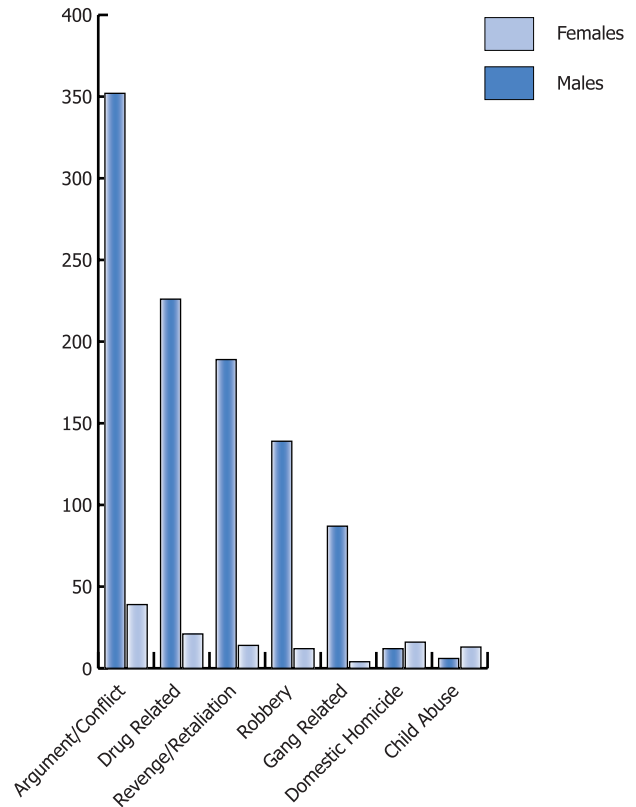
¹ These percentages were calculated by dividing the number of motives for a category by the total number of 744 homicides.

Motives in Male- and Female-Victim Homicides

For homicides involving both male and female victims between 1998 and 2000, the most common motives were the same: arguments/conflicts and drug-related incidents. Arguments/conflicts were a motive in 54 percent of the homicides involving male victims (352 of 652) and more than 42 percent of those involving female victims (39 of 92). Similarly, almost 35 percent of the male-victim homicides (226) and nearly 23 percent of the female-victim homicides (21) were drug-related.

However, women were more likely than men to be the victims of homicides involving domestic violence and child abuse – the third and fifth most common motives, respectively, behind homicides of women. In fact, these were the only two categories in which the actual number of female victims – not just the percentage – was higher than the number of male victims. Domestic violence was a factor in more than 17 percent of the homicides of female victims (16), but less than 2 percent of male-victim homicides (12). There were 13 female child abuse homicide victims (14.1 percent of the female victim total), compared with six male victims in which child abuse was a factor (less than 1 percent of the male victim total).

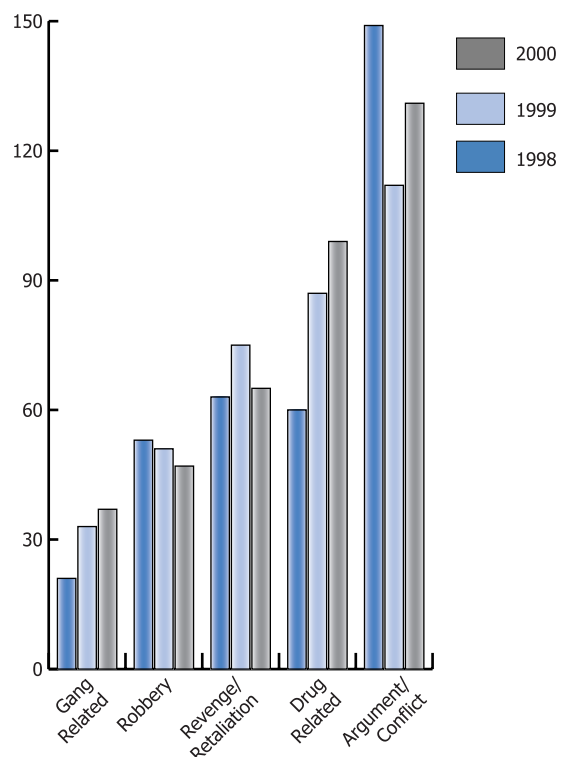
Homicide Motives: 1998-2000



Changes over Time in Homicide Motives

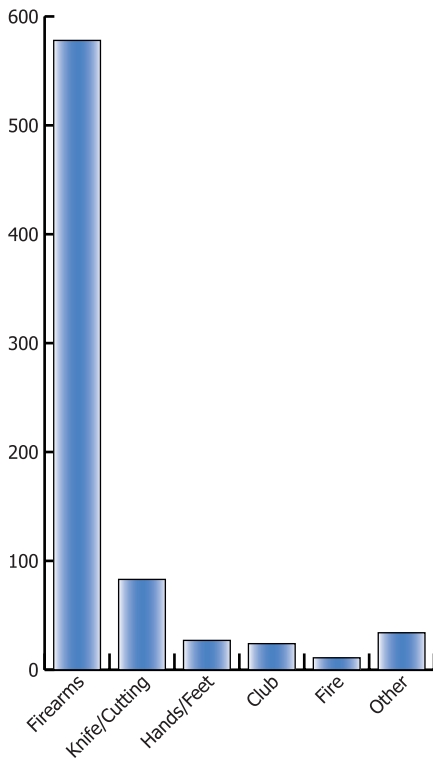
While murders generally declined between 1998 and 2000, there were steady increases in homicides involving gangs and drugs. Gang-related homicides rose more than 76 percent during this period (from 21 in 1998 to 37 in 2000), while drug-related homicides increased by 65 percent (from 60 to 99). Homicides involving robbery declined steadily (from 53 in 1998 to 47 in 2000), while homicides with a motive of revenge/retaliation and argument/conflicts have shown a mixed picture.

Homicide Motives: 1998-2000



Weapons Used in Homicides

Homicide Weapons: 1998-2000

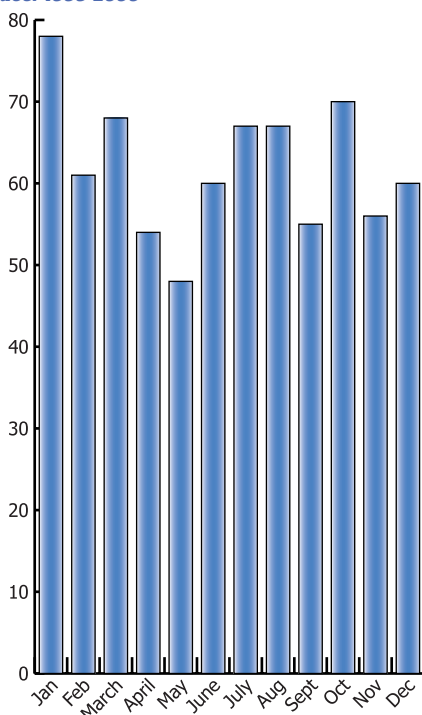


A total of 757 weapons were used against the 744 victims of homicide between 1998 and 2000. (In five murders, two weapons were used; in four others, three weapons were used.) Firearms were used in more than three-quarters of these homicides (578, or 77.7 percent), with the vast majority of firearm homicides involving handguns. Knives or other cutting instruments were the next most frequent weapon used in homicide, accounting for 83 victims (11.2 percent). Hands and/or feet were used in 27 murders (3.6 percent), clubs or other blunt instruments in 24 murders (3.2 percent), and fire (arson) in 11 instances (1.5 percent). Other weapons included poison or ligatures.

Analysis of the firearm homicides reveals that the majority of victims were shot more than once, with nearly three in 10 victims suffering four or more wounds. (The number of gunshot wounds was reported for 436 victims in the Master Case Jackets.) Of these 436 victims, 181 (41.5 percent) suffered one wound, 71 (16.3 percent) had two wounds, 54 (12.4 percent) had three wounds, 47 (10.8 percent) had four wounds, and 83 (19.0 percent) had five or more wounds. The average number of gunshot wounds suffered by firearm homicide victims was 2.9.

Month of Occurrence

Homicides: 1998-2000

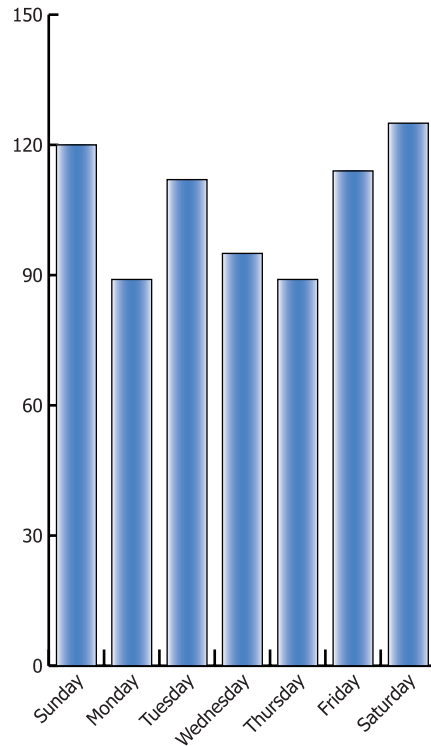


Contrary to conventional wisdom, the summer months are not necessarily the peak season for homicide in the District of Columbia. In fact, from 1998 through 2000, January (10.5 percent), October (9.4 percent) and March (9.1 percent) were the three months in which the largest number of homicides occurred. The largest number of homicides (207, or 27.8 percent) occurred during the first quarter of the year; the lowest (162, 21.8 percent) occurred during the second quarter. The lowest months for homicide during this three-year period were April, May, September, and November, with each averaging about 18 murders per month. By contrast, January averaged 26 homicides per month.

Day of Occurrence

As expected, a large percentage of homicides in the District occur on the weekend. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays accounted for 359 of the 744 homicides (48.3 percent) that took place between 1998 and 2000. Of the weekdays, Tuesdays recorded the highest number of murders – 112, or just two fewer than the total for Fridays. The fewest homicides occurred on Mondays and Thursdays.

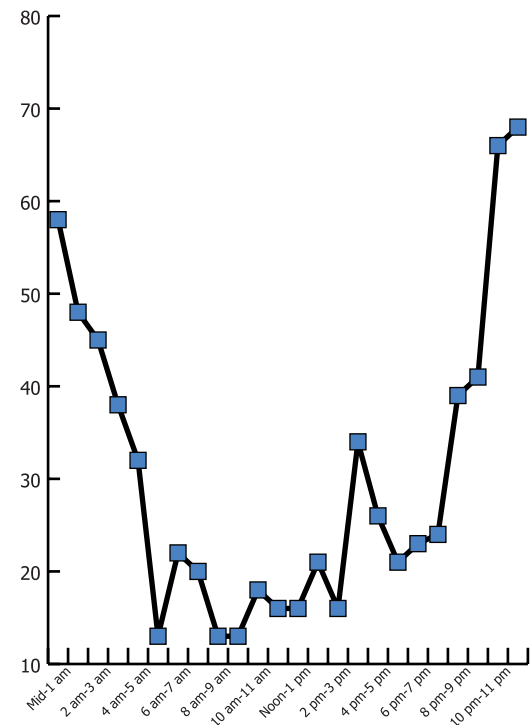
Homicides: 1998-2000



Hour of Occurrence

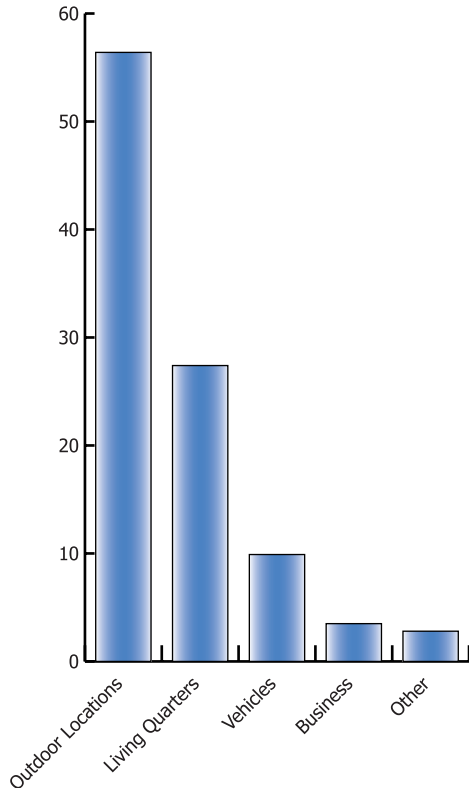
Homicides in the District tend to occur between the hours of 8 pm and 4 am. More than 55 percent of the homicides from 1998 through 2000 occurred during this eight-hour period. Homicides peak in the hours around midnight: more than 26 percent took place during the three hours between 10 pm and 1 am. The fewest number of homicides occur in the mornings and early afternoon. Only about 23 percent of DC homicides occur between 5 am and 3 pm.

Homicides: 1998-2000



Locations of Homicides, by Type

Percent of Homicides: 1998-2000



Specific location not known in 29 cases.

Most homicide victims in the District are killed in outdoor locations. Of the 715 homicides from 1998 to 2000 for which specific location was available, 403 victims (56.4 percent) were killed in outdoor locations, such as roads, sidewalks and alleys. In fact, more than 71 percent of the outdoor location homicides took place on roads and sidewalks; alleys accounted for just over 14 percent of the homicides committed outdoors.

The next most common location for homicides was living quarters, which accounted for 196 murders (27.4 percent). More than half of these victims (105, or 53.6 percent) were killed in their place of residence. The remainder were killed in a multi-family complex (for example, in a hallway), dormitory or other residential location.

Seventy-one victims (9.9 percent) were killed in vehicles, 25 victims (3.5 percent) in business locations, and 20 (2.8 percent) in various other locations.

Locations of Homicides, by Neighborhood

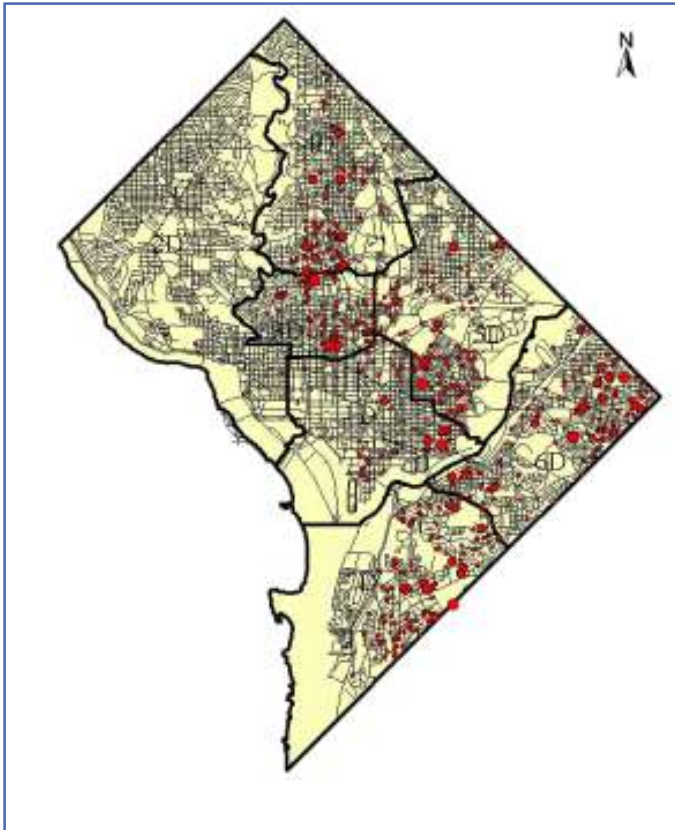
Homicide Locations: 1998-2000

PSA	Number of Homicides
605	34
602	29
709	24
707	21
603	20
414	19
513	19
705	19
703	18
601	17
Total	220




Homicides in the District are not spread evenly throughout the city, but rather are clustered in certain portions of six of the seven police districts. Mapping the locations of homicides committed between 1998 and 2000 reveals at least six areas of concentration: the border straddling the Third and Fourth Districts; the southern part of the Third District; the southwestern end of the Fifth District; the eastern-most corner of the First District; the eastern end of the Sixth District, and the southeast portion of the Seventh District.

The seven police districts are further divided into 83 Police Service Areas (PSAs). Between 1998 and 2000, nearly 30 percent of the homicides in DC (220 victims) occurred in just 10 PSAs (12 percent of the total). Eight of these 10 PSAs are east of the Anacostia River, in the East Regional Operations Command.

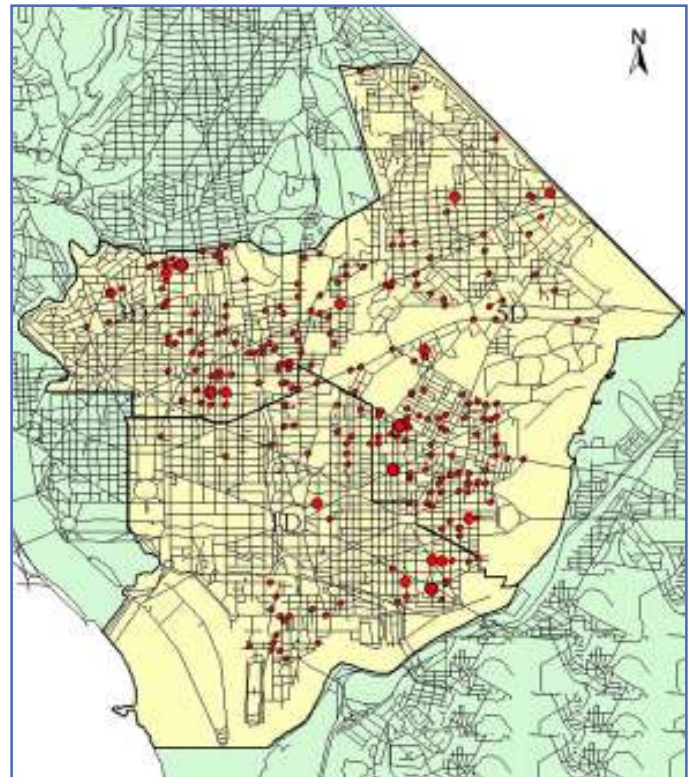
Homicide Map—Citywide







Legend Citywide, 1998-2000

- 1
- 2
- 3
-  Streets
-  District Boundaries
-  District of Columbia

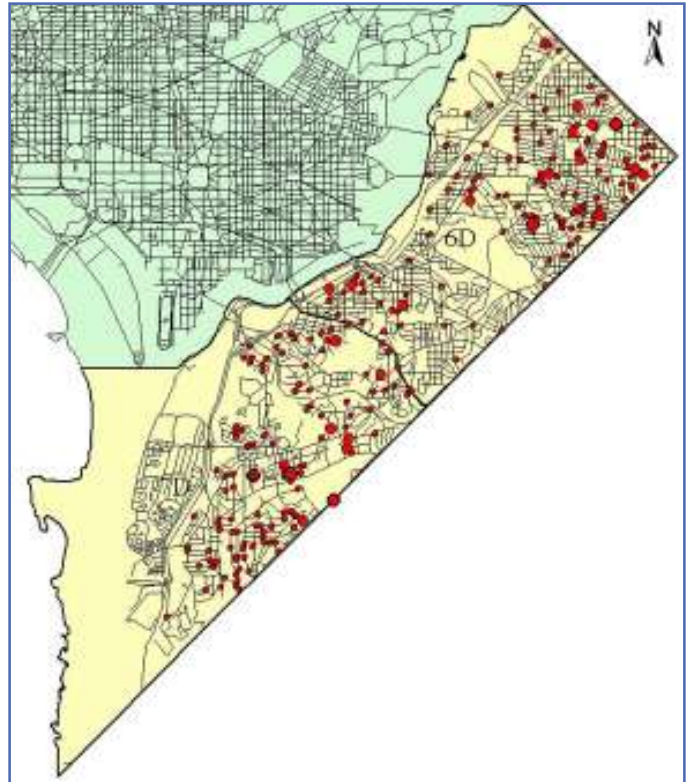
Homicide Map—ROC-Central



Legend ROC-Central, 1998-2000

- 1
- 2
- 3
-  Streets
-  District Boundaries
-  ROC-Central
-  District of Columbia

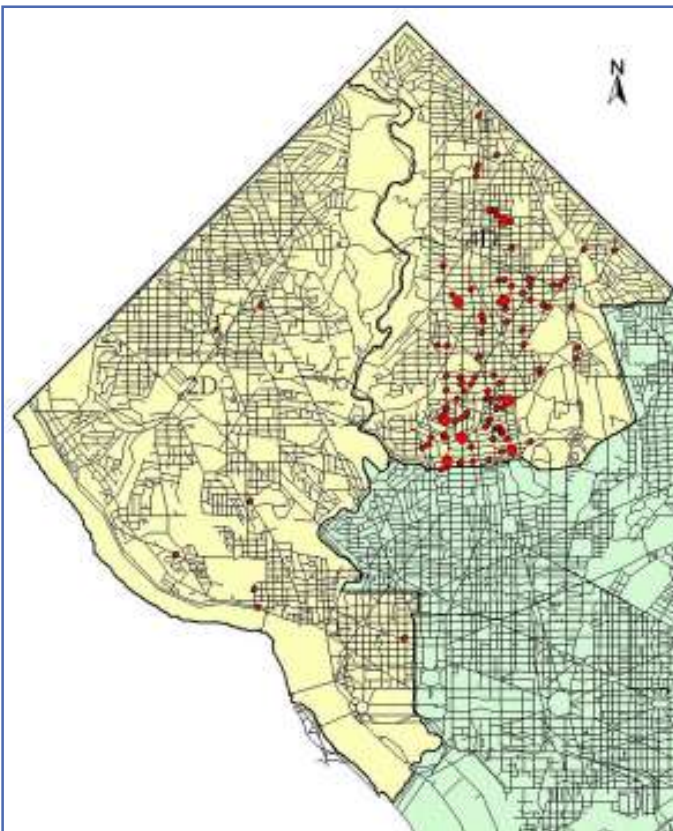
Homicide Map—ROC-East



Legend ROC-East, 1998-2000

- 1 (small red dot)
- 2 (medium red dot)
- 3 (large red dot)
- Streets (line with zigzag)
- District Boundaries (thick black line)
- ROC-East (yellow fill)
- District of Columbia (light green fill)

Homicide Map—ROC-North



Legend ROC-North, 1998-2000

- 1 (small red dot)
- 2 (medium red dot)
- 3 (large red dot)
- Streets (line with zigzag)
- District Boundaries (thick black line)
- ROC-North (yellow fill)
- District of Columbia (light green fill)

The Victims

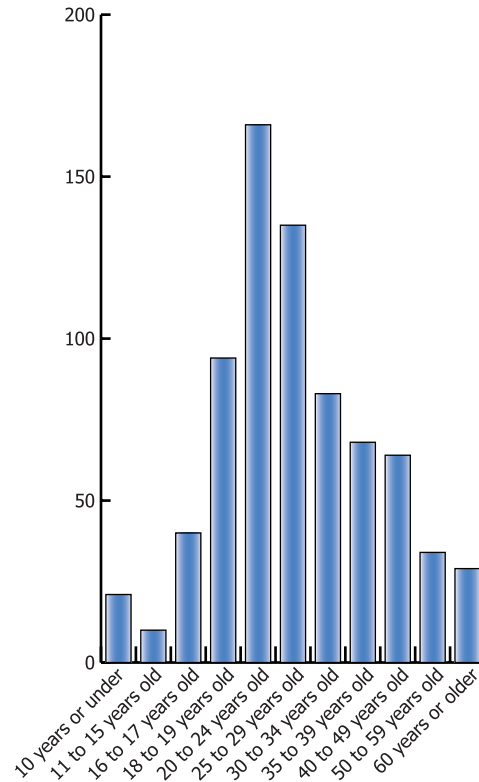
Ages of Victims

More than half of the homicide victims in DC between 1998 and 2000 were in their late teens or 20s. Eighteen- and 19-year-olds accounted for 12.6 percent of the victims; 20- to 24-year-olds made up 22.3 percent; and 25- to 29-year-olds were 18.1 percent.

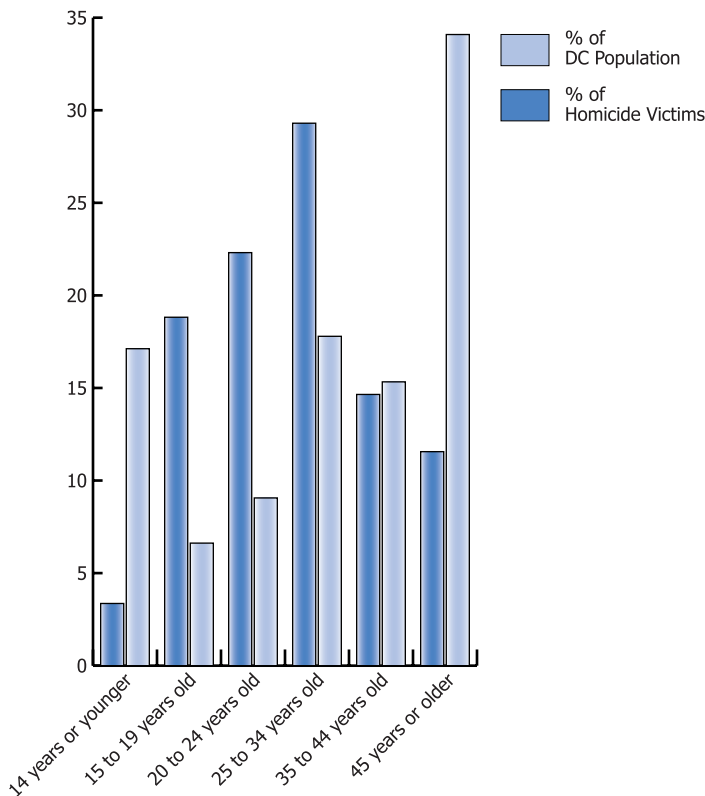
Nearly one out of every 10 victims during this period was a juvenile (age 17 or younger). Twenty-one of these 71 juvenile victims were 10 years or under. And tragically, nine homicide victims – all victims of child abuse – had not reached their first birthday.

The distribution of homicide victims rises sharply from the 11- to 15-year-old category through the 20- to 24-year-old group, then declines sharply after the 25- to 29-year-old group. Just over 20 percent of the victims were in their 30s, 8.6 percent were in their 40s and 8.5 percent were aged 50 or older.

Homicide Victims: 1998-2000



Percent

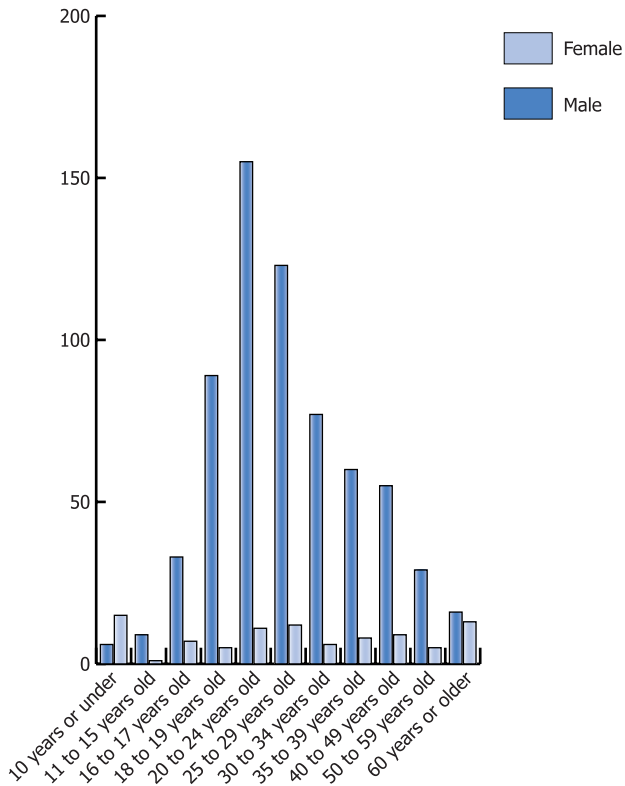


Particularly significant is the fact that, compared with their percentage of the District's population, young people are greatly over-represented among homicide victims. From 1998 through 2000, young people aged 15 to 19 accounted for 18.8 percent of homicides, but only 6.6 percent of the population.² Young adults 20-to-24 years old were victims of 22.3 percent of homicides, as compared to 9.1 percent of the population. In other words, DC residents in their late teens and early 20s make up less than 16 percent of the population, but accounted for more than 41 percent of the homicides during the three-year period studied.

² The age categories of the victims were adjusted for this exhibit in order to make comparisons with available Census data for year 2000. At this time, the Census data for the District do not include population breakdowns by individual age.

Gender and Ages of Victims

Homicide Victims: 1998-2000

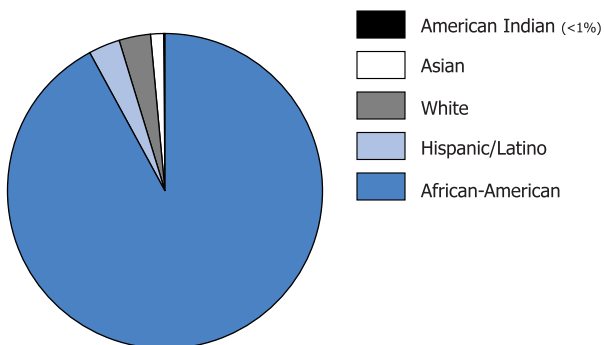


Approximately seven out of eight homicide victims in the District of Columbia are men. Of the 744 homicides that occurred between 1998 and 2000, 652 victims (87.6 percent) were male and 92 (12.4 percent) were female.

There are important differences in the age distribution of male and female homicide victims in DC. Male victims tend to be concentrated in the age categories of late teens and 20s. In fact, more than 56 percent of the male victims were aged 18 to 29; nearly three-quarters of the male victims were between 16 and 34 years of age.

While a sizable percentage of female homicide victims were also in their late teens and 20s, female victims tend to be concentrated in the youngest and oldest age groups as well. More than 16 percent of the female homicide victims were aged 10 or younger (15 of 92 female victims), making it the single largest age group of female victims. An additional 14 percent of female victims were aged 60 or older (13 of 92). Among male homicide victims, by contrast, only about 2.5 percent were 60 or older, and fewer than 1 percent were 10 or younger.

Homicide Victims: 1998-2000



Race/Ethnicity of Victims

As in previous years, the overwhelming majority of homicide victims in the District of Columbia between 1998 and 2000 were African-American. Of the 744 homicides that occurred during this three-year period, 685 – or more than 92 percent – involved African-American victims. The number of Hispanic/Latino and white victims was identical: 24 in each group, or 3.2 percent of the homicide total.

According to the 2000 Census, African-Americans account for 60 percent of the District's population, meaning they are seriously over-represented among homicide victims. By contrast, whites account for 31 percent of DC's population and persons of Hispanic or Latino origin represent nearly 8 percent.

The Suspects

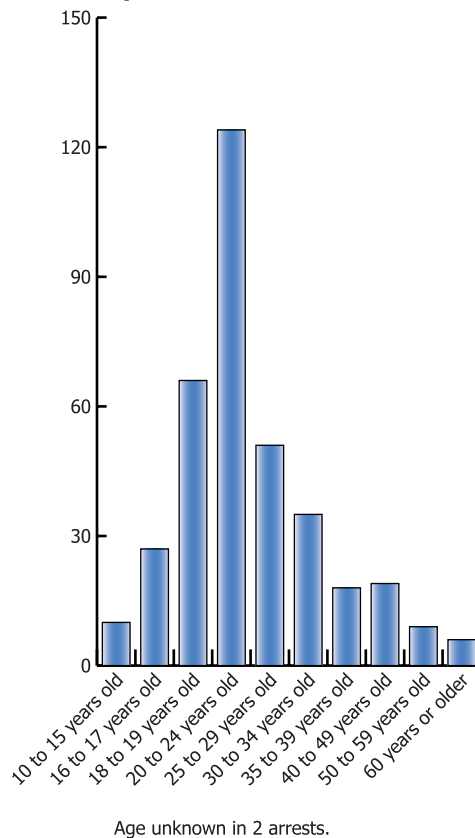
The analysis of suspects arrested for homicides occurring from 1998 through 2000 included information on 367 arrestees. The age of two suspects was not known.

Ages of Murder Suspects

A sizable majority of homicide arrestees were youths and young adults: 62.2 percent were under the age of 25. Just over one in 10 homicide arrestees (37) was a juvenile.

In general, homicide suspects in DC tend to be slightly younger than homicide victims. Twenty- to 24-year-olds composed the largest groups of both victims and offenders. However, the second most common age group for victims was 25- to 29-year-olds; for arrestees, it was 18- and 19-year-olds. Fewer than 10 percent of the murder suspects in DC were aged 40 or older.

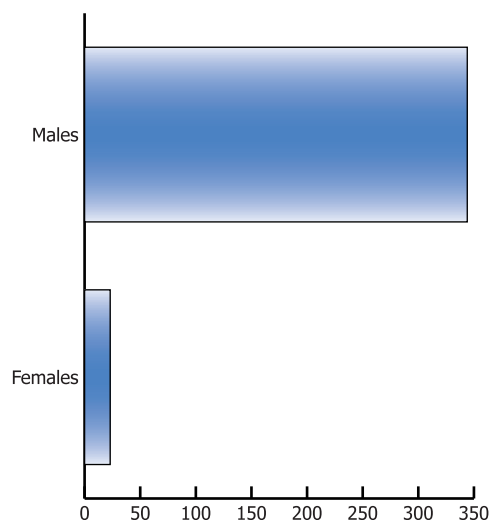
Homicide Suspects: 1998-2000



Gender of Murder Suspects

As with murder victims, the overwhelming majority of murder suspects arrested for 1998-2000 homicides were men. In fact, male involvement in homicide was even higher among arrestees (93.7 percent) than among victims (87.6 percent). Women made up 6.3 percent of the arrestee population and 12.4 percent of victims.

Homicide Suspects: 2000



Race/Ethnicity of Murder Suspects

Of the 367 suspects arrested for homicide, 345 (94 percent) were African-American – a figure roughly equivalent to the percent of homicide victims who were African-American (92.1). In other words, the overwhelming majority of homicides in the District are black-on-black crimes. Other arrestees during the three-year period included 16 Hispanic/Latino suspects (4.4 percent), five whites (1.4 percent), and one Asian (0.3 percent).

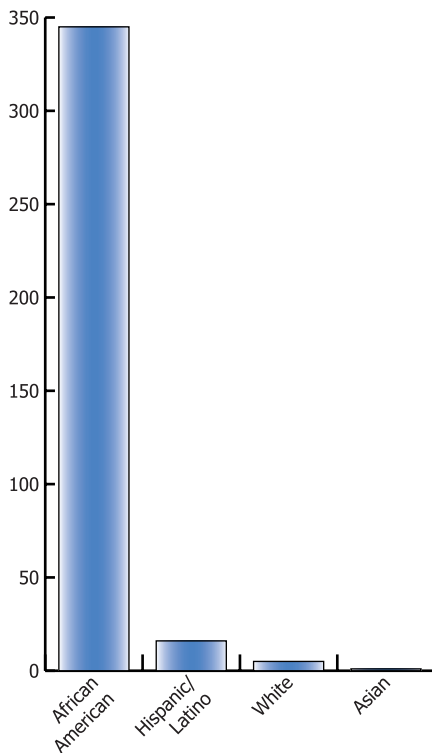
Analyzing the range of demographic information reveals that the picture of both homicide suspects and victims in the District is essentially the same: African-American males under the age of 25. Nearly 56 percent of the alleged murderers between 1998 and 2000 fit this basic profile.

Criminal History of Murder Suspects—Prior Arrests

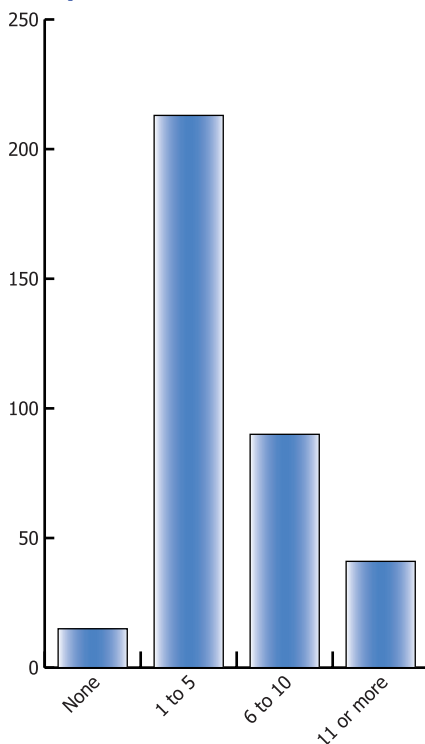
Almost every one of the 367 suspects arrested for murders committed between 1998 and 2000 had a history of arrests by the MPDC, including both violent and property crimes.³ In fact, only 15 (4.1 percent) of the arrestees had not been arrested previously by the MPDC.⁴ Nearly 60 percent of the alleged murderers had between one and five arrests. Almost 25 percent had between six and 10 arrests, and 11 percent had 11 or more prior arrests. The average arrestee had 5.3 prior arrests with the MPDC, with one suspect having 35 prior arrests.

Most murder suspects in the District not only have an arrest record with the MPDC, but also have a history of arrests for violent crimes. Only 8.2 percent of the alleged murderers did not have a prior arrest for a violent crime. In fact, the average arrestee had 2.3 prior arrests for violent crimes. Almost 83 percent had one to five prior arrests for violent crimes, and 9 percent had six or more arrests for violent crimes. The criminal history of one suspect included 12 prior arrests for violent crimes.

Homicide Suspects: 1998-2000



Homicide Suspects—Prior Arrests: 1998-2000



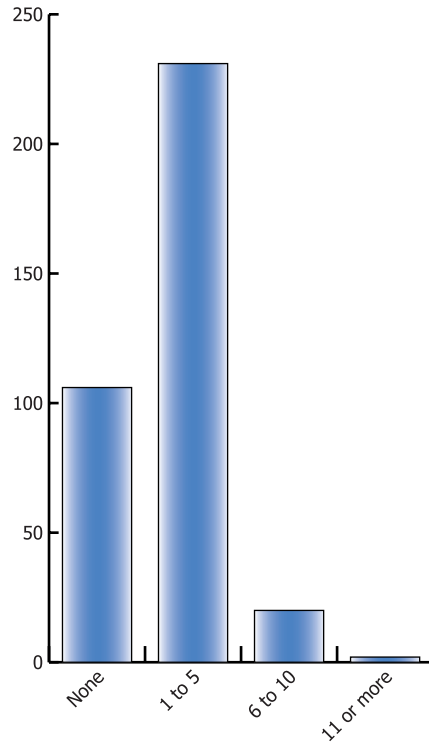
³ In this analysis, violent crimes are defined as homicides, rapes, robberies, and assaults. Property crimes are burglaries, auto thefts, arson, and larcenies. These definitions are in agreement with those used by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program.

⁴ Juvenile arrests are not included in this section. In addition, the arrests are only those by the MPDC; information on arrests by other jurisdictions was not available.

Criminal History of Murder Suspects—Prior Convictions

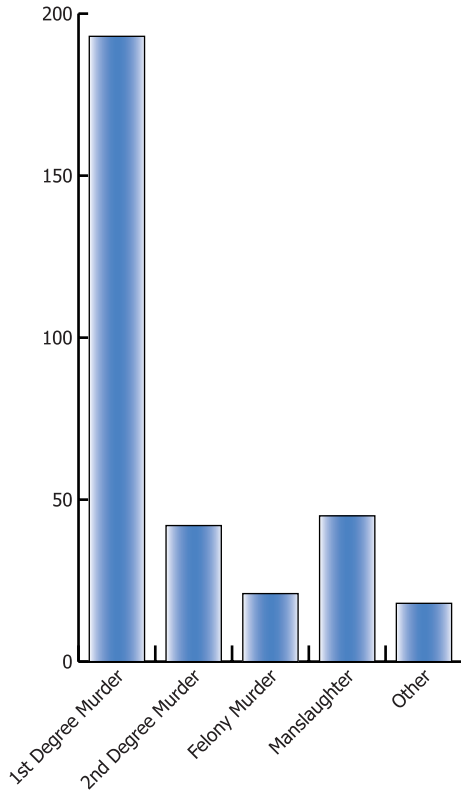
The majority of DC murder suspects not only had an arrest history with the MPDC, but also had prior convictions. About 30 percent of the suspects with prior arrests were never convicted. However, more than 64 percent had between one and five prior convictions, and 6.2 percent had six or more convictions. One individual had 32 prior convictions. The typical murder suspect had a criminal history that included two prior convictions.

Homicide Suspects—Prior Convictions: 1998-2000

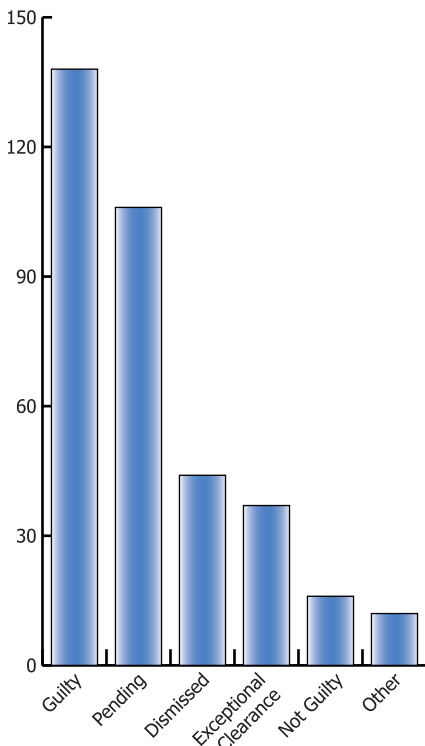


The Investigations

Homicide Charges: 1998-2000



Homicide Dispositions: 1998-2000



Primary Arrest Charge

The majority of the suspects arrested for murders occurring between 1998 and 2000 received the most serious charge by the US Attorney's Office. In 60 percent of the cases, the primary charge was first-degree murder. The primary charge was second-degree murder in 13.2 percent of the cases, and felony murder in another 6.6 percent. Just over 14 percent of the suspects were charged with manslaughter; 5.6 percent received other charges, such as accessory after the fact, conspiracy to commit murder or murder/RICO conspiracy.

Disposition of Cases

As of August 2001, dispositions had been reached in 70 percent of the 1998-2000 cases analyzed, and the majority of these dispositions involved guilty verdicts or exceptional clearances.

Of the 353 cases resulting from arrests made in 1998-2000 homicides, 106 (30 percent) were still pending at the time of the analysis. Another 138 cases (39.1 percent) resulted in guilty verdicts, and 37 (10.5 percent) involved exceptional clearances. Not-guilty verdicts were reached in only 16 cases (4.4 percent), and charges were dismissed in another 44 cases (12.5). Twelve cases (3.4 percent) resulted in other types of dispositions – for example, not guilty by reason of insanity or mistrial.

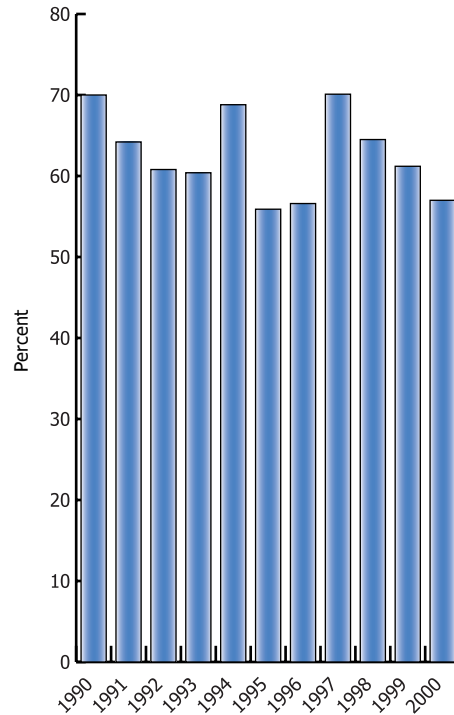
In many instances, a guilty verdict was for a lesser charge than the initial primary charge. For example, of the 46 guilty verdicts with a primary charge of first-degree murder, 30 suspects were found guilty of that charge; nine were found guilty of manslaughter; five of second-degree murder, and one each of felony murder and conspiracy to commit murder.

Clearance Rate Trends

During the 1990s, the clearance rate for homicide in the District of Columbia fluctuated, with no consistent pattern over time.⁵ Between 1990 and 2000, the clearance rate ranged from a high of 70.1 percent in 1997 to a low of 55.9 percent in 1995. The clearance rate was 70 percent or greater in two years; it was between 60 and 70 percent in six years, and was less than 60 percent in three years. Since peaking in 1997, DC's homicide clearance rate has declined in recent years, reaching 57 percent in 2000. This local trend mirrors the national picture: homicide clearances have generally declined in recent years in large cities and the country as a whole.

Just as there has been no consistent pattern in clearance rates over time in DC, there also does not appear to be a close correlation between the clearance rate and the number of homicides occurring in the District. For example, the number of homicides in 1994 and 1996 was almost identical, but the homicide clearance rate for those years was dramatically different: almost 69 percent in 1994, but only 56.6 percent in 1996. Between 1990 and 1993, when the number of homicides exceeded 450 per year, the homicide clearance rate fluctuated between 70 percent and 60 percent. In the last few years, as homicides have declined steadily in DC, the homicide clearance rate has also fallen.

Clearance Rates: 1990-2000



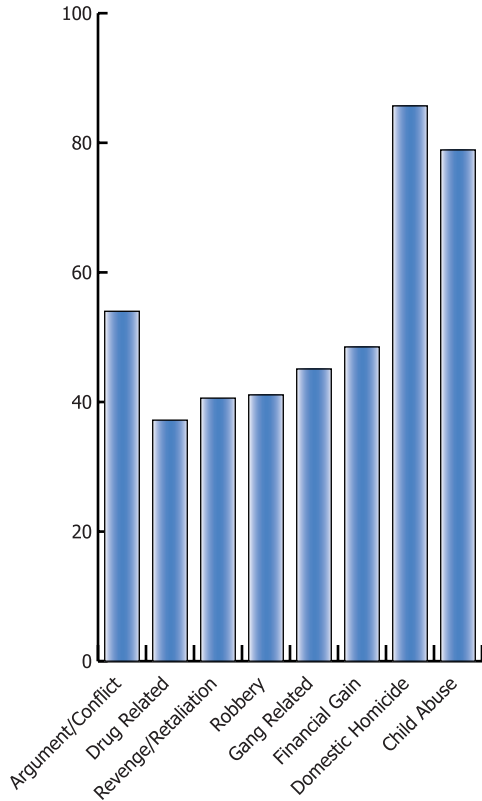
⁵ The clearance rates contained in this report represent the "UCR clearance rate," which is the standard used by the FBI for reporting homicide clearances across the United States. The UCR clearance rate is calculated by dividing the total number of homicides that occurred in a calendar year into the total number of homicides cleared during that year, regardless of the year in which the cleared homicide occurred.

Clearance Rates, by Motive

As of August 2001, the MPDC had solved 342 (46 percent) of the 744 homicides that occurred from 1998 through 2000.

Looking at clearance rates by homicide motives reveals that some of the most common types of homicide are among the most difficult to solve. While police solved more than half of the homicides in which argument/conflict was a motive, the clearance rate was much lower – 45 percent or below – for the next four most common homicide types. The clearance rate was only 37 percent for drug-related homicides, approximately 41 percent for both revenge/retaliation and robbery homicides, and about 45 percent for gang-related murders. Clearance rates were much higher for homicides that involve family members or other close individuals: nearly 86 percent for domestic murders and 76.5 percent for child abuse homicides.

Clearance Rates, by Motive: 1998-2000



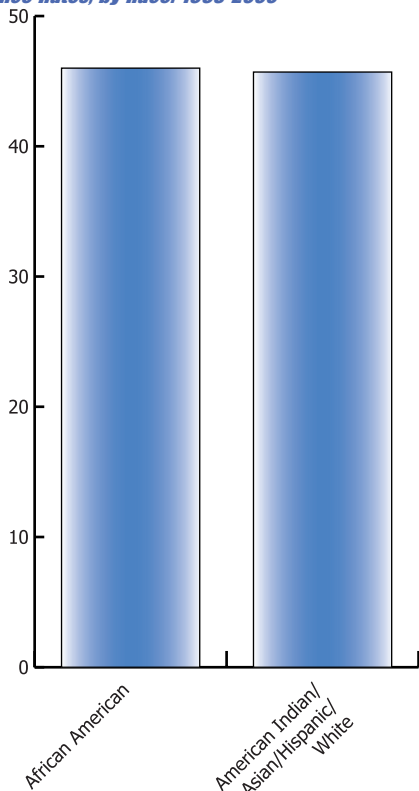
Note: Many homicides have multiple motives. Of the 744 homicides analyzed, 45.3 percent had more than one motive (for example, drugs and robbery). Therefore, the total is greater than the number of homicides. This exhibit provides information on clearances when each type of motive is present.

Clearance Rates, by Victim Demographics

Murders of women in the District are more likely to be cleared than murders of men. Between 1998 and 2000, nearly 59 percent of the homicides involving female victims were cleared, compared to just over 44 percent of the cases with male victims. This difference is largely explained by the higher closure rates for domestic and child abuse homicides, which typically involve more female than male victims.

Analyzing clearance rates by the race/ethnicity of the victim is difficult because of the relatively low numbers of Asian, Hispanic/Latino and white victims. For African-Americans, the analysis shows that 315 cases over the three-year period (46 percent) were closed. By way of comparison, there were 10 Asian victims, of which 5 cases have been closed; 24 Hispanic/Latino victims, with 12 closures; 24 white victims; and 1 American Indian victim (open-case), of which 10 have been closed. Collectively, the clearance rate for these three categories is 45.7 percent (27 closures), which is very close to the closure rate for cases involving African-American victims.

Clearance Rates, by Race: 1998-2000



Time to Closure

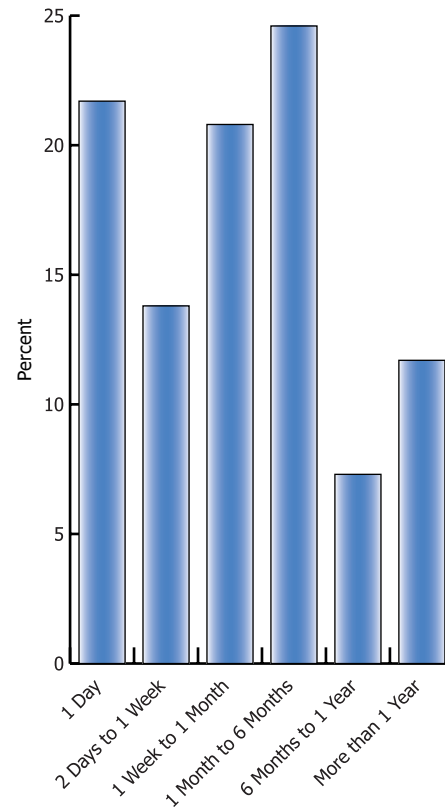
While conventional wisdom holds that most homicides are closed within the first day or two of the crime, experience in DC reveals that a sizable percentage of homicides are cleared after several weeks or even months. Of the 342 homicides occurring between 1998 and 2000 that were closed, about 22 percent took only one day for the clearance. About 35.5 percent of these cases were cleared within one week, 56.3 percent within a month, and 80.9 percent within six months.

Among closed cases, the median time for clearance was 20 days. It is interesting to note that 19 percent of the cases took more than six months to close – a figure only slightly below the clearance rate after one day.

Just as there are substantial differences in the overall clearance rates for different types of homicides, there are also major differences in the time it takes to solve a homicide based on the motives behind the case. For example, among domestic homicides that are solved, the closure typically comes within a matter of a few days (about 2.5 days on average), primarily because the offender is almost always a member of the household and is therefore immediately available. Among homicides involving arguments/conflicts that are solved, the time to closure is typically 16 days, and those involving revenge/retaliation, within 20 days.

Homicides requiring considerably longer to solve include gang-related murders (average of 79 days), drug-related homicides (59 days), and child abuse murders (45 days). These averages reflect the difficulties in determining and finding the offender, as well as gathering the necessary evidence for an arrest.

Time To Closure: 1998-2000 Homicides



	Argument/ Conflict (n=211)	Drug Related (n=92)	Revenge/ Retaliation (n=82)	Robbery (n=61)	Gang Related (n=41)	Domestic Homicides (n=24)	Child Abuse (n=15)
Clearance Time							
1 Day	26.1	12.0	18.3	6.6	9.8	41.7	0.0
2 Days to 1 Week	13.3	7.6	17.1	13.1	7.3	25.0	6.7
1 Week to 1 Month	22.7	15.2	22.0	26.2	19.5	4.2	20.0
1 Month to 6 Months	22.3	34.8	15.9	34.4	26.8	16.7	53.3
6 Months to 1 Year	4.7	10.9	6.1	11.5	9.8	4.2	6.7
More than 1 Year	10.9	19.6	20.7	8.2	26.8	8.3	13.3
Total	100.0	100.1	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.1	100.0
Average (Medians)	16 days	59 days	20 days	37 days	79 days	2.5 days	45 days

Note: Numbers in the exhibit are percentages adding to 100 percent for each column.

Implications and Next Steps

The value of this type of detailed analysis of homicides in the District of Columbia is really threefold. First, the analysis provides a wealth of information that serves as a baseline against which future progress can be measured. Second, the analysis points to those broad areas that the MPDC and our partners in community policing must focus on, in order to improve the homicide picture in the District. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the analysis serves to inform the specific organizational and operational changes the Department must make if we are to achieve our dual-track goals: further reducing the murder rate, while substantially increasing the homicide clearance rate.

The data show quite clearly that there is no one factor that can explain homicide patterns in the District over the last several years. Similarly, there is no one enforcement strategy or organizational change that will single-handedly reduce the murder rate or improve homicide investigations. Homicide in the District is a complex, multi-faceted problem. As a result, the responses to the problem must be multi-faceted and wide-ranging as well.

Following are some of the critical areas in which the MPDC and our partners in community policing will need to devote additional resources and reform efforts in the coming months and years. The need for other changes will undoubtedly become apparent as homicide patterns continue to change and additional data about those patterns are collected and analyzed.

Organization and Management of Homicide and Major Crime Investigations

Over the years, the Metropolitan Police Department has used a number of organizational models for the investigation of homicides and other major crimes. And as the data on clearance rates show, the results under these different models have been uneven at best: no one approach produced a consistently high clearance rate for homicides. The obvious conclusion: while organizational structure is an important part of the equation, there are numerous other factors – the quality of investigative personnel; their selection, retention, training, and supervision; technology; and policies and procedures – that also play a significant role in the success of criminal investigations. The MPDC is working on reforms in all of these areas.

Changing the organizational structure of homicide investigations – and shaking up the organizational culture of the people within that structure – are critical first steps. Almost three years ago, the MPDC disbanded the previously centralized homicide investigation unit and placed detectives out into the seven police districts to investigate homicides and other violent crimes. The theory behind this change was sound: like their counterparts in patrol, detectives would be more effective if they worked in – and became familiar with – a particular community, its problems and resources. But while the theory was

sound, in practice the movement of homicide detectives to the police districts has not produced the necessary results, as measured by the homicide clearance rate. While the clearance rates in some districts have been laudable, the overall decline in homicide clearances between 1998 and 2000 is clearly unacceptable.

The homicide analysis reveals some of the shortcomings inherent in our current investigative model. Perhaps the biggest problem is that this approach fails to provide the flexibility needed to adjust resources based on changes in homicide patterns. The analysis demonstrated that homicides are not spread evenly across location and time, but rather tend to occur in selected geographic pockets and to spurt at certain hours of the day and certain days of the week. More importantly, these patterns are subject to rapid changes, as homicide motives or locations may shift dramatically within a short period of time.

Staffing a decentralized investigative model in this type of environment – seven police districts, three tours of duty, seven days a week, with union restrictions on the movement of personnel – poses serious challenges. The decentralized model tends to dilute the talent pool of investigators and supervisors and to

place tremendous pressure on the members within a unit. In some respects, the decentralized model requires an abundance of high-achieving, experienced detectives to adequately cover assignments in all districts at all times of the day. In recent years, however, the MPDC – through retirements, promotions and other factors – has experienced an overall diminution of talent within its investigative ranks.

With an improved selection process, a centralized structure will maximize the investigative talent pool and provide greater agility and flexibility in responding to the changing nature of homicides in the District, especially rapid changes in motives, locations, or victim or offender characteristics. Given the new reality of terrorism and the threat facing our city, a centralized investigative model also provides the resources and expertise needed to respond more effectively to the possibility of mass casualties or other unpredictable events. Finally, centralized command and control of major crime investigations – something the Department began implementing in June 2001 – can ensure greater consistency and accountability in individual investigations. These two values are the cornerstone of the Department's new Homicide Standard Operating Procedure; implementing the SOP will be easier and more effective in a centralized environment.

- **Next steps:** By January 1, 2002, the MPDC will expand and staff a centralized Violent Crimes Branch. The unit will be located in a community-based facility (tentatively, Regional Operations Command-East), under the command of the Superintendent of Detectives. Members of the VCB will investigate serious violent crimes including homicides, serious AWIK (assault with intent to kill) offenses where the victim may die, serial rapes, pattern robberies and other major crimes that occur anywhere in the District. In early 2002, the Department also plans to incorporate a response unit for the investigation of sexual assaults, except for child sexual assaults, into the new VCB. The unit will employ a team approach to case investigations, thereby maximizing its resources for investigating different types of homicides occurring in different parts of the city.

To ensure maximum coordination, the unit will work closely with both specialized units (such as narcotics and gangs) and PSA teams. The VCB will also include a Victim and Family Liaison function that will provide regular follow-up with the survivors of homicide victims, as well as the victims of other serious crimes. Other violent and property crime detectives will remain in the police districts, but also under the centralized command of the Superintendent of Detectives.

The Department is also merging its Mobile Crime and Crime Scene Search functions to provide for more effective investigatory support. By January 1, 2002, the centralized Crime Scene Examination Section will move into a new facility specifically designed for the critical function. The new unit will help ensure not only that crime scene resources will be available to the VCB and other detectives, but also that the quality of the work will be enhanced. Members of the unit will receive more rigorous and ongoing training. Protocols will ensure that evidence collection, processing and storage are consistent and effective. As with investigations in general, a centralized command and control crime scene processing will promote quality and accountability in this critical investigative support function.

Concurrent with these organizational changes will be continued reforms in how investigative personnel are selected, evaluated, trained and supervised. Assignments in the new VCB will be based on talent and potential, not simply on the fact that someone has been assigned to homicide investigations in the past. A new, more rigorous investigator selection process has already been introduced, and will be adapted to the selection of members for the VCB. Training for investigators has been expanded, and this process will continue for the VCB as well. Finally, centralized command and control will hold supervisors accountable for ensuring that homicide investigations follow all of the protocols and milestones contained in the MPDC's new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

Realignment of Intervention and Prevention Efforts

As the MPDC works toward the dual goals of continued homicide reductions and an improved homicide clearance rate, the new Violent Crimes Branch will complement – not be independent of – other crime-fighting efforts. While the Department moves to a centralized approach to investigating homicides and other major crimes, our prevention and intervention strategies will remain firmly rooted in the “Policing for Prevention” principles of focused law enforcement, neighborhood partnerships and systemic prevention.

The increases in gang- and drug-related homicides over last few years support the Department’s recent decisions to create a specialized Gang Unit and Narcotics Strike Force. (Preliminary analysis of 2001 data suggests that these units have already had an impact on these types of homicides.) These units will need to continue – and more strategically target – their focused law enforcement efforts on those neighborhoods experiencing drug- and gang-related violence. Stronger collaboration between these specialized units and the PSA teams where these homicides are taking place will be critical.

Also critical will be the continuation – and expansion – of the Department’s youth violence prevention efforts. And these intervention and prevention programs must continue to focus not only on juveniles, but also on young adults – especially young black males – in their late teens and early 20s. As the number of juvenile homicide victims and offenders has declined sharply in the last few years, young adults have become especially over-represented among both homicide victims and offenders.

- **Next steps:** The managers of the Department’s drug, gang and youth violence reduction efforts will immediately re-assess their enforcement, intervention and prevention strategies in light of this homicide analysis. Particular attention will be paid to those demographic groups and neighborhoods that continue to experience intolerable levels of violence. The 10 PSAs with the highest number of homicides over the last three years will re-evaluate their PSA plans and ensure that violence prevention is specifically addressed using enforcement, partnership and prevention strategies. In addition, the Department will re-evaluate the sizes and boundaries of some PSAs to see if crime-fighting can be enhanced and additional efficiencies realized through changes.

Addressing the Problem of Repeat Offenders

The analysis found that practically every suspect arrested for homicide had a history – often a long one – of prior arrests by the MPDC and frequently prior convictions as well. In many cases, these prior cases were for other, non-lethal violent crimes. Efficiently identifying these repeat offenders – and effectively interrupting their criminal careers – will help to prevent further victimizations, including homicides.

This challenge will be greater than ever in the next few years, as the number of offenders leaving prison and returning to the community increases dramatically. Meeting this challenge will take the resources and energy of much more than the MPDC. Indeed, the entire criminal justice system will need to refocus its attention on this growing population of ex-offenders and the problem of repeat offenders in general. The homicide analysis reveals the deadly consequences of not taking action.

Promising new partnerships, such as the CORE program (Conditions of Release Enforcement) and the MPDC-Court Services and Offenders Supervision Agency partnership program for probationers and parolees, provide a foundation for building the type of collaborative effort that will be needed in the future. Because so many offenders – especially repeat offenders – have substance abuse problems, providing meaningful treatment to this population will also be a priority. Finally, the support of the community – employers, unions, the faith community, not-for-profit organizations and others – will be critical in providing educational and employment opportunities that ex-offenders will need in order to become productive members of society and not lapse into recidivism.

- **Next steps:** The DC Criminal Justice Coordinating Council should convene a task force to study and develop the range of responses and interventions that will be needed to reduce the impact that repeat offenders have on the homicide rate and community safety in general. Particular attention should be paid to the large population of offenders who will be released from prison and back to the community in the next few years.

Reducing Firearm Violence

The analysis shows that nearly eight out of every 10 homicides in the District are committed with a firearm, usually a handgun. It is obvious, therefore, that reducing the number of firearm homicides will be a major step to reducing the number of homicides overall. Offenders who rely on firearms are not likely to switch to other weapons, and even if they do, those weapons will never be as lethal as firearms.

Again, reducing the number of firearms in the District and the level of firearm violence are not goals that the MPDC can achieve on its own. Achieving them will require a range of enforcement, legislative, prosecutorial, technological and community responses.

Programs such as the recent gun buy-backs have reduced the number of firearms in our homes and on our streets – and, as a result, probably helped to prevent not only some crimes of passion, but also accidental shootings and suicide attempts. Still, the biggest challenge facing the District is disarming the career criminals who use handguns and other firearms to carry out a range of crimes, up to and including homicide. More aggressive enforcement, tougher penalties and large-scale operations targeting gun trafficking are all elements of the equation for reducing firearm violence.

- **Next steps:** The DC Criminal Justice Coordinating Council should convene a special task force to study in-depth the problem of firearm violence in the District. The task force should develop recommendations that serve to reduce the availability of firearms and hold accountable those who violate firearms laws. Among the issues that should be explored are the penalties for committing a firearms offense in the District, young people's access to firearms, and the availability and legal issues surrounding the use of new firearms detection technology.

Reducing Domestic and Child Abuse Homicides

While the analysis revealed that domestic violence and child abuse are factors in only a small percentage of all homicides in the District, they play a major role in the homicides of women and children. The analysis also found that these types of homicides are often the easiest to clear, and in a relatively short period of time, largely because the offender is someone close to the victim. This analysis suggests that if these crimes can be solved after the fact, many of them can also be prevented before the fact.

The MPDC – and DC government in general – has made great strides in the last few years to enhance our response to domestic violence and child abuse. Within the last year, the MPDC created a Family Violence and Child Protection Unit and a Special Victims Unit to handle serious cases involving child victims of abuse, including child sexual abuse. The Department has created a Domestic Violence Coordinator position and established new partnerships with advocacy groups, service agencies and other organizations involved in this critical area.

Success in the future will hinge largely on greater sharing of information among domestic violence and child abuse prevention partners – and more swift and effective action being taken, based on that information.

- **Next steps:** The MPDC's Domestic Violence Coordinator will immediately conduct an in-depth analysis of all domestic violence and child abuse homicides that have occurred in recent years, paying particular attention to both the victims' and the offenders' prior contacts with the criminal justice system. Based on this analysis, the coordinator, working with the full range of agencies that focus on domestic and family violence, will develop a set of responses and recommendations designed to improve the justice system's early intervention in these cases.

The Data

Homicides: 1990-2000

Year	Homicides
1990	474
1991	479
1992	443
1993	454
1994	414
1995	379
1996	304
1997	301
1998	261
1999	241
2000	242

Selected Motives, by Gender of Victim

	Males	Females
Argument/Conflict	352	39
Drug Related	226	21
Revenge/Retaliation	189	14
Robbery	139	12
Gang Related	87	4
Domestic Homicide	12	16
Child Abuse	6	13

Homicide Motives

	Number	Percent of Homicides
Argument/Conflict	392	52.7%
Drug Related	246	33.1%
Revenge/Retaliation	203	27.3%
Robbery	151	20.3%
Gang Related	91	12.2%
Other	44	5.5%
Undetermined	38	5.1%
Financial Gain	33	4.4%
Domestic Homicide	28	3.8%
Drive-by Shooting	20	2.7%
Child Abuse	19	2.6%
Sexual Motivation	12	1.6%
Burglary	8	1.1%
Arson	6	0.8%
Witness Elimination	3	0.4%
Kidnapping	3	0.4%
Crime Concealment	3	0.4%
Organized Crime	2	0.3%
Contract Killing	2	0.3%
Bias/Hate	1	0.2%

Note: More than 1 motive could be marked for a homicide

Selected Motives, by Year

	1998	1999	2000	Total
Gang Related	21	33	37	91
Robbery	53	51	47	151
Revenge/Retaliation	63	75	65	203
Drug Related	60	87	99	246
Argument/Conflict	149	112	131	392

Homicide: Weapons

	Number	Percent
Firearms	578	76.4%
Knife/Cutting	83	11.0%
Hands/Feet	27	3.6%
Club	24	3.2%
Fire	11	1.5%
Other	34	4.5%
Total	757	100.0%

Note: Unless indicated otherwise, the data tables in this section cover the years 1998, 1999 and 2000

Homicide: Month of Occurrence

	1998	1999	2000	Total	Percent
Jan	23	25	30	78	10.5%
Feb	16	21	24	61	8.2%
March	20	30	18	68	9.1%
April	23	14	17	54	7.3%
May	21	10	17	48	6.5%
June	23	20	17	60	8.1%
July	23	17	27	67	9.0%
Aug	27	17	23	67	9.0%
Sept	19	17	19	55	7.4%
Oct	21	31	18	70	9.4%
Nov	21	20	15	56	7.5%
Dec	24	19	17	60	8.1%
Total	261	241	242	744	100.0%

Homicide: Hour of Occurrence

	1998	1999	2000	Total	Percent
Mid.-1 am	13	13	24	58	7.9%
1 am-2 am	18	17	13	48	6.6%
2 am-3 am	18	11	16	45	6.2%
3 am-4 am	11	10	17	38	5.2%
4 am-5 am	6	11	15	32	4.4%
5 am-6 am	6	2	5	13	1.8%
6 am-7 am	5	8	9	22	3.0%
7 am-8 am	8	7	5	20	2.7%
8 am-9 am	4	6	3	13	1.8%
9 am-10 am	7	5	1	13	1.8%
10 am-11 am	7	7	4	18	2.5%
11 am-Noon	7	6	3	16	2.2%
Noon-1 pm	6	6	4	16	2.2%
1 pm-2 pm	10	3	8	21	2.9%
2 pm-3 pm	6	2	8	16	2.2%
3 pm-4 pm	18	6	10	34	4.7%
4 pm-5 pm	13	11	2	26	3.6%
5 pm-6 pm	9	7	5	21	2.9%
6 pm-7 pm	7	10	6	23	3.1%
7 pm-8 pm	5	13	6	24	3.3%
8 pm-9 pm	11	14	14	39	5.3%
9 pm-10 pm	14	12	16	41	5.6%
10 pm-11pm	26	25	15	66	9.0%
11 pm-Mid.	21	25	22	68	9.3%
Total	256	237	231	731	100.0%

Note: Time unknown in 13 cases.

Homicide: Day of Occurrence

	1998	1999	2000	Total	Percent
Sunday	47	43	30	120	16.1%
Monday	37	25	27	89	12.0%
Tuesday	38	38	36	112	15.1%
Wednesday	31	34	30	95	12.8%
Thursday	26	22	41	89	12.0%
Friday	43	34	37	114	15.3%
Saturday	39	45	41	125	16.8%
Total	261	241	242	744	100.0%

Homicide: Location Type

Location	Number	Percent
Outdoor Locations	403	56.4%
Living Quarters	196	27.4%
Vehicles	71	9.9%
Business	25	3.5%
Other	20	2.8%
Total	715	100.0%

Note: Specific location not known in 29 cases.

Ages of Victims

Age Categories	Victims	Percent
10 years or under	21	2.8%
11 to 15 years old	10	1.3%
16 to 17 years old	40	5.4%
18 to 19 years old	94	12.6%
20 to 24 years old	166	22.3%
25 to 29 years old	135	18.1%
30 to 34 years old	83	11.2%
35 to 39 years old	68	9.1%
40 to 49 years old	64	8.6%
50 to 59 years old	34	4.6%
60 years or older	29	3.9%
Total	744	100.0%

Ages of Victims

	Frequency	Percent
14 years or younger	25	3.4%
15 to 19 years old	140	18.8%
20 to 24 years old	166	22.3%
25 to 34 years old	218	29.3%
35 to 44 years old	109	14.7%
45 years or older	86	11.6%
Total	744	100.1%

Race/Ethnicity of Victims

	Number	Percent
African-American	685	92.1%
Hispanic/Latino	24	3.2%
White	24	3.2%
Asian	10	1.3%
American Indian	1	0.1%
Total	744	100.0%

DC Population (2000 Census)

	Number	Percent
14 years or younger	97,939	17.1%
15 to 19 years old	37,867	6.6%
20 to 24 years old	51,823	9.1%
25 to 34 years old	101,762	17.8%
35 to 44 years old	87,677	15.3%
45 years or older	194,991	34.1%
Total	572,059	100.0%

Ages of Suspects

	Number	Percent
10 to 15 years old	10	2.7%
16 to 17 years old	27	7.4%
18 to 19 years old	66	18.1%
20 to 24 years old	124	34.0%
25 to 29 years old	51	14.0%
30 to 34 years old	35	9.6%
35 to 39 years old	18	4.9%
40 to 49 years old	19	5.2%
50 to 59 years old	9	2.5%
60 years or older	6	1.6%
Total	365	100.0%

Note: Age unknown in 2 arrests.

Ages and Gender of Victims

	Male	Female	Total
10 years or under	6	15	21
11 to 15 years old	9	1	10
16 to 17 years old	33	7	40
18 to 19 years old	89	5	94
20 to 24 years old	155	11	166
25 to 29 years old	123	12	135
30 to 34 years old	77	6	83
35 to 39 years old	60	8	68
40 to 49 years old	55	9	64
50 to 59 years old	29	5	34
60 years or older	16	13	29
Total	652	92	744

Gender of Suspects

	Number	Percent
Males	344	93.7%
Females	23	6.2%
Total	367	100.0%

Race/Ethnicity of Suspects

	Number	Percent
African American	345	94.0%
Hispanic	16	4.4%
White	5	1.4%
Asian	1	0.3%
Total	367	100.1%

Suspects: Prior Arrest History

	Number	Percent
None	15	4.2%
1 to 5	213	59.3%
6 to 10	90	25.1%
11 or more	41	11.4%
Total	359	100.0%

Disposition of Cases

	Numbers	Percent
Guilty	138	39.1%
Pending	106	30.0%
Dismissed	44	12.5%
Exceptional Clearance	37	10.5%
Not Guilty	16	4.5%
Other	12	3.4%
Total	353	100.0%

Suspects: Prior Arrest History for Violent Crimes

	Number	Percent
None	30	8.2%
1 to 5	304	82.8%
6 to 10	23	6.3%
11 or more	10	2.7%
Total	367	100.0%

Clearance Rates: 1990-2000

Year	Rate
1990	70.0
1991	64.2
1992	60.8
1993	60.4
1994	68.8
1995	55.9
1996	56.6
1997	70.1
1998	64.5
1999	61.2
2000	57.0

Suspects: Prior Conviction History

	Number	Percent
None	106	29.5%
1 to 5	231	64.3%
6 to 10	20	5.6%
11 or more	2	0.6%
Total	359	100.0%

Primary Arrest Charge

	Number	Percent
1st Degree Murder	193	60.5%
2nd Degree Murder	42	13.2%
Felony Murder	21	6.6%
Manslaughter	45	14.1%
Other	18	5.6%
Total	319	100.0%

Clearance Rate, by Motive

Motive	Total	Closed	Percent
Argument/Conflict	391	211	54.0%
Drug Related	247	92	37.2%
Revenge/Retaliation	202	82	40.6%
Robbery	151	62	41.1%
Gang Related	91	41	45.1%
Financial Gain	33	16	48.5%
Domestic Homicide	28	24	85.7%
Drive-by Shooting	20	6	30.0%
Child Abuse	19	15	78.9%
Sexual Motivation	12	5	41.7%
Burglary	8	6	75.0%
Arson	6	1	16.7%
Crime Concealment	3	2	66.7%
Kidnapping	3	2	66.7%
Witness Elimination	3	2	66.7%
Contract Killing	2	2	100.0%
Organized Crime	2	1	50.0%
Bias/Hate	1	0	0%
Other	43	34	79.1%

Note: Many homicides have multiple motives. Of the 744 homicides analyzed, 45.3 percent had more than one motive (for example, drugs and robbery). Therefore, the total is greater than the number of homicides. This exhibit provides information on clearances when each type of motive is present.

Open v. Closed Cases, by Race

	Total Cases	Closed Cases	Percent
African American	689	316	45.9%
Hispanic	23	12	52.2%
White	20	8	40.0%
Asian	11	6	54.5%
American Indian	1	0	0%
Total	743	342	100.0%

Clearance: Time to Closure

	Frequency	Percent
1 Day	74	21.7%
2 Days to 1 Week	47	13.8%
1 Week to 1 Month	71	20.8%
1 Month to 6 Months	84	24.6%
6 Months to 1 Year	25	7.3%
More than 1 Year	40	11.7%
Total	341	100.0%

Clearance Rate, by Victim Gender

	Total Cases	Closed Cases	Percent
Male	652	288	44.2%
Female	92	54	58.7%
Total	744	342	100.0%

The Appendix

Definitions of Motives

Argument/Conflict

A disagreement between two or more parties with intent to provoke a breach of the peace by annoying, disturbing, interfering, or offending others. For example, two men are playing cards and one accuses the other of cheating. They begin to yell at one another until a physical altercation ensues. One of the two men pulls a knife from his back pocket and stabs the alleged card cheater. The victim succumbs as a result of knife wounds. The motive in this homicide is an argument over a card game.

Arson

The burning of one's own property with intent to defraud or injure another; the malicious burning, destruction, or injury of another's property; or the malicious burning of fences, woods, or crops. For example, an owner of a local restaurant is about to lose his business because he can not pay his bills. He decides to burn down his business in order to collect the insurance money. One evening after business hours, the owner douses the building with gasoline, strikes a match, and soon the place is an inferno. The new grill chef was cleaning up her work station at the time the smoke began to seep into the back kitchen. She was overcome and died as a result of smoke inhalation. The motive in this homicide is arson.

Bias/Hate

A criminal act that demonstrates a prejudice based on the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibility, physical handicap, matriculation, or political affiliations. For example, a homophobic man decides that all homosexual men should be removed from the earth. He waits outside of a known gay club until a homosexual couple emerges from the building. He follows them to their vehicle, pulls a handgun from the waist of his jeans, and begins firing, all the time shouting, "Die sinners, die!" The motive in these homicides is the offender's bias against homosexuals.

Burglary

The unlawful entry of a dwelling, bank, store, warehouse, shop, stable, or other building or any apartment or room with the intent to commit any criminal offense, whether at the time occupied or not. For example, a seventeen-year old kid decides to break into his neighbor's house to steal some money for a new pair of sneakers. He cuts a hole in the screen of the rear bedroom window. Upon gaining entry, he is startled to find the neighbor's daughter walking into the room. He grabs the nearest lamp and repeatedly hits her over the head. The victim dies as a result of blunt force trauma to the head. The motive of this resulting homicide is burglary.

Child Abduction (under 18 years)

To seize, confine, entice, decoy, kidnap, abduct, conceal, or carry away a child under the age of 18 years by any means whatsoever; or to abduct, take, or carry away a child with the intent to prevent a lawful custodian from exercising right to custody of the child. This includes a parent who intentionally conceals a child from the child's other parent or a relative who harbors the child with the intent to deprive a parent the right of limited custody or visitation. For example, the grandmother of an eight-year old boy believes that the boy's biological father is a drug abusing dirtbag who does not deserve to see his son. She offers to baby sit for the weekend. When the father returns Sunday to pick up his son, the grandmother says that he cannot have him back, takes the boy, jumps into her car, and drives off. As she races down the highway she loses control of her vehicle, hits a tree, and the boy dies as a result of blunt force trauma upon impact of the dashboard. The motive is the grandmother's abduction of her grandson with the intent to keep him away from his legal guardian.

Child Abuse

The intentional or reckless torture, beating, or otherwise maltreatment of a child under 18 years of age; or any conduct which creates a grave risk of bodily injury to a child, and thereby causes bodily injury, to include any intent to abandon the child. For example, a woman who recently gave birth to a baby girl is suffering from depression. One evening as the baby is crying for food, the mother storms into her room, picks the child up and shakes her until she stops crying. The child dies as a result of “shaken baby syndrome”. The motive in this homicide is child abuse.

Contract Killing

The exchange of money, goods, or other services for the killing of another individual by deliberate means and with malice aforethought. For example, a woman believes that her husband is cheating on her. She refuses to get divorced because of religious reasons. She decides to pay her sister’s boyfriend, a recently released felon, \$10,000 to kill her husband and make sure that it looks like an accident. She pays him half up front. The next day, her husband wrecks his car on the way home from work as a result of the brake lines being cut and he dies on impact. The contract placed on the husband’s life is the motive in this homicide.

Crime Concealment

The intentional seizing, hiding, concealing, or covering up of a criminal act, to include persons and instruments involved in the commission of the crime. For example, police respond to an apartment with a search warrant for narcotics. When the owner hears the police at the door he empties a bag of cocaine into his son’s morning milkshake. The five-year old dies as a result of an overdose. The father’s motive was an attempt to hide the drugs from the police, however the result was the death of his son.

Domestic Homicide

The deliberate and premeditated killing of another family member, to include: any person with whom the offender is related by blood, legal custody, marriage, having a child in common, or with whom the offender shares or has shared a mutual residence; or any person with whom the offender maintains or maintained a romantic relationship not necessarily including a sexual relationship. For example, a woman tells her boyfriend that she wants to see other people and she is currently sleeping with several other people. The boyfriend becomes enraged. He tells her that she belongs to him and no one else. As the girlfriend attempts to leave the boyfriend grabs her by the arm, throws her to the ground, and strangles her until she ceases to breathe. This is a domestic homicide.

Drive-by Shooting

The act of firing a gun from a vehicle with intent to kill or injure others. For example, there is a nightclub in a known gang territory. One evening around three in the morning as people are leaving the club, a gray SUV pulls up in front of the club. The passenger rolls down his window, displays a firearm, and begins shooting, injuring five people and killing two. The drive-by shooting is the motive in this case.

Drug-related

Any criminal act that directly or indirectly involves substances recognized as a controlled substance. For example, a man enters a known drug district to purchase crack cocaine. He locates a dealer and gives the dealer cash for the drugs. The dealer states that the man owes him another \$50.00 and the man refuses to pay or return the crack. At this time, the drug dealer pulls a handgun from his jacket, fires the gun, and kills the buyer. This is a drug-related homicide.

Financial Gain

Any criminal act committed with the intent to obtain a monetary sum. For example, a woman had been living with a guy for sixteen years. She knows that upon the death of her common law husband, she will inherit the house as well as his bank account. One evening, she poisons him and he dies in his sleep. The motivation for this homicide is financial gain.

Gang-Related

A group of two or more individuals involved in any type of criminal activity, typically recognized as gang members by their neighborhood. For example, as part of a new gang member's initiation, the juvenile delinquent must find and kill one of the members of the rival gang. He goes to a local park, known to be frequented by the rival gang, locates one of the crew, and stabs him as he walks by. The rival gang member dies as a result of a stab wound to the chest. This is a gang-related homicide.

Kidnapping (18 years or older)

To seize, confine, inveigle, entice, decoy, abduct, conceal, or carry away any individual by any means whatsoever with the intent to obtain a ransom or reward or for any purpose seen as a benefit to the offender. For example, a man plans to kidnap the Mayor's daughter in order to obtain a huge ransom. He follows her to the gym one Sunday morning and waits in the parking lot near his van until she comes back outside. As she does, he asks for her help in opening the rear door of his vehicle since his hands are full. As she assists this stranger, he pushes her into the vehicle, jumps on top of the woman, ties her hands and feet, and places a gag over her mouth. He drives about thirty minutes and realizes how quiet his prize has been. The woman died as a result of suffocation due to the duct tape being placed over both her nose and mouth. The motive of this homicide is kidnapping.

Organized Crime

A group of individuals attempting to structure a criminal enterprise. For example, the Mafia wants to buy land to build a gambling casino. The owner of the property refuses to sell and is subsequently shot. This homicide is the result of the organized crime motivation.

Revenge

A violent act committed against another person as the result of retaliation for a perceived wrong done to the offender. For example, a mother's daughter is killed in a drunk driving accident as the result of the daughter's boyfriend driving while intoxicated. The mother, seeking vengeance, locates the boy leaving the movie theater one evening. She accelerates her vehicle and runs the boy over, reverses, and runs him over for a second time. The boy dies as a result of this trauma. The motivation for this homicide is revenge for the death of this woman's daughter.

Robbery

The taking of anything of value from another person or their immediate possession by force or violence, whether against resistance or by sudden or stealthy seizure or snatching, or by putting the person in fear. For example, a couple is walking down the street and is approached by a man wearing a long jacket who has his right hand in his jacket pocket. The stranger stops and says that he has a gun and for the couple to give him all of their cash quickly. The man refuses and is shot five times by the thief. The motivation for this homicide is robbery.

Sexual Motivation

To engage in or cause another person to engage in or submit to a sexual act by using force; threatening or placing that other person in reasonable fear that any person will be subjected to death, bodily injury, or kidnapping; rendering that other person unconscious; or after administering a drug, intoxicant, or other similar substance that substantially impairs the ability of that other person to appraise or control his or her conduct. For example, a man breaks into an elderly woman's apartment with the intent to rape her. He attacks her while she is sleeping. The woman dies of a heart attack as a result of the trauma. This homicide resulted from the motivation of rape by the offender.

Witness Elimination

The deliberate and premeditated killing of a person as the result of that person's involvement as a witness in another court case. For example, an eighteen-year old boy was a witness to a shooting three months ago and has agreed to aid the police in their investigation by testifying against the offender. The offender's friend follows the witness from the police station and shoots him twice in the back of the head while the witness is parked at a red light in his vehicle. The motivation for this homicide is to eliminate a witness who would prove damaging in another criminal case.

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