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When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2008 Homicide Data

**Females Murdered by Males in
Single Victim/Single Offender Incidents**

September 2010

The Violence Policy Center (VPC) is a national non-profit educational organization that conducts research and public education on violence in America and provides information and analysis to policymakers, journalists, advocates, and the general public. This study was funded with the support of the David Bohnett Foundation and The Joyce Foundation. Past studies released by the VPC include:

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- *Cease Fire: A Comprehensive Strategy to Reduce Firearms Violence* (Revised, October 1997)

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Introduction

Intimate partner violence against women is all too common and takes many forms. The most serious is homicide by an intimate partner.¹ Guns can easily turn domestic violence into domestic homicide. One federal study on homicide among intimate partners found that female intimate partners are more likely to be murdered with a firearm than all other means combined, concluding that “the figures demonstrate the importance of reducing access to firearms in households affected by IPV [intimate partner violence].”²

Gun use does not need to result in a fatality to involve domestic violence. A study by Harvard School of Public Health researchers analyzed gun use at home and concluded that “hostile gun displays against family members may be more common than gun use in self-defense, and that hostile gun displays are often acts of domestic violence directed against women.”³

The U.S. Department of Justice has found that women are far more likely to be the victims of violent crimes committed by intimate partners than men, especially when a weapon is involved. Moreover, women are much more likely to be victimized at home than in any other place.⁴

A woman must consider the risks of having a gun in her home, whether she is in a domestic violence situation or not. While two thirds of women who own guns acquired them “primarily for protection against crime,” the results of a California analysis show that “purchasing a handgun provides no protection against homicide among women and is associated with an increase in their risk for intimate partner homicide.”⁵ A 2003 study about the risks of firearms in the home found that females living with a gun in the home were nearly three times more likely to be murdered than

¹ An intimate partner or intimate acquaintance is defined as a spouse, common-law spouse, ex-spouse, or girlfriend/boyfriend.

² Leonard J. Paulozzi et al, “Surveillance for Homicide Among Intimate Partners—United States, 1981-1998,” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) Surveillance Summaries* 50 (October 12, 2001): 1-16.

³ Deborah Azrael and David Hemenway, “‘In the Safety of Your Own Home’: Results from a National Survey on Gun Use at Home,” *Social Science & Medicine* 50 (2000): 285-291.

⁴ Diane Craven, “Sex Differences in Violence Victimization, 1994,” *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997).

⁵ Garen Wintemute et al., “Increased Risk of Intimate Partner Homicide Among California Women Who Purchased Handguns,” *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 41, no. 2 (2003): 282.

females with no gun in the home.⁶ Finally, another study reports, women who were murdered were more likely, not less likely, to have purchased a handgun in the three years prior to their deaths, again invalidating the idea that a handgun has a protective effect against homicide.⁷

While this study does not focus solely on domestic violence homicide or guns, it provides a stark reminder that domestic violence and guns make a deadly combination. Firearms are rarely used to kill criminals or stop crimes.⁸ Instead, they are all too often used to inflict harm on the very people they were intended to protect.

When Men Murder Women is an annual report prepared by the Violence Policy Center detailing the reality of homicides committed against women. The study analyzes the most recent Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) data submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).⁹ The information used for this report is for the year 2008. Once again, this is the most recent data available. This is the first analysis of the 2008 data on female homicide victims to offer breakdowns of cases in the 10 states with the highest female victim/male offender homicide rates, and the first to rank the states by the rate of female homicides.

This study examines only those instances involving one female homicide victim and one male offender. This is the exact scenario—the lone male attacker and the vulnerable woman—that is often used to promote gun ownership among women.

⁶ Douglas Wiebe, "Homicide and Suicide Risks Associated with Firearms in the Home: A National Case-Control Study," *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 41, no. 6 (2003): 775.

⁷ K.M. Grassel et al., "Association between Handgun Purchase and Mortality from Firearm Injury," *Injury Prevention* 9 (2003): 50.

⁸ According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports, in 2008 there were only 204 justifiable homicides (the justified killing of a felon during the commission of a felony) committed by private citizens using firearms. Of these, only 161 involved handguns. While firearms are at times used by private citizens to kill criminals or to stop crimes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the most common scenarios of gun use in America in 2007, the most recent final data available, are suicide (17,352), homicide (12,632), or fatal unintentional injury (613).

⁹ The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program collects basic information on serious crimes from participating police agencies and records supplementary information about the circumstances of homicides in its unpublished Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR). Submitted monthly, supplementary data consists of: the age, sex, race, and ethnicity of both victims and offenders; the types of weapons used; the relationship of victims to offenders; and, the circumstances of the murders. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, supplementary data are provided on only a subset of homicide cases. Additionally, SHR data are updated throughout the year as homicide reports are forwarded by state UCR programs.

In 2008, there were 1,817 females murdered by males in single victim/single offender incidents that were submitted to the FBI for its Supplementary Homicide Report.¹⁰ These key findings from the report, expanded upon in the following sections, dispel many of the myths regarding the nature of lethal violence against women.

- o For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 92 percent of female victims (1,564 out of 1,694) were murdered by someone they knew.
- o Twelve times as many females were murdered by a male they knew (1,564 victims) than were killed by male strangers (130 victims).
- o For victims who knew their offenders, 64 percent (997) of female homicide victims were wives or intimate acquaintances of their killers.¹¹
- o There were 278 women shot and killed by either their husband or intimate acquaintance during the course of an argument.
- o Nationwide, for homicides in which the weapon could be determined (1,662), more female homicides were committed with firearms (52 percent) than with any other weapon. Knives and other cutting instruments accounted for 21 percent of all female murders, bodily force 15 percent, and murder by blunt object seven percent. Of the homicides committed with firearms, 71 percent were committed with handguns.
- o In 86 percent of all incidents where the circumstances could be determined, homicides were *not* related to the commission of any other felony, such as rape or robbery.

The study also analyzes available information on the murders of black females. Not surprisingly, these homicides mirror the trends for women overall: most homicides against black women are not committed by strangers, but by men known to the victims.

¹⁰ In 2008, as in years past, the state of Florida did not submit any data to the FBI Supplementary Homicide Report. Data from Florida was not requested individually because the difference in collection techniques would create a bias in the study results.

¹¹ A female intimate acquaintance is defined as a wife, common-law wife, ex-wife, or girlfriend.

Section One: National Data

When Men Murder Women offers both national and state-by-state statistics from FBI Supplementary Homicide Report data including charts listing the number and rate of female homicides by state and a chart ranking each state by rate. For the top 10 states, data are broken out by: age and race of victim; type of weapon used; relationship of victim to offender; and, the circumstances of the murder. General findings are summarized below. More detailed data on each of the 10 states can be found in Appendix Two.

State Rankings

In 2008, the homicide rate among female victims murdered by males in single victim/single offender incidents nationally was 1.26 per 100,000. For that year, Nevada ranked first as the state with the highest homicide rate among female victims killed by male offenders in single victim/single offender incidents. Its rate of 2.96 per 100,000 was more than double the national average. Nevada was followed by Vermont (2.54 per 100,000) and Alabama (2.07 per 100,000). The remaining states that comprise the top 10 can be found in Chart One on page six. For a ranking of all states that submitted data to the FBI, please see Appendix One on page 15.

Age and Race of Female Homicide Victims

In 2008, for single female victim/single male offender homicides where the age of the victim was reported (1,740 homicides), eight percent of the victims were younger than 18 years old (131 victims) and 10 percent were 65 years of age or older (170 victims). The average age of female homicide victims was 39 years old. Homicides in which race was identified (1,798 victims) included: 18 American Indian or Alaskan Native females; 45 Asian or Pacific Islander females; 542 black females; and 1,193 white females. Eighty-eight percent (1,579 out of 1,798) of the homicides where the race of the female victim and male offender were known were intra-racial.¹² Overall, black women were murdered by men at a rate (2.74 per 100,000) more than two and a half times higher than white women (1.02 per 100,000). American Indian

¹² Intra-racial homicides are homicides where the victim and the offender are of the same race.

and Alaskan Native women (1.10 per 100,000) were more likely than white women to be murdered by a male offender, while Asian and Pacific Islander women were the least likely (0.58 per 100,000) women of any race to be murdered by a male offender. Unfortunately, Hispanic ethnicity could not be determined on a national level because of the inadequacy of data collection and reporting. Of the 49 states reporting, only 11 states reported having at least one Hispanic female homicide victim. Yet, even most of these states did not code a sufficient number of their female victims' ethnicity as either Hispanic or non-Hispanic to run a valid analysis.

Chart One: Number of Females Murdered by Males in Single Victim/Single Offender Homicides and Rates by State in 2008, Ranked by Rate

| Ranking | State | Number of Homicides | Homicide Rate per 100,000 |
|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Nevada | 38 | 2.96 |
| 2 | Vermont | 8 | 2.54 |
| 3 | Alabama | 50 | 2.07 |
| 4 | North Carolina | 97 | 2.05 |
| 5 | Tennessee | 63 | 1.97 |
| 6 | Texas | 209 | 1.72 |
| 7 (tie) | Arkansas | 25 | 1.71 |
| 7 (tie) | Missouri | 52 | 1.71 |
| 9 | South Carolina | 39 | 1.69 |
| 10 | Georgia | 82 | 1.66 |

Victim to Offender Relationship

The relationship of victim to offender differs significantly between male and female victims of homicide. Compared to a man, a woman is far more likely to be killed by her spouse, an intimate acquaintance, or a family member than by a stranger. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 92 percent of female victims (1,564 out of 1,694) were murdered by someone they knew. Twelve times as many females were murdered by a male they knew (1,564 victims) than were killed by male strangers (130 victims) in single victim/single offender incidents in 2008.¹³ Of victims who knew their offenders, 64 percent (997 out of 1,564) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. (Ex-girlfriends cannot be included in the intimate acquaintance analysis because there is not a separate designation for ex-boyfriends or ex-girlfriends in the FBI Supplementary Homicide Report relationship category.)

Female Homicide Victims and Weapons

Firearms—especially handguns—were the most common weapon used by males to murder females in 2008. For homicides in which the weapon could be identified, 52 percent of female victims (858 out of 1,662) were killed with a gun. Of the females killed with a firearm, nearly two-thirds were murdered by male intimates. The number of females shot and killed by their husband or intimate acquaintance (534 victims) was more than four times higher than the total number murdered by male strangers using all weapons combined (130 victims) in single victim/single offender incidents in 2008. In homicides where males used firearms to kill females, handguns were clearly the weapon of choice over rifles and shotguns. In 2008, 71 percent of female firearm homicide victims (608 out of 858) were killed with handguns.

¹³ These are homicides in which the relationship between the victim and the offender could be identified. According to the FBI's 2008 Supplementary Homicide Report data on females murdered by males in single victim/single offender incidents, the relationship of victim to offender could be determined in 1,694 of 1,817 incidents. In 123 homicides the relationship of victim to offender was "unknown," meaning the reporting police officer was unable to determine at the scene if the victim and offender knew each other or were strangers. According to the July 1992 *Journal of Trauma* study "Men, Women, and Murder: Gender-Specific Differences in Rates of Fatal Violence and Victimization," local law enforcement agencies generally submit case reports early in the course of their investigation, sometimes before the identity of the offender is known. Although one might assume that most homicides where the relationship was initially unknown would eventually be determined to have been committed by a stranger, follow-up data from one large metropolitan police jurisdiction (Los Angeles) suggest that a substantial number involve an acquaintance or relative of the victim.

Female Homicide Victims and Circumstance

The overwhelming majority of homicides among females by male offenders in single victim/single offender incidents in 2008 were not related to any other felony crime. Most often, females were killed by males in the course of an argument—usually with a firearm. In 2008 there were 1,453 incidents in which the circumstances of the homicide between the female victim and male offender in single victim/single offender incidents could be identified. Of these, 86 percent (1,253 out of 1,453) were not related to the commission of any other felony.

Of the homicides not related to the commission of another felony, 60 percent (758 out of 1,253) involved arguments between the female victim and male offender. Forty-nine percent (369 out of 758) of the homicides stemming from an argument involved guns. In 2008 there were 278 women shot and killed by their husbands or intimate acquaintances in single victim/single offender incidents during the course of an argument.

Section Two: Black Women

The disproportionate burden of fatal and nonfatal violence borne by black women has almost always been overshadowed by the toll violence has taken on black men. In 2008, black women were murdered at a rate more than two and a half times higher than white women: 2.74 per 100,000 versus 1.02 per 100,000.

Age of Black Female Homicide Victims

In 2008, for single female victim/single male offender homicides where the age of the victim was reported (521 homicides), 10 percent of black female victims were less than 18 years old (54 victims) and four percent were 65 years of age or older (23 victims). The average age of black female homicide victims was 34 years old.

Victim to Offender Relationship

Compared to a black man, a black woman is far more likely to be killed by her spouse, an intimate acquaintance, or a family member than by a stranger. Where the relationship could be determined, 92 percent of black females killed by males in single victim/single offender incidents knew their killers (445 out of 482). Twelve times as many black females were murdered by a male they knew (445 victims) than were killed by male strangers (37 victims) in single victim/single offender incidents in 2008. Of black victims who knew their offenders, 62 percent (278 out of 445) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Ninety-two percent (500 out of 542) of the homicides of black women where the race of the male offender was known were intra-racial.

Black Female Homicide Victims and Weapons

As with female homicide victims in general, firearms—especially handguns—were the most common weapons used by males to murder black females in 2008. In the 486 homicides for which the murder weapon could be identified, 58 percent of black female victims (283 victims) were shot and killed with guns. And when these women were killed with a gun, it was most often a handgun (217 victims or 77 percent). The number of black females shot and killed by their husband or intimate acquaintance (158 victims) was more than four times as high as the total number murdered by male strangers using all weapons combined (37 victims) in single

victim/single offender incidents in 2008.

Black Female Homicide Victims and Circumstance

The overwhelming majority of homicides of black females by male offenders in single victim/single offender incidents in 2008 were not related to any other felony crime. Most often, black females were killed by males in the course of an argument—most commonly with a firearm. In 2008, for the 433 homicides in which the circumstances between the black female victim and male offender could be identified, 86 percent (374 out of 433) were not related to the commission of any other felony.

Nearly two-thirds of non-felony related homicides (239 out of 374) involved arguments between the black female victim and male offender. Fifty-four percent (130 victims) were shot and killed with guns during those arguments.

Section Three: Laws that Help Protect Women from Abusers

In the 1990s, two major provisions were added to federal law to prevent domestic abusers from obtaining firearms.

In 1993, the late Senator Paul Wellstone (D-MN) attached an amendment to the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act to prohibit individuals who are the subject of a protective order involving domestic violence from buying or possessing firearms. The Wellstone amendment became law in 1994.¹⁴ Twenty-two states supplement the federal prohibition with a similar state law.

In 1996, Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) sponsored a provision prohibiting individuals with misdemeanor domestic violence convictions from purchasing or possessing firearms (those with felony domestic violence convictions are already precluded from firearms possession under a general provision prohibiting firearms possession by felons).¹⁵ Twenty-six states have comparable state law prohibitions.¹⁶

These laws are enforced in part by the Brady Law background checks performed on firearm transactions conducted through Federal Firearms License holders (FFLs). In 2008, the most recent year for which data is available, the two domestic violence prohibited categories accounted for approximately 14 percent of rejected firearm transfers.¹⁷

However, not all states make the records of domestic violence protective orders and misdemeanors available to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), the computer system used to conduct the Brady background checks. Moreover, the U.S. Department of Justice identifies several common impediments to thorough checks of domestic violence records: incomplete automation; incomplete

¹⁴ 18 USC § 922 (g)(8).

¹⁵ 18 USC § 922 (g)(9).

¹⁶ Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Survey of State Procedures Related to Firearm Sales, 2005* (November 2006)

¹⁷ Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Background Checks for Firearm Transfers, 2008* (August 2009)

records; and, the inability to distinguish domestic violence misdemeanors from other misdemeanors.

For a chart detailing which states make available records of protective orders and misdemeanor domestic violence convictions to systems used to conduct the Brady background check for gun purchases, please see Appendix Three.

Conclusion

Many women—those in abusive relationships, those who have left such relationships, those who fear, in general, for their safety—have considered bringing a gun into their home as a measure of protection. Yet, gun ownership contains clear risks that should deeply concern women. One study that examined the risk factors of violent death for women in the home in three United States counties found that when there were one or more guns in the home, the risk of homicide increased more than three times.¹⁸ The increased risk of homicide associated with firearms was attributable to homicides at the hands of a spouse, intimate acquaintance, or close relative. Furthermore, a gun in the home is a key factor in the escalation of nonfatal spousal abuse to homicide. In a study of family and intimate assaults for the city of Atlanta, firearm-associated family and intimate assaults were 12 times more likely to result in death than non-firearm associated assaults between family and intimates.¹⁹

A 2002 study from researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health found that although the United States represented only 32 percent of the female population among 25 high-income countries, it accounted for *84 percent of all female firearm homicides*. The study's lead author, Dr. David Hemenway, concluded that "the difference in female homicide victimization rates between the U.S. and these other industrialized nations is very large and is closely tied to levels of gun ownership. The relationship cannot be explained by differences in urbanization or income inequality."²⁰

The picture that emerges from *When Men Murder Women* is that women face the greatest threat from someone they know, most often a spouse or intimate acquaintance, who is armed with a gun. For women in America, guns are not used to save lives, but to take them.

¹⁸ James E. Bailey et al., "Risk Factors for Violent Death of Women in the Home," *Archives of Internal Medicine* 157 (April 14, 1997): 777-782.

¹⁹ Linda E. Salzman et al., "Weapon Involvement and Injury Outcomes in Family and Intimate Assaults," *JAMA* 267, no. 22 (1992): 3043-3047.

²⁰ David Hemenway et al., "Firearm Availability and Female Homicide Victimization Rates among 25 Populous High Income Countries," *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association (JAMWA)* 57 (Spring 2002): 100-104 and Harvard School of Public Health press release, April 17, 2002.

**Appendix One: Number of Females Murdered by Males in Single
Victim/Single Offender Homicides and Rates by State, 2008**

| State Ranking by Rate | State | Number of Homicide Victims | Homicide Rate per 100,000 |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 3 | Alabama | 50 | 2.07 |
| 35 | Alaska | 3 | 0.91 |
| 19 | Arizona | 44 | 1.36 |
| 7 (tie) | Arkansas | 25 | 1.71 |
| 29 | California | 206 | 1.13 |
| 21 | Colorado | 32 | 1.31 |
| 40 | Connecticut | 13 | 0.72 |
| 20 | Delaware | 6 | 1.33 |
| NA | Florida | NA | NA |
| 10 | Georgia | 82 | 1.66 |
| 23 | Hawaii | 8 | 1.26 |
| 41 (tie) | Idaho | 5 | 0.66 |
| 47 | Illinois | 22 | 0.34 |
| 27 (tie) | Indiana | 37 | 1.14 |
| 41 (tie) | Iowa | 10 | 0.66 |
| 22 | Kansas | 18 | 1.28 |
| 18 | Kentucky | 31 | 1.42 |
| 12 (tie) | Louisiana | 37 | 1.62 |
| 26 | Maine | 8 | 1.18 |
| 11 | Maryland | 48 | 1.65 |
| 44 | Massachusetts | 19 | 0.56 |
| 37 | Michigan | 41 | 0.81 |
| 38 | Minnesota | 20 | 0.76 |
| 30 | Mississippi | 17 | 1.12 |
| 7 (tie) | Missouri | 52 | 1.71 |
| 24 (tie) | Montana | 6 | 1.24 |

**Appendix One: Number of Females Murdered by Males in Single
Victim/Single Offender Homicides and Rates by State, 2008**

| State Ranking by Rate | State | Number of Homicide Victims | Homicide Rate per 100,000 |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 33 (tie) | Nebraska | 9 | 1.00 |
| 1 | Nevada | 38 | 2.96 |
| 49 | New Hampshire | 2 | 0.30 |
| 31 | New Jersey | 47 | 1.06 |
| 14 | New Mexico | 16 | 1.59 |
| 32 | New York | 105 | 1.05 |
| 4 | North Carolina | 97 | 2.05 |
| 48 | North Dakota | 1 | 0.31 |
| 36 | Ohio | 52 | 0.88 |
| 15 | Oklahoma | 28 | 1.52 |
| 46 | Oregon | 10 | 0.52 |
| 17 | Pennsylvania | 92 | 1.43 |
| 45 | Rhode Island | 3 | 0.55 |
| 9 | South Carolina | 39 | 1.69 |
| 39 | South Dakota | 3 | 0.74 |
| 5 | Tennessee | 63 | 1.97 |
| 6 | Texas | 209 | 1.72 |
| 41 (tie) | Utah | 9 | 0.66 |
| 2 | Vermont | 8 | 2.54 |
| 16 | Virginia | 60 | 1.51 |
| 33 (tie) | Washington | 33 | 1.00 |
| 12 (tie) | West Virginia | 15 | 1.62 |
| 24 (tie) | Wisconsin | 35 | 1.24 |
| 27 (tie) | Wyoming | 3 | 1.14 |
| | U.S. Total | 1,817 | 1.26 |

**Appendix Two:
Additional Information for the 10 States with the
Highest Rates of Female Homicide**

Nevada

38 females were murdered by males in Nevada in 2008

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Nevada was
2.96 per 100,000 in 2008*

Ranked 1st in the United States

Age

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (36 homicides), 3 female homicide victims (8 percent) were less than 18 years old and 2 victims (6 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 43 years old.

Race

Out of 38 female homicide victims, 3 were Asian or Pacific Islander, 6 were black, 1 was American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 28 were white.

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 54 percent of female victims (19 out of 35) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 74 percent (14 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 7 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 6 females killed by a blunt object, and 3 females killed by bodily force.

Victim/Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 83 percent of female victims (29 out of 35) were murdered by someone they knew. Six female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 69 percent (20 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 50 percent (10 victims) were killed with guns; 80 percent of these (8 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 88 percent (28 out of 32) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 14 percent (4 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

Vermont

8 females were murdered by males in Vermont in 2008

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Vermont was
2.54 per 100,000 in 2008*

Ranked 2nd in the United States

Age

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (6 homicides), 1 female homicide victim (17 percent) was less than 18 years old and 1 victim (17 percent) was 65 years of age or older. The average age was 39 years old.

Race

Out of 8 female homicide victims, 8 were white.

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 38 percent of female victims (3 out of 8) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 33 percent (1 victim) was killed with a handgun. There were 2 females killed by a blunt object, and 3 females killed by bodily force.

Victim/Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 100 percent of female victims (8 out of 8) were murdered by someone they knew. No female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 38 percent (3 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 67 percent (2 victims) were killed with guns; 50 percent of these (1 victim) were shot and killed with handguns.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 100 percent (7 out of 7) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 29 percent (2 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

Alabama

50 females were murdered by males in Alabama in 2008

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Alabama was
2.07 per 100,000 in 2008*

Ranked 3rd in the United States

Age

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (47 homicides), 6 female homicide victims (13 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 41 years old.

Race

Out of 50 female homicide victims, 24 were black, 1 was American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 25 were white.

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 83 percent of female victims (39 out of 47) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 85 percent (33 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 5 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, and 3 females killed by bodily force.

Victim/Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 97 percent of female victims (38 out of 39) were murdered by someone they knew. One female victim was killed by a stranger. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 68 percent (26 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 88 percent (23 victims) were killed with guns; 91 percent of these (21 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 92 percent (22 out of 24) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 95 percent (21 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

North Carolina

97 females were murdered by males in North Carolina in 2008

The homicide rate among females murdered by males in North Carolina was 2.05 per 100,000 in 2008

Ranked 4th in the United States

Age

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (92 homicides), 5 female homicide victims (5 percent) were less than 18 years old and 12 victims (13 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 40 years old.

Race

Out of 95 female homicide victims, 4 were Asian or Pacific Islander, 32 were black, 1 was American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 58 were white.

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 53 percent of female victims (46 out of 87) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 65 percent (30 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 14 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 3 females killed by a blunt object, and 21 females killed by bodily force.

Victim/Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 91 percent of female victims (78 out of 86) were murdered by someone they knew. Eight female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 67 percent (52 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 54 percent (28 victims) were killed with guns; 68 percent of these (19 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 85 percent (51 out of 60) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 41 percent (21 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

Tennessee

63 females were murdered by males in Tennessee in 2008

The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Tennessee was 1.97 per 100,000 in 2008

Ranked 5th in the United States

Age

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (61 homicides), 8 female homicide victims (13 percent) were less than 18 years old and 7 victims (11 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 36 years old.

Race

Out of 63 female homicide victims, 28 were black, and 35 were white.

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 56 percent of female victims (28 out of 50) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 50 percent (14 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 7 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 5 females killed by a blunt object, and 10 females killed by bodily force.

Victim/Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 95 percent of female victims (57 out of 60) were murdered by someone they knew. Three female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 56 percent (32 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 63 percent (20 victims) were killed with guns; 55 percent of these (11 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 98 percent (39 out of 40) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 59 percent (23 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

Texas

209 females were murdered by males in Texas in 2008

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Texas was
1.72 per 100,000 in 2008*

Ranked 6th in the United States

Age

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (199 homicides), 13 female homicide victims (7 percent) were less than 18 years old and 12 victims (6 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 37 years old.

Race

Out of 209 female homicide victims, 5 were Asian or Pacific Islander, 52 were black, and 152 were white.

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 54 percent of female victims (110 out of 203) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 82 percent (90 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 46 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 11 females killed by a blunt object, and 27 females killed by bodily force.

Victim/Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 90 percent of female victims (182 out of 203) were murdered by someone they knew. Twenty-one female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 65 percent (118 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 59 percent (70 victims) were killed with guns; 81 percent of these (57 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 89 percent (167 out of 188) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 64 percent (107 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

Arkansas

25 females were murdered by males in Arkansas in 2008

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Arkansas was
1.71 per 100,000 in 2008*

Ranked 7th (tie) in the United States

Age

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (23 homicides), 3 female homicide victims (13 percent) were less than 18 years old and 2 victims (9 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 34 years old.

Race

Out of 24 female homicide victims, 12 were black, and 12 were white.

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 62 percent of female victims (13 out of 21) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 77 percent (10 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 2 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 2 females killed by a blunt object, and 3 females killed by bodily force.

Victim/Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 94 percent of female victims (17 out of 18) were murdered by someone they knew. One female victim was killed by a stranger. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 82 percent (14 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 57 percent (8 victims) were killed with guns; 75 percent of these (6 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 90 percent (19 out of 21) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 79 percent (15 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

Missouri

52 females were murdered by males in Missouri in 2008

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Missouri was
1.71 per 100,000 in 2008*

Ranked 7th (tie) in the United States

Age

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (49 homicides), 1 female homicide victim (2 percent) was less than 18 years old and 9 victims (18 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 44 years old.

Race

Out of 52 female homicide victims, 1 was Asian or Pacific Islander, 20 were black, and 31 were white.

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 63 percent of female victims (29 out of 46) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 66 percent (19 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 11 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 3 females killed by a blunt object, and 1 female killed by bodily force.

Victim/Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 96 percent of female victims (47 out of 49) were murdered by someone they knew. Two female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 68 percent (32 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 63 percent (20 victims) were killed with guns; 75 percent of these (15 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 64 percent (30 out of 47) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 80 percent (24 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

South Carolina

39 females were murdered by males in South Carolina in 2008

The homicide rate among females murdered by males in South Carolina was 1.69 per 100,000 in 2008

Ranked 9th in the United States

Age

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (37 homicides), 1 female homicide victim (3 percent) was less than 18 years old and 3 victims (8 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 43 years old.

Race

Out of 39 female homicide victims, 19 were black, and 20 were white.

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 49 percent of female victims (18 out of 37) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 67 percent (12 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 3 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 2 females killed by a blunt object, and 11 females killed by bodily force.

Victim/Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 97 percent of female victims (37 out of 38) were murdered by someone they knew. One female victim was killed by a stranger. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 65 percent (24 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 63 percent (15 victims) were killed with guns; 73 percent of these (11 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 81 percent (25 out of 31) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 80 percent (20 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

Georgia

82 females were murdered by males in Georgia in 2008

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Georgia was
1.66 per 100,000 in 2008*

Ranked 10th in the United States

Age

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (79 homicides), 8 female homicide victims (10 percent) were less than 18 years old and 3 victims (4 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 33 years old.

Race

Out of 82 female homicide victims, 1 was Asian or Pacific Islander, 53 were black, and 28 were white.

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 59 percent of female victims (40 out of 68) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 83 percent (33 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 14 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 5 females killed by a blunt object, and 1 female killed by bodily force.

Victim/Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 95 percent of female victims (72 out of 76) were murdered by someone they knew. Four female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 63 percent (45 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 56 percent (25 victims) were killed with guns; 84 percent of these (21 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 89 percent (70 out of 79) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 47 percent (33 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

United States

1,817 females were murdered by males in the United States in 2008

The homicide rate among females murdered by males in the United States was 1.26 per 100,000 in 2008

Age

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (1,740 homicides), there were 131 female homicide victims (8 percent) who were less than 18 years old and 170 victims (10 percent) who were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 39 years old.

Race

Out of 1,798 female homicide victims where race was identified, 45 were Asian or Pacific Islander, 542 were black, 18 were American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 1,193 were white.

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 52 percent of female victims (858 out of 1,662) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 71 percent (608 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 351 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 111 females killed by a blunt object, and 244 females killed by bodily force.

Victim/Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 92 percent of female victims (1,564 out of 1,694) were murdered by someone they knew. There were 130 female victims killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 64 percent (997 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 54 percent (534 victims) were killed with guns; 71 percent of these (381 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 86 percent (1,253 out of 1,453) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 60 percent (758 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

Understanding the Statistics

This analysis of female homicide victims in America is limited to cases involving one female victim and one male offender. Supplemental data on age and race of victim, the type of weapon used, the relationship of victim to offender, and the circumstances of the murder are provided for each state as follows:

Rates

Rates of females killed by males in single victim/single offender incidents by state were computed using reported incidents by state and female population estimates for 2008 from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Ranking

States were ranked by their female homicide rates. Rates were rounded to the second decimal place.

Age

This section notes how many female homicide victims were less than 18 years old and how many were 65 years of age or older.

Race

This section identifies the race of female victims.

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon could be identified, this section records the number of females killed by firearms, specifically handguns. It also lists the most common weapons—other than firearms—used by males to kill females.

Victim/Offender Relationship

This section lists the number of females killed by known offenders and the number killed by strangers. This section also enumerates the number of victims identified as wives or intimate acquaintances (common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends) of the offenders, as well as the number of these intimates shot and killed with firearms in general and handguns in particular.

Circumstance

This section indicates the number of cases in which the homicide was related to the commission of any other felony. This section also provides the number of cases that involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

**Appendix Three:
Additional Information on State Efforts to Help
Prevent Domestic Violence Abusers
from Obtaining Firearms**

Table 13. Data accessed for firearm background checks: domestic violence, December 31, 2005

| Jurisdiction | Restraining (protective) orders | | Domestic violence misdemeanor convictions | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|
| | Statewide database | Entered into NCIC file | In criminal history (CH) records | Method used to distinguish from other misdemeanors in CH ^a |
| Federal | -- | ■ | ■ | Flagged records (from States) |
| State totals | 43 | 46 | 44 | |
| Alabama | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Alaska | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Arizona | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Arkansas | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| California | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Colorado | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Connecticut | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Delaware | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Florida | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Georgia | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Hawaii | ■ | -- | ■ | Flagged records |
| Idaho | -- | ■ | ■ | |
| Illinois | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Indiana | ■ | ■ | -- | |
| Iowa | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Kansas | ■ | ■ | ■ | Statute citations |
| Kentucky | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Louisiana | ■ | ■ | ■ | Modifier denoting DV |
| Maine | ■ | ■ | -- | |
| Maryland | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Massachusetts | ■ | ■ | ■ | Included in crimes of violence ^b |
| Michigan | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Minnesota | ■ | ■ | ■ | Offense codes |
| Mississippi | -- | ■ | -- | |
| Missouri | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Montana | -- | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Nebraska | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Nevada | ■ | -- | ■ | Flagged records |
| New Hampshire | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| New Jersey | ■ | -- | ■ | Flagged records |
| New Mexico | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| New York | ■ | ■ | -- | |
| North Carolina | -- | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| North Dakota | ■ | ■ | -- | |
| Ohio | -- | ■ | -- | |
| Oklahoma | -- | ■ | ■ | Offense codes / flagged records |
| Oregon | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Pennsylvania | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Rhode Island | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| South Carolina | -- | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| South Dakota | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Tennessee | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Texas | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Utah | ■ | -- | ■ | Flagged records |
| Vermont | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Virginia | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Washington | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| West Virginia | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Wisconsin | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |
| Wyoming | ■ | ■ | ■ | Flagged records |

--No data are available for firearm background checks or availability is unknown.

■Data are accessed by checking agencies within the jurisdiction (may not be available to other checking agencies).

^aExtent of flagging and ability to distinguish domestic crimes from other misdemeanors varies significantly by jurisdiction.

^bDomestic misdemeanors are not flagged because all crimes of violence are disqualifying offenses.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Survey of State Procedures Related to Firearm Sales, 2005* (November 2006).