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# **When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2011 Homicide Data**

Females Murdered by Males in Single Victim/Single Offender Incidents



**Violence Policy Center**

**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, The Herb Block Foundation, The Broad Foundation, and The Joyce Foundation. A list highlighting select past VPC studies is listed below. For a complete list of VPC publications with document links, please visit <http://www.vpc.org/studyndx.htm>.

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- *“Officer Down”—Assault Weapons and the War on Law Enforcement* (May 2003)
- *License to Kill IV: More Guns, More Crime* (June 2002)
- *“A .22 for Christmas”—How the Gun Industry Designs and Markets Firearms for Children and Youth* (December 2001)
- *Unintended Consequences: Pro-Handgun Experts Prove That Handguns Are a Dangerous Choice For Self-Defense* (November 2001)
- *Voting from the Rooftops: How the Gun Industry Armed Osama bin Laden, Other Foreign and Domestic Terrorists, and Common Criminals with 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles* (October 2001)
- *Hispanics and Firearms Violence* (May 2001)
- *Where’d They Get Their Guns?—An Analysis of the Firearms Used in High-Profile Shootings, 1963 to 2001* (April 2001)
- *A Deadly Myth: Women, Handguns, and Self-Defense* (January 2001)
- *Handgun Licensing and Registration: What it Can and Cannot Do* (September 2000)
- *Pocket Rockets: The Gun Industry’s Sale of Increased Killing Power* (July 2000)
- *Guns For Felons: How the NRA Works to Rearm Criminals* (March 2000)
- *Cease Fire: A Comprehensive Strategy to Reduce Firearms Violence* (Revised, October 1997)

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*This study is published in PDF format and is designed to be printed  
in black and white as a single-page document.*

## Introduction

Intimate partner violence against women is all too common and takes many forms. The most serious is homicide by an intimate partner.<sup>1</sup> 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].”<sup>2</sup>

Guns are also often used in non-fatal 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.”<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup>

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.”<sup>5</sup> 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 females with no gun in the home.<sup>6</sup> 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

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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

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

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

invalidating the idea that a handgun has a protective effect against homicide.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup> Instead, they are all too often used to inflict harm on the very people they were intended to protect.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports, in 2011 there were only 261 justifiable homicides committed by private citizens. Of these, only 31 involved women killing men. Of those, only 17 involved firearms, with 14 of the 17 involving handguns. While firearms are at times used by private citizens to kill criminals, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the most common scenarios of lethal gun use in America in 2010, the most recent final data available, are suicide (19,392), homicide (11,078), or fatal unintentional injury (606).

*When Men Murder Women* is an annual report prepared by the Violence Policy Center detailing the reality of homicides committed against females by single male offenders. The study analyzes the most recent Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) data submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).<sup>9</sup> The information used for this report is for the year 2011. Once again, this is the most recent data available. This is the first analysis of the 2011 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.

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

<sup>8</sup> In 2011, justifiable homicides involving women killing men occurred in: Arizona (1); California (6); Colorado (1); Illinois (1); Kansas (1); Kentucky (1); Louisiana (2); Maryland (1); Michigan (7); Minnesota (1); Missouri (1); Pennsylvania (1); South Carolina (2); Texas (4); and, Wisconsin (1). In 2011, justifiable homicides involving women killing men with a firearm occurred in: Arizona (1); California (3); Illinois (1); Kentucky (1); Louisiana (1); Michigan (4); Missouri (1); Pennsylvania (1); and, Texas (4). Of these, handguns were used in: Arizona (1); California (2); Illinois (1); Louisiana (1); Michigan (4); Missouri (1); Pennsylvania (1); and, Texas (3).

<sup>9</sup> 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.

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.

In 2011, there were 1,707 females murdered by males in single victim/single offender incidents that were submitted to the FBI for its Supplementary Homicide Report.<sup>10</sup> These key findings from the report, expanded upon in the following sections, dispel many of the myths regarding the nature of lethal violence against females.

- For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 94 percent of female victims (1,509 out of 1,601) were murdered by a male they knew.
- Sixteen times as many females were murdered by a male they knew (1,509 victims) than were killed by male strangers (92 victims).
- For victims who knew their offenders, 61 percent (926) of female homicide victims were wives or intimate acquaintances of their killers.<sup>11</sup>
- There were 264 women shot and killed by either their husband or intimate acquaintance during the course of an argument.
- Nationwide, for homicides in which the weapon could be determined (1,551), more female homicides were committed with firearms (51 percent) than with any other weapon. Knives and other cutting instruments accounted for 20 percent of all female murders, bodily force 14 percent, and murder by blunt object seven percent. Of the homicides committed with firearms, 73 percent were committed with handguns.
- In 87 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 females overall: most homicides against black females are not committed by strangers, but by males known to the victims.

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<sup>10</sup> In 2011, as in years past, the state of Florida did not submit any data to the FBI Supplementary Homicide Report. Also in 2011, data from Alabama was not available from the FBI. Data from Florida and Alabama was not requested individually because the difference in collection techniques would create a bias in the study results. In addition, according to the FBI's *Uniform Crime Reports*, limited SHR data was received from Illinois for 2011.

<sup>11</sup> 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 2011, the homicide rate among female victims murdered by males in single victim/single offender incidents nationally was 1.17 per 100,000. For that year, South Carolina 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 2.54 per 100,000 was more than double the national average. South Carolina was followed by Alaska (2.01 per 100,000) and Oklahoma (1.99 per 100,000). The remaining states that comprise the top 10 can be found in the chart on page five. For a ranking of all states that submitted data to the FBI, please see Appendix One on page 12.

### ***Age and Race of Female Homicide Victims***

In 2011, for single female victim/single male offender homicides where the age of the victim was reported (1,653 homicides), eight percent of the victims were younger than 18 years old (138 victims) and 10 percent were 65 years of age or older (169 victims). The average age of female homicide victims was 39 years old. Homicides in which race was identified (1,679 victims) included: 14 American Indian or Alaskan Native females; 47 Asian or Pacific Islander females; 492 black females; and 1,126 white females. Eighty-seven percent (1,466 out of 1,679) of the homicides where the race of the female victim and male offender were known were intra-racial.<sup>12</sup> Overall, black females were murdered by males at a rate (2.61 per 100,000) more than two and a half times higher than white females (0.99 per 100,000). American Indian and Alaskan Native females (0.77 per 100,000) were murdered by male offenders at a lower rate than white females, while Asian and Pacific Islander females were the least likely (0.57 per 100,000) females 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.

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<sup>12</sup> Intra-racial homicides are homicides in which the victim and the offender are of the same race.

**Number of Females Murdered by Males in Single Victim/Single Offender  
Homicides and Rates by State in 2011, Ranked by Rate**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Number of Female Homicide Victims</b>	<b>Homicide Rate per 100,000 Females</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>2.54</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Alaska</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2.01</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Oklahoma</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1.99</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Delaware</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1.92</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Arizona</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1.84</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Tennessee</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>1.80</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Idaho</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1.77</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>West Virginia</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1.70</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Louisiana</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1.67</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>New Mexico</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1.62</b>

***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, 94 percent of female victims (1,509 out of 1,601) were murdered by someone they knew. Sixteen times as many females were murdered by a male they knew (1,509 victims) than were killed by male strangers (92 victims) in single victim/single offender incidents in 2011.<sup>13</sup> Of victims who knew their offenders, 61 percent (926 out of 1,509) 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 2011. For homicides in which the weapon could be identified, 51 percent of female victims (798 out of 1,551) 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 (489 victims) was more than five times higher than the total number murdered by male strangers using all weapons combined (92 victims) in single victim/single offender incidents in 2011. In homicides where males used firearms to kill females, handguns were clearly the weapon of choice over rifles and shotguns. In 2011, 73 percent of female firearm homicide victims (585 out of 798) were killed with handguns.

### ***Female Homicide Victims and Circumstance***

The overwhelming majority of homicides among females by male offenders in single victim/single offender incidents in 2011 was 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 2011 there were 1,335 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, 87 percent (1,159 out of 1,335) were not related to the commission of any other felony.

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<sup>13</sup> These are homicides in which the relationship between the victim and the offender could be identified. According to the FBI's 2011 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 1,601 of 1,707 incidents. In 106 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.

Of the homicides not related to the commission of another felony, 60 percent (701 out of 1,159) involved arguments between the female victim and male offender. Forty-nine percent (344 out of 701) of the homicides stemming from an argument involved guns. In 2011 there were 264 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 Females**

The disproportionate burden of fatal and nonfatal violence borne by black females has almost always been overshadowed by the toll violence has taken on black males. In 2011, black females were murdered at a rate more than two and a half times higher than white females: 2.61 per 100,000 versus 0.99 per 100,000.

### ***Age of Black Female Homicide Victims***

In 2011, for single female victim/single male offender homicides where the age of the victim was reported (470 homicides), 12 percent of black female victims were less than 18 years old (55 victims) and five percent were 65 years of age or older (22 victims). The average age of black female homicide victims was 34 years old.

### ***Victim to Offender Relationship***

Compared to a black male, a black female 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, 94 percent of black females killed by males in single victim/single offender incidents knew their killers (415 out of 443). Nearly 15 times as many black females were murdered by a male they knew (415 victims) than were killed by male strangers (28 victims) in single victim/single offender incidents in 2011. Of black victims who knew their offenders, 52 percent (216 out of 415) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Ninety-three percent (459 out of 492) of the homicides of black females 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 2011. In the 448 homicides for which the murder weapon could be identified, 51 percent of black female victims (230 victims) were shot and killed with guns. And when these females were killed with a gun, it was most often a handgun (188 victims or 82 percent). The number of black females shot and killed by their husband or intimate acquaintance (106 victims) was nearly four times as high as the total number murdered by male strangers using all weapons combined (28 victims) in single victim/single offender incidents in 2011.

### ***Black Female Homicide Victims and Circumstance***

The overwhelming majority of homicides of black females by male offenders in single victim/single offender incidents in 2011 was 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 2011, for the 383 homicides in which the circumstances between the black female victim and male offender could be identified, 87 percent (332 out of 383) were not related to the commission of any other felony.

Nearly two-thirds of non-felony related homicides (200 out of 332) involved arguments between the black female victim and male offender. Forty-nine percent (98 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.<sup>14</sup>

In 1996, the late 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).<sup>15</sup>

These laws are enforced in part by the Brady Law background checks performed on firearm transactions conducted through Federal Firearms License holders (FFLs). From November 30, 1998 to July 31, 2013, these two domestic violence prohibited categories accounted for more than 14 percent of rejected federal firearm transfers.<sup>16</sup>

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 Law background checks. Moreover, the U.S. Department of Justice has identified several common impediments to thorough checks of domestic violence records: incomplete automation; incomplete records; and, the inability to distinguish domestic violence misdemeanors from other misdemeanors.

Bills have recently been introduced in Congress to improve the federal laws that protect victims of domestic violence. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) introduced the “Protecting Domestic Violence and Stalking Victims Act of 2013,” to prohibit persons convicted of misdemeanor crimes of stalking from possessing firearms. Representative Lois Capps (D-CA) introduced “The Domestic Violence Survivor Protection Act,” and Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Chris Murphy (D-CT) have announced plans to introduce a companion Senate bill. The legislation would extend the prohibition on firearms possession to include persons subject to temporary protective orders

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<sup>14</sup> 18 USC § 922 (g)(8).

<sup>15</sup> 18 USC § 922 (g)(9).

<sup>16</sup> *Federal Denials, Reasons Why the NICS Section Denies, November 30, 1998–July 31, 2013*, <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/nics/reports/federal-denials-083113.pdf>.

(current law only includes permanent orders). The bill would also expand the victims protected by federal firearms prohibitions to include dating and former dating partners. These bills are important steps forward in preventing domestic homicide.

On March 7, 2013, President Obama signed a bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The bill will help prevent domestic homicide by integrating screening for homicide risks throughout existing VAWA programs. It also requires states to develop goals and activities to reduce domestic violence homicides.

## 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.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>

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."<sup>19</sup>

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.

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<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> Linda E. Salzman et al., "Weapon Involvement and Injury Outcomes in Family and Intimate Assaults," *JAMA* 267, no. 22 (1992): 3043-3047.

<sup>19</sup> 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, 2011**

<b>State Ranking by Rate</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Number of Homicide Victims</b>	<b>Homicide Rate per 100,000 Females</b>
NA	Alabama	NA	NA
2	Alaska	7	2.01
5	Arizona	60	1.84
17	Arkansas	20	1.34
29 (tie)	California	193	1.02
23 (tie)	Colorado	30	1.18
36	Connecticut	15	0.82
4	Delaware	9	1.92
NA	Florida	NA	NA
12	Georgia	79	1.58
42	Hawaii	5	0.73
7	Idaho	14	1.77
48	Illinois <sup>20</sup>	18	0.27
20	Indiana	43	1.30
44	Iowa	11	0.71
11	Kansas	23	1.59
26 (tie)	Kentucky	25	1.13
9	Louisiana	39	1.67
23 (tie)	Maine	8	1.18
18	Maryland	40	1.33
47	Massachusetts	18	0.53
21	Michigan	64	1.27
40 (tie)	Minnesota	20	0.74
13	Mississippi	24	1.57
15	Missouri	46	1.50

<sup>20</sup> According to the FBI's *Uniform Crime Reports*, limited SHR data was received from Illinois for 2010.

**Appendix One: Number of Females Murdered by Males in Single Victim/Single Offender Homicides and Rates by State, 2011**

<b>State Ranking by Rate</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Number of Homicide Victims</b>	<b>Homicide Rate per 100,000 Females</b>
37 (tie)	Montana	4	0.81
14	Nebraska	14	1.51
16	Nevada	20	1.48
46	New Hampshire	4	0.60
32	New Jersey	45	0.99
10	New Mexico	17	1.62
25	New York	115	1.14
22	North Carolina	61	1.23
35	North Dakota	3	0.89
37 (tie)	Ohio	48	0.81
3	Oklahoma	38	1.99
26 (tie)	Oregon	22	1.13
26 (tie)	Pennsylvania	74	1.13
40 (tie)	Rhode Island	4	0.74
1	South Carolina	61	2.54
33 (tie)	South Dakota	4	0.97
6	Tennessee	59	1.80
19	Texas	171	1.32
31	Utah	14	1.00
45	Vermont	2	0.63
33 (tie)	Virginia	40	0.97
29 (tie)	Washington	35	1.02
8	West Virginia	16	1.70
39	Wisconsin	23	0.80
43	Wyoming	2	0.72
	<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>1.17</b>



**Appendix Two:  
Additional Information for the 10 States with the Highest  
Rates of Females Murdered by Males**

## **South Carolina**

*61 females were murdered by males in South Carolina in 2011*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in South Carolina was  
2.54 per 100,000 in 2011*

*Ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in the United States*

### **Age**

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (59 homicides), 4 female homicide victims (7 percent) were less than 18 years old and 1 victim (2 percent) was 65 years of age or older. The average age was 38 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 61 female homicide victims, 22 were black and 39 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 57 percent of female victims (31 out of 54) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 68 percent (21 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 12 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 3 females killed by a blunt object, and 7 females killed by bodily force.

### **Victim/Offender Relationship**

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 93 percent of female victims (52 out of 56) were murdered by someone they knew. Four female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 63 percent (33 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 52 percent (17 victims) were killed with guns; 71 percent of these (12 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 78 percent (36 out of 46) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 72 percent (26 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Alaska**

*7 females were murdered by males in Alaska in 2011*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Alaska was  
2.01 per 100,000 in 2011*

*Ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the United States*

### **Age**

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (7 homicides), 1 victim (14 percent) was less than 18 years old. The average age was 32 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 7 female homicide victims, 1 was Asian or Pacific Islander, 3 were American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 3 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 43 percent of female victims (3 out of 7) were shot and killed with guns. There were 2 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, and 1 female killed by bodily force.

### **Victim/Offender Relationship**

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 100 percent of female victims (7 out of 7) were murdered by someone they knew. No female victims were killed by a stranger. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 57 percent (4 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 25 percent (1 victim) were killed with guns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 100 percent (5 out of 5) were not related to the commission of any other felony.

## **Oklahoma**

*38 females were murdered by males in Oklahoma in 2011*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Oklahoma was  
1.99 per 100,000 in 2011*

*Ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the United States*

### **Age**

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (36 homicides), 4 female homicide victims (11 percent) were less than 18 years old and 3 victims (8 percent) was 65 years of age or older. The average age was 40 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 38 female homicide victims, 1 was Asian or Pacific Islander, 1 was American Indian or Alaskan Native, 9 were black, and 27 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 59 percent of female victims (20 out of 34) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 90 percent (18 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 5 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, and 7 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 (36 out of 37) were murdered by someone they knew. One female victim was killed by a stranger. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 61 percent (22 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 73 percent (16 victims) were killed with guns; 88 percent of these (14 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 84 percent (31 out of 37) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 42 percent (13 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Delaware**

*9 females were murdered by males in Delaware in 2011*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Delaware was  
1.92 per 100,000 in 2011*

*Ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the United States*

### **Age**

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (9 homicides), 1 female homicide victim (11 percent) was less than 18 years old and 2 victims (22 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 44 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 9 female homicide victims, 3 were black, and 6 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 63 percent of female victims (5 out of 8) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 80 percent (4 victims) were killed with handguns. There was 1 female killed by a blunt object, and 2 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 a stranger. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 50 percent (4 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 75 percent (3 victims) were killed with guns; 67 percent of these (2 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 67 percent (4 out of 6) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 75 percent (3 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Arizona**

*60 females were murdered by males in Arizona in 2011*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Arizona was  
1.84 per 100,000 in 2011*

*Ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the United States*

### **Age**

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (58 homicides), 5 victims (9 percent) were less than 18 years old and 5 victims (9 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 42 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 60 female homicide victims, 3 were Asian or Pacific Islander, 2 were American Indian or Alaskan Native, 7 were black, and 48 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 59 percent of female victims (33 out of 56) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 82 percent (27 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 8 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 8 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, 95 percent of female victims (55 out of 58) were murdered by someone they knew. Three female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 56 percent (31 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 65 percent (20 victims) were killed with guns; 80 percent of these (16 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 84 percent (21 out of 25) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 57 percent (12 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Tennessee**

*59 females were murdered by males in Tennessee in 2011*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Tennessee was  
1.80 per 100,000 in 2011*

*Ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the United States*

### **Age**

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (57 homicides), 8 victims (14 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 43 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 58 female homicide victims, 25 were black and 33 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 56 percent of female victims (32 out of 57) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 59 percent (19 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 10 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 7 females killed by a blunt object, and 5 females killed by bodily force.

### **Victim/Offender Relationship**

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 93 percent of female victims (54 out of 58) were murdered by someone they knew. Four female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 56 percent (30 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 67 percent (20 victims) were killed with guns; 65 percent of these (13 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 89 percent (39 out of 44) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 67 percent (26 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Idaho**

*14 females were murdered by males in Idaho in 2011*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Idaho was  
1.77 per 100,000 in 2011*

*Ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the United States*

### **Age**

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (14 homicides), 2 female homicide victims (14 percent) were less than 18 years old and 1 victim (7 percent) was 65 years of age or older. The average age was 32 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 13 female homicide victims, all 13 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 75 percent of female victims (9 out of 12) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 89 percent (8 victims) were killed with handguns. There was 1 female killed with a knife or other cutting instrument.

### **Victim/Offender Relationship**

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 93 percent of female victims (13 out of 14) were murdered by someone they knew. One female victim was killed by a stranger. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 54 percent (7 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 86 percent (6 victims) were killed with guns; 83 percent of these (5 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 100 percent (10 out of 10) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 60 percent (6 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.



## **West Virginia**

*16 females were murdered by males in West Virginia in 2011*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in West Virginia was  
1.70 per 100,000 in 2011*

*Ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in the United States*

### **Age**

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (15 homicides), 3 female homicide victims (20 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 48 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 16 female homicide victims, all 16 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 47 percent of female victims (7 out of 15) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 43 percent (3 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 5 females killed with a knife or other cutting instrument and 2 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 (16 out of 16) were murdered by someone they knew. No female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 69 percent (11 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 55 percent (6 victims) were killed with guns; 50 percent of these (3 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 100 percent (10 out of 10) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 50 percent (5 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Louisiana**

*39 females were murdered by males in Louisiana in 2011*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Louisiana was  
1.67 per 100,000 in 2011*

*Ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the United States*

### **Age**

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (39 homicides), 2 female homicide victims (5 percent) were less than 18 years old and 4 victims (10 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 37 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 39 female homicide victims, 23 were black and 16 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 66 percent of female victims (25 out of 38) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 96 percent (24 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 4 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 2 females killed by a blunt object, and 5 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 (31 out of 33) were murdered by someone they knew. Two female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 61 percent (19 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 74 percent (14 victims) were killed with guns; 93 percent of these (13 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 70 percent (14 out of 20) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 93 percent (13 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **New Mexico**

*17 females were murdered by males in New Mexico in 2011*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in New Mexico was  
1.62 per 100,000 in 2011*

*Ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the United States*

### **Age**

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (16 homicides), 1 female homicide victim (6 percent) was less than 18 years old and 2 victims (13 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 38 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 15 female homicide victims, 2 were American Indian or Alaskan Native and 13 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 44 percent of female victims (7 out of 16) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 86 percent (6 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 4 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 2 females killed by a blunt object, and 2 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 (15 out of 16) were murdered by someone they knew. One female victim was killed by a stranger. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 60 percent (9 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 56 percent (5 victims) were killed with guns; 80 percent of these (4 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 75 percent (12 out of 16) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 75 percent (9 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **United States**

*1,707 females were murdered by males in the United States in 2011*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in the United States was 1.17 per 100,000 in 2011*

### **Age**

For homicides in which the age of the victim was reported (1,653 homicides), there were 138 female homicide victims (8 percent) who were less than 18 years old and 169 victims (10 percent) who were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 39 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 1,679 female homicide victims where race was identified, 47 were Asian or Pacific Islander, 492 were black, 14 were American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 1,126 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 51 percent of female victims (798 out of 1,551) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 73 percent (585 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 315 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 108 females killed by a blunt object, and 224 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 (1,509 out of 1,601) were murdered by someone they knew. There were 92 female victims killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 61 percent (926 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 53 percent (489 victims) were killed with guns; 73 percent of these (355 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 87 percent (1,159 out of 1,335) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 60 percent (701 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 2011 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.



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