



Violence Policy Center

NINTH EDITION

APRIL 2026

# American Roulette

MURDER-SUICIDE IN THE UNITED STATES

Road Trip Takes Tragic Turn

**Murder/suicide leaves  
city stunned on Sunday**

**Believe officer killed girlfriend,  
then turned gun on himself**

**COP IN  
MURDER  
SUICIDE**  
Man kills wife, self at tag agency

Trip Takes Detour Into Murder And Suicide

**Father kills son, self**  
Maumelle mom killed child, then herself, police say

**HORROR AT  
THE RANGH**

Mother of three kills  
two children, herself

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The Violence Policy Center (VPC) is a national nonprofit 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.

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## INTRODUCTION

Murder-suicide is “a dramatic, violent event” in which a person commits one murder or multiple murders, and then shortly after dies by suicide.<sup>1-2</sup> What makes these acts particularly disturbing is that they affect more than one person and often involve a family. They almost always are committed by a man armed with a firearm. Yet outside of high-profile mass shootings, the phenomenon of murder-suicide usually garners little public attention as a significant contributor to gun-related death and injury. This is despite the fact that, as one medical professional has observed, “because many murder-suicides result in the death or injury of family members and sometimes mass murder, they cause countless additional morbidity, family trauma, and disruption of communities.”<sup>2</sup>

Currently, comprehensive, up-to-date information specific to murder-suicides in the United States is not readily available, making it challenging to assess the toll in death and injury.<sup>A</sup> In order to more fully understand the human costs of murder-suicide, in 2002 the Violence Policy Center (VPC) began collecting and analyzing news reports of murder-suicides, resulting in a series of studies titled *American Roulette: Murder-Suicide in the United States*. This is the ninth edition of the study.<sup>B</sup> For each analysis, the VPC tracked murder-suicide incidents over a six-month period using Internet news reports. For this most recent edition of the report, news reports of murder-suicides were collected for the period January 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025. To be included in the study, both the murder and subsequent suicide had to occur within 72 hours of each other and within this six-month time period. Recognizing the lack of publicly available data, this study likely provides the most current and accurate portrait possible of murder-suicide in America.

Studies estimate that between 1,000 and 1,500 deaths per year in the United States are the result of murder-suicide.<sup>2-3</sup> This VPC analysis reveals that in the first half of 2025:

- There were 237 murder-suicide events resulting in 526 murder-suicide deaths, of which 237 were suicides and 289 were homicides.
- Extrapolating from this information, we estimate nine murder-suicide events occurred in the U.S. each week during the study period.
- Of the 237 murder-suicide events, 87 percent were known to involve a firearm (207 of 237).
- Of the 237 suicides, 92 percent were male (219 of 237), five percent were female (12 of 237), and three percent were not identified by sex (six of 237).
- Of the 289 homicides, 76 percent of victims were female (221 of 289), 20 percent were male (57 of 289), and four percent of victims were not identified by sex (11 of 289).

A The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) compiles and combines data about violent deaths from medical examiners, coroners, police, crime labs, and death certificate registrars. Since 2018 all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia have reported data to NVDRS. While information about murder-suicides and other violent deaths are captured by NVDRS, data about murder-suicide events specifically are not available to the public. For more information, see <https://www.cdc.gov/nvdrs/about/index.html>.

B Prior editions of *American Roulette* can be found here: <https://vpc.org/revealing-the-impacts-of-gun-violence/murder-suicide/>. For a chart comparing the key findings of each of these eight editions with those of the current edition, please see page eight.

- Sixty-five percent of all murder-suicides involved an intimate partner (155 of 237). Of these, 99 percent were females killed by their intimate partners (153 of 155) and 88 percent involved a gun (136 of 155).
- Sixteen percent of the homicide victims were children and teens less than 18 years of age (45 of 289).
- Twenty-seven children and teens less than 18 years of age were survivors who witnessed some aspect of the murder-suicide.
- Eleven of the murder-suicides were perpetrated by family annihilators, nine of whom were male. Seven family annihilations involved intimate partners.

By doubling the total number of fatalities during the six-month period for a yearly estimate, there were an estimated 1,052 murder-suicide deaths in 2025. This is within the standard range of estimates for murder-suicides. Due to the necessary limitations of our incident-collection method, this is most likely an underestimate. Anecdotal evidence suggests that our study may have missed a small percentage of murder-suicides. This could be the result of an incident not being reported in the media, not being reported as a murder-suicide, or not being published in an online format.

## TRENDS IDENTIFIED FROM THE STUDY

Listed below are murder-suicide trends and characteristics as identified from the VPC analysis. The findings from this study are consistent with other research concerning murder-suicides. Following each subsection is an incident taken from the news reports collected for the study illustrating the subsection’s findings. At the end of this section, on page eight, is a chart comparing key findings of this study with those from the eight prior editions.

Following this section is an appendix that lists the number of murder-suicides by state. States with no reported murder-suicides during the six-month period are also listed in the appendix. Six states had 10 or more murder-suicides in the six-month period of the study. In order, these states were: Texas (29), Georgia (17), Florida (16), Ohio (15), California (10), and New York (10).

### MOST MURDER-SUICIDES INVOLVE A FIREARM

In the analysis, **87 percent of murder-suicide incidents involved a firearm** (207 of 237). The following table describes the weapons involved.

#### WEAPONS INVOLVED IN MURDER-SUICIDES, JANUARY THROUGH JUNE 2025<sup>C</sup>

Weapon	Count (percent)
Gun	207 (87%)
Handgun	9
Rifle	2
Pistol	4
Revolver	1
Shotgun	2
Gun type not specified	189
Knife	11 (5%)
Fire	6 (3%)
Other	5 (2%)
Unknown	18 (8%)

**TEXAS:** In April 2025, 26-year-old Austin Collette shot and killed his 21-year-old girlfriend before calling 911 to tell them he shot her. He then proceeded to shoot himself. Just five months earlier, in December 2024, Collette pled guilty to murdering a man during an altercation. According to media reports, Collette was out of jail on bond when he killed his girlfriend despite his having multiple ankle monitor violations.

All major murder-suicide studies in the United States completed since 1950 have shown that firearms are by far the most common method of committing homicide, with the offender choosing the firearm for suicide as well.<sup>4-11</sup> This is true for all studies, including those focused on specific populations, e.g., murder-suicides perpetrated by military members, adolescents, older adults, and those involving intimate partners. As one expert on a National Institute of Justice panel focusing on murder-suicide noted, guns are the “low-hanging fruit.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>C</sup> As multiple weapons may be used in one incident, percentages may total more than 100 percent.

## **MOST MURDERERS IN MURDER-SUICIDES ARE MALE**

In this study, **92 percent of the offenders were males** who acted alone (219 of 237). Other studies analyzing murder-suicide in the U.S. support this finding and have found that most perpetrators of murder-suicide are male—more than 90 percent.<sup>5,7-8,10,12</sup> This is again true across multiple studies regardless of the specific population of interest. This pattern is consistent with homicides in general. In 2024, 88 percent of homicides in the U.S. were committed by male offenders.<sup>13</sup> However, most homicides involve male victims killed by male offenders (64 percent), whereas a male victim being specifically targeted by a male offender in a murder-suicide is relatively rare.

**PENNSYLVANIA:** In January 2025, Clifford Hunt, Jr., 19, shot and killed his parents, Clifford and Michelle Hunt, and his brother, Cody Hunt, age 16, before turning the gun on himself. Media reports indicate Cody had called 911 from inside the home before he was killed.

## **MOST MURDER-SUICIDES INVOLVE AN INTIMATE PARTNER**

The most prevalent type of murder-suicide is between two intimate partners,<sup>D</sup> with a man killing his current or former wife or girlfriend. Such events can be the result of a breakdown in the relationship.<sup>3,7,12</sup> The average age difference between the offender and primary victim in murder-suicides involving an intimate partner was 5.2 years with a range of zero to 35 years. (Other studies on fatal violence for spouses have found that there is a greater risk of homicide victimization as the age difference between the partners increases.<sup>14</sup>) In this study, **65 percent of all murder-suicides involved an intimate partner** (155 of 237). Of these, 99 percent were females killed by their intimate partners (153 of 155) and 88 percent involved a gun (136 of 155). In comparison, in 2024, for all homicides where the relationship could be determined, nine percent of homicide victims were killed by an intimate partner.<sup>13</sup> Of these, 77 percent were females killed by their intimate partners.

**NEBRASKA:** In February 2025, 21-year-old Michelle Gonzalez filed a protection order hours before she was killed by her boyfriend, 28-year-old Ibrahim Alhamadani. That morning, Gonzalez reported that Alhamadani had beaten her with a pistol while intoxicated. She filed for a protection order later that morning which was approved, although it had not yet been served by the time she was attacked. A few hours later, two bystanders saw Gonzalez get hit by a black vehicle driven by Alhamadani. The bystanders brought Gonzalez into their car. Alhamadani then crashed his vehicle into their car. He then left his vehicle and fired multiple shots at Gonzalez. Gonzalez was transported to the hospital where she died of her injuries later that day. First responders found Alhamadani with a fatal self-inflicted gunshot wound. Neither of the bystanders were injured. Alhamadani had previously served time in prison on domestic violence charges, and was out on parole at the time of the murder-suicide.

D For the purposes of this study, an intimate partner or intimate acquaintance is defined as a spouse, common-law spouse, ex-spouse, girlfriend/boyfriend, ex-girlfriend/boyfriend, ex-fiancee, or estranged husband/wife.

## **MANY MURDER-SUICIDES WITH THREE OR MORE VICTIMS INVOLVE A “FAMILY ANNIHILATOR”**

Many multiple-victim murder-suicides involving a large number of victims (three or more) are perpetrated by family annihilators. Family annihilators are murderers who kill their intimate partners, children, or other family members before killing themselves. In many cases, a family annihilator is suffering from depression and has financial or other problems and feels the family is better off dying with them than remaining alive to deal with the problems at hand.<sup>15-16</sup>

**Eleven murder-suicides perpetrated by family annihilators were identified** in this study. Of these 11, the offender was male in nine cases. Seven of the 11 family annihilations involved current or former intimate partners and the offender was male in all seven cases.

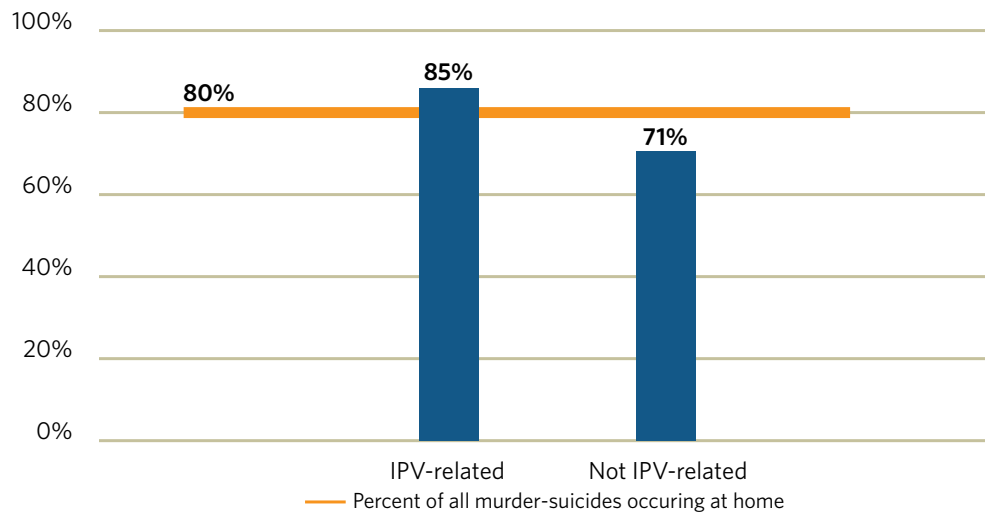
**RHODE ISLAND:** In January 2025, Nicholas Arruda, 39, shot and killed his family inside their home. Arruda murdered his pregnant wife Danielle, age 39, and their two children, ages five and two. All of the victims had multiple gunshot wounds from a semiautomatic M4-style assault rifle. Nicholas Arruda was found with a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. Two additional guns were found in the home, a Mossberg shotgun, and another semiautomatic rifle.

## **MOST MURDER-SUICIDES OCCUR IN THE HOME**

In this study, **80 percent of murder-suicides occurred in the home** (190 of 237). Available data confirm that the home of the offender and/or victim is the most likely place for a murder-suicide.<sup>6-8,10</sup> The home is a particularly dangerous place for victims of intimate partner violence.<sup>10,17</sup> In this study, 85 percent of murder-suicides involving an intimate partner (“IPV-related”) occurred at home, while 71 percent of other murder-suicide incidents occurred at home (Figure 1). One study suggests that within the home, more murder-suicides are committed in the bedroom than any other room.<sup>5</sup>

**FLORIDA:** In March 2025, Army veteran Jonathan Rivera, age 26, shot and killed his wife Weilu Liu, age 29, at their home, before turning the gun on himself. Neighbors reported knowing of abuse in the couple’s relationship and called law enforcement when they heard screams and gunshots coming from the couple’s home the day of the murder. In the months prior to the killing Rivera had been arrested for domestic battery, but Liu had not pressed charges.

**Figure 1. Percentage of IPV-related and not IPV-related murder-suicides occurring at home**



### **CHILDREN ARE OFTEN VICTIMS OF, AND WITNESSES TO, MURDER-SUICIDE**

**Sixteen percent of the homicide victims were children and teens less than 18 years of age** (45 of 289). The average age of children killed was eight years old. Twenty-seven children and teens less than 18 years of age were survivors who witnessed some aspect of the murder-suicide. One study noted that children of the victim and/or perpetrator witnessed the murder-suicide, were in the immediate vicinity, found their parents' bodies, or were killed in 43 percent of the cases studied.<sup>18</sup>

**OHIO:** In June 2025, Lawrence Moore, age 46, shot his girlfriend Ashley Fonseca, age 37, before shooting himself. Fonseca was transported to the hospital where she died the next day. Fonseca's two sons, ages seven and 15, were home at the time of the shooting and called 911. Fonseca had recently posted on social media about her not feeling safe around Moore. She described Moore threatening to punch her, putting a gun to her head as well as shoving it into her stomach, and destroying her possessions.

Fonseca had witnessed her own mother's murder as a child more than two decades before. In February of 1998 Fonseca's mother was stabbed to death by a coworker who had been stalking her. Just 10 years old at the time, the man also stabbed Fonseca as well as her brother. The perpetrator then went on to kill another person with a shotgun before being killed by police.<sup>E</sup>

E "Childhood stabbing survivor recounts attack 25 years later," *WTOL11 News*, February 14, 2023.

## **MOST MURDER-SUICIDE VICTIMS INVOLVE A SINGLE HOMICIDE VICTIM**

In this study, **84 percent of murder-suicides** (200 of 237) **involved one homicide victim**, while 10 percent (23 of 237) involved two victims, and six percent involved three or more victims (14 of 237). This finding is consistent with other analyses of murder-suicide data.<sup>10,19</sup>

**ILLINOIS:** In May 2025, William Rudy, age 67, shot and killed Lacy Williams, age 32. Police found Williams lying in the front yard of a house and Rudy inside the house with a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Williams had given birth approximately two weeks prior to her death. According to media reports, Williams and Rudy had known each other for approximately seven years and had been dating for part of that time.

## **UNIQUE FACTORS MAY DRIVE MURDER-SUICIDE AMONG THE ELDERLY**

In this study, **25 percent of murder-suicides involved a murderer 55 years of age or older**. Older people rarely commit homicide. In 2024, only seven percent of known homicide offenders were 55 years of age or older.<sup>13</sup> Suicide, however, is disproportionately represented in this age group, with 37 percent of suicide victims being 55 years of age or older.<sup>23</sup>

While 65 percent of all murder-suicide incidents in this study involved a current or former intimate partner, this percentage was higher among older perpetrators—**82 percent of incidents among those age 55 and older involved the murder of an intimate partner**. This finding is consistent with another study that found that 81 percent of murder-suicide incidents among older adults were IPV-related.<sup>22</sup>

If most murder-suicides involve family turmoil, a smaller, discrete category involves older people where the declining health of either the victim, the offender, or both is the motivation for murder-suicide.<sup>10,20-22</sup> Traditional male roles in society may also play a part in these incidents, where men perceive responsibility for their partners, including caretaking and decision-making.<sup>24</sup> Conflict between a man's interpretation of his role in the relationship and his ability to manage a variety of stressors—including caretaking burdens, health concerns, and financial problems, may increase the risk for men to unilaterally decide to end both his and his partner's lives.

**LOUISIANA:** In March 2025, Robert Rickoll, age 79, killed his wife, Brenda Rickoll, age 82, before killing himself. Brenda Rickoll reportedly had health problems and her husband was overwhelmed as her caretaker. Robert Rickoll left a note indicating there were no other options to continue caring for his wife.

**AMERICAN ROULETTE: SELECT COMPARISONS FOR THE YEARS 2001, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2019, 2021, AND 2025**

	2001	2005	2007	2011	2014	2017	2019	2021	2025
Murder-suicide incidents involving a firearm	95%	92%	89%	90%	93%	91%	89%	90%	87%
Murder-suicide incidents in which the killers were male	90%	94%	95%	90%	89%	89%	91%	91%	92%
Murder-suicide incidents that involved intimate partners	74%	74%	73%	72%	72%	65%	65%	62%	65%
Average age difference in intimate partner killings (in years)	6.6	6.3	6.0	3.3	3.8	3.1	4.3	5.3	5.2
Murder-suicides that occurred in the home	76%	75%	75%	80%	81%	82%	81%	78%	80%
Number of children killed in murder-suicides	N/T*	47	45	55	45	42	51	40	45
Number of children who witnessed murder-suicides	N/T	N/T	44	66	63	52	67	66	27
Murder-suicide incidents with an elderly perpetrator (age 55+)	21%	23%	27%	25%	33%	29%	23%	21%	25%

\* N/T = Not Tabulated

## CONCLUSION

Most people think of suicide as a solitary act, affecting only one person. Yet, the effects of murder-suicide go far beyond the shooter: family, friends, co-workers, and absolute strangers are among those who are killed as a result of these acts of desperation. Moreover, murder-suicide often leaves children parentless. During the six-month period tallied in this study, there were 237 suicides—yet the total number of deaths was 526. More people died from murders associated with the suicide—289—than from the suicides themselves. These numbers call into grave question the common belief that suicide, especially firearms suicide, is a solitary act that affects only the shooter.

A significant number of murder-suicides involved intimate partners. Therefore, stronger domestic violence legislation may be one avenue of intervention, including programs that assist men with coping with issues of anger, control, and separation. Prevention efforts likely need to be tailored to specific age demographics, for example one study showed that homicide was more likely to be the primary intent (as opposed to suicide) among younger perpetrators, while older perpetrators were more likely to exhibit suicidal intent.<sup>10</sup> Efforts to identify individuals intending to hurt themselves or others and removing firearms from their possession is a valuable prevention strategy. In addition, experts have suggested that more research should be focused on the impact that domestic violence murder-suicides have on the families in which they occur. The establishment of state-level domestic violence task forces to examine the particular circumstances of domestic murder-suicide—including cultural, social, economic, and geographic issues—should be encouraged. State and local authorities should evaluate and establish best practices for domestic violence prevention and intervention for governmental and non-governmental efforts.

Depression and the strain of providing care for a spouse in failing health have been cited by experts as a significant contributing factor to murder-suicide among older persons.<sup>10,22,24-25</sup> Health care options that provide aid to older caregivers and that aim to monitor and treat depression in such cases may be one useful intervention.

Existing surveillance of violent deaths in the U.S. should be improved and information specifically about murder-suicides should be made available to the public. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's surveillance system for violent deaths, the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), captures comprehensive information about homicide, suicide, unintentional firearm deaths, legal intervention, and undetermined intent deaths.<sup>26</sup> Though murder-suicide events are captured in NVDRS, information about these events is not made publicly available. In order to better understand the phenomenon and develop effective prevention strategies, data about murder-suicides collected and reported by NVDRS should be made easily available to the public and include detailed information, to the extent possible, on: the sex, age, race, ethnicity, and profession of the perpetrator and victim(s); the relationship between the perpetrator and victim(s); the type of weapon used, including the make and model of the firearm if available; the specific location of the event, e.g. workplace, specific room in the residence; whether any children witnessed the event; and, any available information regarding the motivation of the murderer.

Finally, the most common catalytic component in murder-suicide is the use of a firearm. Guns allow killers to act on impulse. Every major murder-suicide study ever conducted has shown that a firearm—with its unmatched combination of high lethality and easy availability—is the weapon most often used to murder the victims, with the offenders then turning the gun on themselves.<sup>5-10,12,16-17,19,24,27</sup> In this study, access to a gun was the critical component for almost all of the murder-suicides. Of the 37 murder-suicides with more than one homicide victim,

95 percent (35 of 37) involved the use of a firearm. The presence of a gun allows the offender to quickly and easily kill a greater number of victims. If there had not been easy access to a firearm, these deaths may simply have been injuries or may not have occurred at all. Efforts should be made to restrict access to firearms where there is an increased risk of murder-suicide, for example where an individual has a history of domestic violence and/or has threatened suicide. State and local officials, including judges, should aggressively enforce laws that currently prohibit individuals with a misdemeanor domestic violence conviction or who are the subject of a restraining order for domestic violence from purchasing or possessing a firearm. Research shows that state laws restricting those under domestic violence restraining orders from accessing firearms, and laws allowing the warrantless arrest of those in violation of domestic violence restraining orders, are associated with reductions in intimate partner homicide.<sup>28</sup>

Murder-suicides are horrific and violent events that often involve families, intimate partners, and children. The impact this violence has on survivors and communities is significant and all too often unacknowledged. As these incidents are almost always perpetrated with a gun, policies which restrict access to firearms among violent offenders or individuals at risk of hurting themselves or others are vital to preventing these events. Making timely and comprehensive data about this category of lethal violence easily available to researchers, policymakers, community leaders, the news media, and anti-violence advocates is essential to informing policy efforts and ultimately preventing future murder-suicides.

## APPENDIX: MURDER-SUICIDES BY STATE AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

This appendix lists murder-suicides by state and the District of Columbia. This chart includes the number of murder-suicide incidents recorded during the six-month study period, as well as the total number of people who died. It is important to note that lack of a murder-suicide during the first half of the year is in no way an indicator of whether or not there will be any reports of murder-suicide in the second half of the year.

State	Number of Murder-Suicide Events in the First Half of 2025	Number of People Dead from Murder-Suicide Events in the First Half of 2025
Alabama	3	6
Alaska	0	0
Arizona	9	19
Arkansas	2	4
California	10	20
Colorado	2	4
Connecticut	0	0
Delaware	1	2
District of Columbia	0	0
Florida	16	35
Georgia	17	39
Hawaii	0	0
Idaho	2	4
Illinois	3	8
Indiana	6	16
Iowa	3	7
Kansas	1	2
Kentucky	4	9
Louisiana	8	18
Maine	0	0
Maryland	4	8
Massachusetts	2	4
Michigan	7	14
Minnesota	6	12
Mississippi	3	6
Missouri	9	20
Montana	1	4
Nebraska	5	12
Nevada	5	10

State	Number of Murder-Suicide Events in the First Half of 2025	Number of People Dead from Murder-Suicide Events in the First Half of 2025
New Hampshire	1	2
New Jersey	2	5
New Mexico	3	8
New York	10	21
North Carolina	7	15
North Dakota	0	0
Ohio	15	31
Oklahoma	2	4
Oregon	1	2
Pennsylvania	7	18
Rhode Island	1	4
South Carolina	7	14
South Dakota	0	0
Tennessee	7	14
Texas	29	63
Utah	0	0
Vermont	1	2
Virginia	6	17
Washington	2	5
West Virginia	2	4
Wisconsin	4	10
Wyoming	1	4
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>526</b>

## ENDNOTES

**Citations are individually listed by the order in which they appear in the text. Citations may be referenced multiple times throughout the text.**

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