

DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center
Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety
State of West Virginia

1989 - 1998

WV Domestic Violence Incidents

May 2000

This publication summarizes a ten-year history of domestic violence complaints in West Virginia as reported in the 1989 to 1998 Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), titled *Crime in West Virginia*, published annually by the State Police. It should be noted that not all domestic violence incidents are reported. The data in this report are therefore limited to incidents of domestic violence reported to law enforcement agencies.

West Virginia State Law §48-2A mandates the collection of domestic violence information. Information on spouses, persons living as spouses, persons who formerly resided as spouses, parents, children, step children or other persons related by blood or marriage is collected.

The West Virginia State Police Uniform Crime Reporting Program defines a domestic violence incident in the following manner: Abuse is the occurrence of one or more of the following acts between family or household members who reside together or who formerly resided together:

(1) Attempting to cause or intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing bodily injury with or without a dangerous or deadly weapon.

(2) Placing, by physical menace, another in fear of imminent serious bodily injury.

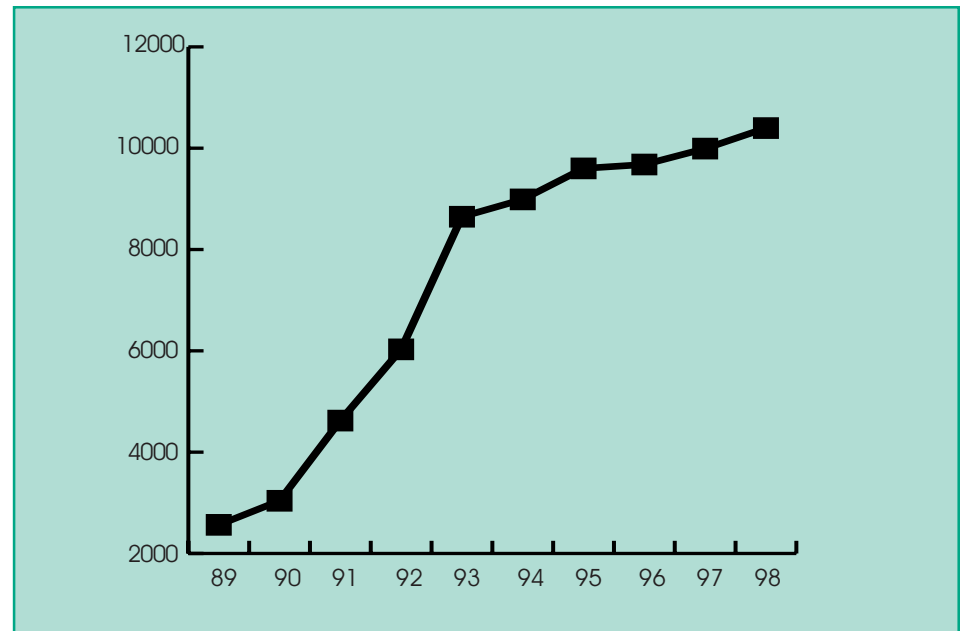
(3) Sexually abusing a person under the age of 18 years.

Domestic Violence

The number of "reported" domestic violence incidents rose from 2,565 in 1989 to 10,397 in 1998. This is an average of 7,356 domestic violence offenses each year during the ten-year period. The largest increase in reported domestic violence incidents ($n = 2,618$) occurred between 1992 and 1993, with complaints rising from 6,029 to 8,647. The smallest increase

Graph 1

1989 - 1998 Domestic Violence Incidents



in reported domestic violence incidents ($n = 77$) occurred between 1995 and 1996, with incidents rising from 9,601 to 9,678.

The number of offenses varied from county to county with Kanawha County having the highest average number of complaints per year at 1,375. Monroe County averaged the fewest, less than one incident (.80) per year over the same ten-year period. These same two counties also shared the highest and lowest range. Kanawha County experienced the highest range in number of offenses with a difference of 1,959 between the highest and lowest years. Monroe County had the smallest range with a difference of three offenses.

For comparison, Kanawha County had more domestic violence complaints in the ten-year period than did the entire eastern region of West Virginia. Kanawha County had 13,754 offenses over the period, while the eastern region had 12,868.

Gender

Domestic violence has long been stereotyped as male on female violence. This stereotype had been validated in West Virginia for many years, but this trend seems to be changing. Over the last four to five years the number of male victims increased along with the number of female offenders in domestic violence situations. Between 1989 and 1994, the percentage of male victims of domestic violence was 11.2%. Between 1994 and 1998, the percentage of male domestic victims increased, reaching 18.4% in 1998.

The percentage of female offenders arrested for domestic violence incidents has also increased. Between 1989 and 1994, the percentage of female domestic violence offenders was 9.3%. Between 1994 and 1998, this figure also increased, reaching 15.5% in 1998.

Table 1 Domestic Violence Incidents by County

County	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Barbour	6	6	20	10	25	34	34	35	29	59	258
Berkeley	108	119	427	379	724	894	724	755	700	744	5574
Grant	7	3	1	0	11	30	24	32	32	39	179
Hampshire	0	6	17	26	40	37	57	46	51	44	324
Hardy	8	20	25	23	36	50	44	35	36	44	321
Jefferson	48	52	120	184	137	148	167	159	256	330	1601
Mineral	94	108	153	234	178	153	125	121	132	109	1407
Morgan	17	14	28	22	45	40	49	36	52	62	365
Pendleton	22	10	55	40	26	43	44	40	40	36	356
Pocahontas	8	6	22	19	55	47	46	35	45	39	322
Randolph	68	59	104	137	189	140	123	152	114	138	1224
Tucker	13	15	26	24	27	37	29	30	17	29	247
Upshur	18	25	41	34	33	34	35	65	86	70	441
Webster	3	4	4	16	4	8	35	68	52	55	249
Eastern Region Total	420	447	1043	1148	1530	1695	1536	1609	1642	1798	12868
Braxton	7	6	16	11	26	27	32	25	28	46	224
Brooke	68	74	92	87	100	99	67	52	66	53	758
Doddridge	1	3	22	23	27	38	50	32	47	63	306
Gilmer	6	4	11	9	21	22	17	22	8	46	166
Hancock	117	134	233	162	205	191	195	194	246	284	1961
Harrison	64	102	231	333	510	597	456	461	304	214	3272
Lewis	6	4	14	21	43	46	58	46	29	35	302
Marion	102	114	210	330	528	409	307	283	212	150	2645
Marshall	54	83	152	112	116	117	169	181	254	358	1596
Monongalia	111	144	217	332	318	342	259	283	377	268	2651
Ohio	22	38	42	99	211	279	518	442	466	412	2529
Pleasants	2	2	4	27	23	34	24	42	60	36	254
Preston	48	32	28	33	42	55	40	84	49	72	483
Ritchie	0	1	6	4	9	3	9	9	20	32	93
Taylor	15	17	45	75	84	37	48	51	43	41	456
Tyler	22	13	7	9	6	9	6	6	11	41	130
Wetzel	4	10	28	44	49	45	34	54	71	43	382
Northern Region Total	649	781	1358	1711	2318	2350	2289	2267	2291	2194	18208
Fayette	19	15	17	118	94	85	84	88	61	113	694
Greenbrier	23	56	82	82	27	79	73	69	57	60	608
Logan	32	33	27	11	9	11	104	108	103	104	542
McDowell	5	11	3	4	8	20	22	6	28	16	123
Mercer	150	194	212	234	349	351	452	442	476	415	3275
Mingo	96	66	30	89	60	53	100	109	103	84	793
Monroe	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	3	0	2	8
Nicholas	42	64	49	50	78	66	87	66	111	176	789
Raleigh	392	455	509	542	678	792	757	896	634	788	6443
Summers	1	0	6	7	7	8	10	0	1	0	40
Wyoming	74	48	75	68	102	89	122	73	118	152	921
Southern Region Total	834	942	1012	1205	1412	1555	1811	1860	1692	1910	14233
Boone	1	2	11	19	37	96	54	60	72	105	457
Cabell	35	57	140	258	514	958	1153	991	727	816	5649
Calhoun	0	0	9	6	17	3	10	37	48	33	163
Clay	0	12	13	14	10	7	18	12	17	17	120
Jackson	8	19	8	12	22	27	43	48	59	65	311
Kanawha	401	506	512	934	1529	1293	1932	1840	2438	2360	13745
Lincoln	30	34	85	77	54	36	102	125	138	193	874
Mason	18	21	40	38	79	83	99	118	113	98	707
Putnam	35	24	99	130	180	185	137	149	110	165	1214
Roane	9	16	11	10	10	18	6	13	31	45	169
Wayne	37	19	39	35	116	107	201	265	304	264	1387
Wirt	2	3	2	3	12	6	12	14	15	17	86
Wood	86	157	241	429	807	570	198	270	295	317	3370
Western Region Total	662	870	1210	1965	3387	3389	3965	3942	4367	4495	28252
Total WV	2565	3040	4623	6029	8647	8989	9601	9678	9992	10397	73561

Offense Rates

The overall offense rate for West Virginia increased dramatically between 1989 and 1998 ranging from a low of 1.38 offenses per 1,000 residents in 1989 to a high of 5.50 offenses per 1,000 residents in 1998. The average rate over the ten year period was 3.55 offenses per 1,000 residents.

When the population is taken into consideration, Kanawha County led the state with an average of 11.82 offenses per 1,000 residents in 1998. Monroe County had the lowest rate with no offenses reported in the county.

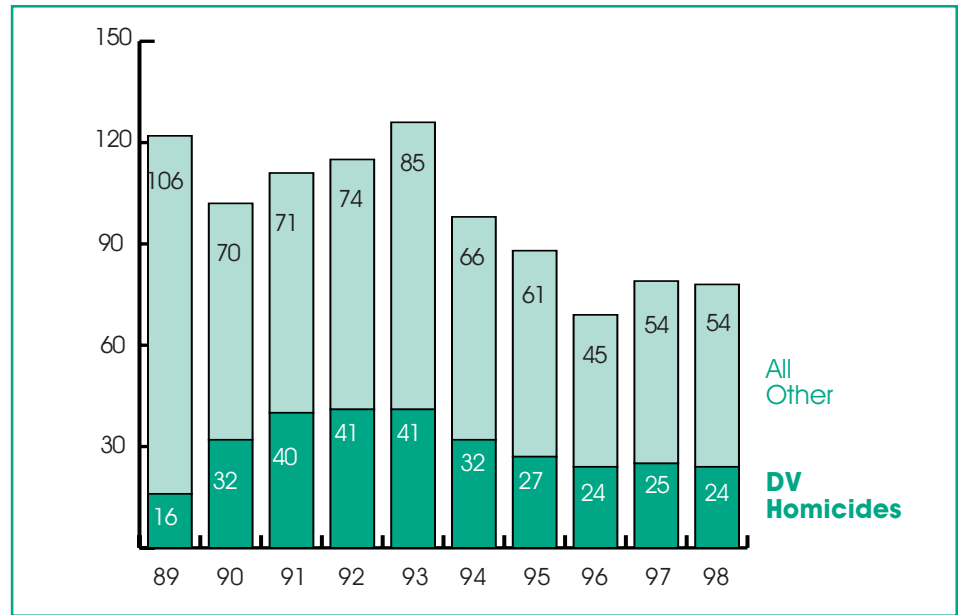
In addition to Kanawha, 13 other counties had a higher offense rate than the statewide average of 5.50 per 1,000 residents in 1998. Those counties were Berkeley (10.73), Ohio (9.35), Raleigh (8.14), Pleasants (8.03), Wayne (8.00), Mercer (7.34), Cabell (7.21), Marshall (6.84), Jefferson (6.61), Doddridge (6.47), Hancock (6.45), Lincoln (6.32), and Calhoun (6.07).

Pro Arrest Law

In July 1994, the West Virginia Legislature adopted an arrest policy for domestic violence cases, referred to by some as the Pro Arrest law. The law authorizes officers to make an arrest of an alleged perpetrator when probable cause exists, either from evidence or allegation that a crime has occurred. By viewing the victim, the accused, or the scene as a whole the officer may be able to form probable cause. Essentially, this law reduced officer liability for false arrests and encourages officers to assess the condition of the scene as well as verbal statements.

Graph 2

1989 - 1998 Homicides: Domestic Violence & All Other



The rate of arrest for domestic violence complaints averaged 11.55% from 1989 to 1993. After adoption of the Pro Arrest Law, the arrest rate nearly doubled from 12.14% in 1993 to 21.55% in 1994. From 1994 to 1998, the average arrest rate was 33.39%, with the rate increasing every year and peaking at 39.39% in 1997.

Extent of Violence

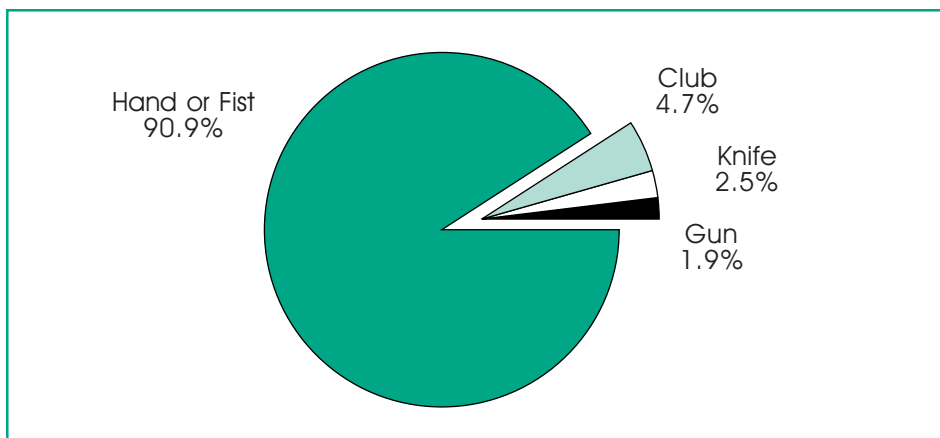
The extent of domestic violence abuse is both tragic and shocking. The UCR gives a breakdown of the results of abuse and divides domestic abuse incidents into four categories; simple assault, felonious assault, homicide, and other. In 1998, simple assault made up the bulk of all domestic violence incidents, with 8,252

reported cases (79.4%). In addition, there were 178 felonious assaults (1.7%) and 24 (0.2%) domestic violence related homicides. In the state of West Virginia in 1998, there were 78 reported homicides, therefore domestic violence incidents accounted for 30.8% of all homicides. Upon further review of the data, it was determined that domestic violence incidents accounted for 30.6% of murders over the past ten years, peaking at 36.0% in 1991. In addition, in 1998, there were 1,741 domestic violence cases that were categorized as "other" domestic abuse. Many of these cases were the result of emotional abuse.

Weapon Used

In addition to the types of violence, the types of weapon used in the domestic violence incidents were explored. Most domestic violence incidents involve the hands or fists of the offender and 1998 was no exception. In 1998, 90.9% of all domestic violence incidents involved the use of hands or fists. The club was the second most frequently used weapon in 1998, accounting for 4.7% of all domestic violence incidents. Knives were next in the type of weapons used, accounting for 2.5% of the domestic violence incidents. Guns were used in 1.9% of all domestic violence incidents.

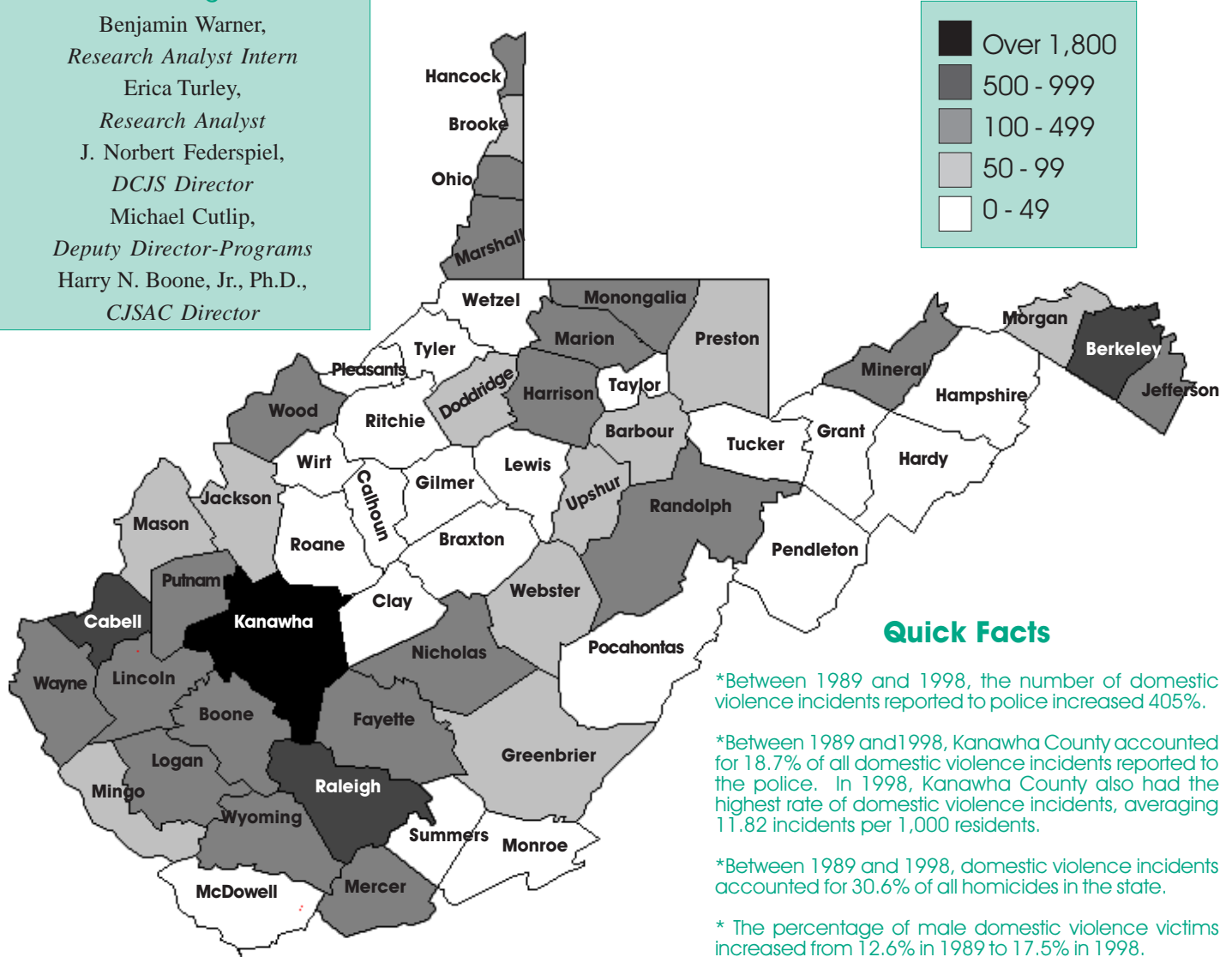
Graph 3 1998 Weapons Used



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1998 Domestic Violence Incidents



Quick Facts

- *Between 1989 and 1998, the number of domestic violence incidents reported to police increased 405%.
- *Between 1989 and 1998, Kanawha County accounted for 18.7% of all domestic violence incidents reported to the police. In 1998, Kanawha County also had the highest rate of domestic violence incidents, averaging 11.82 incidents per 1,000 residents.
- *Between 1989 and 1998, domestic violence incidents accounted for 30.6% of all homicides in the state.
- * The percentage of male domestic violence victims increased from 12.6% in 1989 to 17.5% in 1998.
- * Ninety-one percent of all domestic violence incidents involved the offenders hands or fists as the weapon.



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