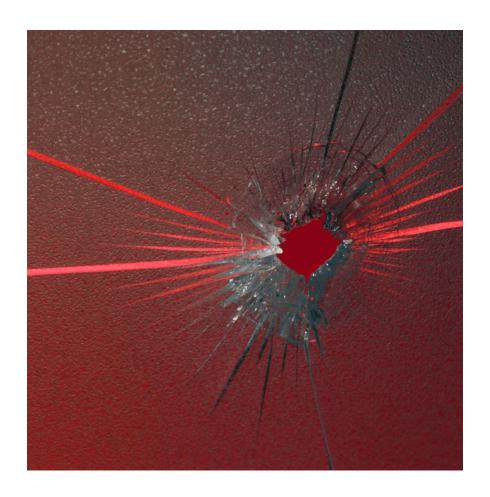
Drive-By America





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 report was authored by VPC Executive Director Josh Sugarmann and VPC Publications Coordinator Aimee Newth. Additional research was provided by Leah Mogabgab. This report was funded in part with the support of The California Wellness Foundation, The Herb Block Foundation, and The Joyce Foundation. Past VPC studies include:

- A Shrinking Minority: The Continuing Decline of Gun Ownership in America (April 2007)
- Black Homicide Victimization in the United States: An Analysis of 2004 Homicide Data (January 2007)
- When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2004 Homicide Data (September 2006)
- American Roulette: Murder-Suicide in the United States (May 2006)
- An Analysis of the Decline in Gun Dealers: 1994 to 2005 (March 2006)
- When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2003 Homicide Data (September 2005)
- Clear and Present Danger: National Security Experts Warn About the Danger of Unrestricted Sales of 50 Caliber Anti-Armor Sniper Rifles to Civilians (July 2005)
- Safe At Home: How D.C.'s Gun Laws Save Children's Lives (July 2005)
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- Bullet Hoses Semiautomatic Assault Weapons: What Are They? What's So Bad About Them?
 (May 2003)
- "Officer Down"—Assault Weapons and the War on Law Enforcement (May 2003)
- Firearms Production in America 2002 Edition—A Listing of Firearm Manufacturers in America with Production Histories Broken Out by Firearm Type and Caliber (March 2003)
- "Just Like Bird Hunting"—The Threat to Civil Aviation from 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles (January 2003)
- Sitting Ducks—The Threat to the Chemical and Refinery Industry from 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles (August 2002)
- License to Kill IV: More Guns, More Crime (June 2002)
- American Roulette: The Untold Story of Murder-Suicide in the United States (April 2002)
- The U.S. Gun Industry and Others Unknown—Evidence Debunking the Gun Industry's Claim that Osama bin Laden Got His 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles from the U.S. Afghan-Aid Program (February 2002)
- "A .22 for Christmas"—How the Gun Industry Designs and Markets Firearms for Children and Youth (December 2001)
- Kids in the Line of Fire: Children, Handguns, and Homicide (November 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)
- One Shot, One Kill: Civilian Sales of Military Sniper Rifles (May 1999)
- Cease Fire: A Comprehensive Strategy to Reduce Firearms Violence (Revised, October 1997)

Drive-by shootings are commonly defined as an incident in which the shooter fires a firearm from a motor vehicle at another person, vehicle, building, or other stationary object.¹

The March 2007 U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services publication *Drive-By Shootings* offers this succinct description of drive-by shootings and their possible circumstances:

"Many drive-by shootings involve multiple suspects and multiple victims. Using a vehicle allows the shooter to approach the intended target without being noticed and then to speed away before anyone reacts. The vehicle also offers some protection in the case of return fire. In some situations, drive-by shootings are gang-related; in others, they are the result of road rage or personal disputes between neighbors, acquaintances, or strangers and are not related to gang membership."

Currently there is no national data on the prevalence of drive-by shootings, those who commit them, those who are killed and injured as a result of them, the types of firearms used, where they take place, or at what times they most often occur.

This study, for the first time, offers a nationwide overview of drive-by shootings, and using a limited sample of information works to begin to answer some of these questions. 3

Dedel, Kelly, *Drive-By Shootings*, *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police, Problem-Specific Guides Series, No. 47*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, March 2007.

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National homicide data, including age, race, circumstance, weapon type, and relationship based on initial police reporting is compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation through the Supplementary Homicide Report of the Uniform Crime Reports. The SHR does not include drive-by shootings in its circumstances. The National Center for Health Statistics compiles data from death certificates on homicides but does not flag drive-by homicides. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) compiles and combines data from medical examiners, coroners, police, crime labs, and death certificate registrars and does code circumstances such as drive-bys. Originally started as a pilot project by the Harvard School of Public Health with the support of six foundations, the National Violent Death Reporting System is now overseen by the CDC and operates in 17 states. While NVDRS does flag drive-by shootings, sites vary in the extent to which they have access to detailed police reports—the data source most likely to mention the specific circumstances involved in a homicide. The Harvard pilot project received data from: Allegheny County, PA (which includes Pittsburgh); Miami-Dade County, FL (which includes

From July 1, 2006, through December 31, 2006, the Violence Policy Center (VPC) used the Google News search engine to collect every reported news article that contained the term "drive by." From these results, the VPC removed all results not related to a drive-by shooting incident (for example, extraneous results included news reports of football games detailing a "drive by" one team against another, etc.). Recognizing the limitations of the survey tools used, and taking into account prior studies looking at the number of drive-by shootings in specific jurisdictions, it is likely that the number of shootings is dramatically underreported.

During the six-month period covered in this report, 549 drive-by shooting incidents were reported in the news media as identified by Google, claiming 156 lives and injuring 465 individuals.

Miami); San Francisco County, CA; and the states of Connecticut, Maine, Utah, and Wisconsin. From this very limited set of locations, the pilot project found that in 2001 and 2002, of the 929 firearm homicides that were reported (excluding legal intervention deaths), 58 (6.2 percent) were coded as drive-by shootings. Miami-Dade County reported more than half of the drive-by shootings (30 of the 58). Data on homicide circumstances from the current 17 NVDRS states are expected to be released later in 2007. more information on the **NVDRS** program, http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/profiles/nvdrs/default.htm a n d http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nviss/documents/NVDRS brochure.pdf.

Studies analyzing specific cities have been conducted using law enforcement records. An analysis of the files of the Gang Information Section of the Los Angeles Police Department to identify all gang-related drive-by shootings (which were estimated to account for 90 percent of all drive-by shootings) in Los Angeles for the year 1991 in which victims 17 years of age or younger were shot at, injured, or killed, revealed that 677 adolescents and children were shot at, of which 429 (63 percent) had gunshot wounds and 36 (5.3 percent) died from their injuries. For all ages, the study reported that there were 1,548 gang-related drive-by shootings in Los Angeles that year, during which 2,222 people were shot at. [Hutson, Range H., et al, Adolescents and Children Injured or Killed in Drive-By Shootings in Los Angeles, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, February 3, 1994, Volume 330:324-327, No. 5, see also, Hutson, H. Range et al, The Epidemic of Gang-Related Homicides in Los Angeles County From 1979 Through 1994, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, October 4, 1995, Vol. 274:1031-1036, No. 13.]

⁵ Google News includes approximately 4,500 US news sources and approximately 10,000 sources worldwide according to the Google press office.

Prior studies have primarily used police reports to tally the number of drive-by shootings in a given locality. Such reports would include not only incidents in which victims or potential victims were present, but property damage reported to law enforcement as the result of drive-by attacks. News coverage of drive-by shootings is far more likely when victims or potential victims are present, but far less likely when only property damage occurs from the incident. As a result, news reports would most likely dramatically underreport the total number of drive-by shootings.

4-Year-Old Girl Wounded in Los Angeles Drive-by Shooting, Los Angeles, CA, July 10, 2006

A gunman in an SUV fired an assault rifle at a car parked on a South Los Angeles street Monday, wounding a 4-year-old girl who was standing on the sidewalk, police said. The vehicle drove away after the 4:30 p.m. shooting, said Officer Mike Lopez. The girl was hit in the abdomen and in a leg and was hospitalized in stable condition. (Associated Press)

2 Teens Killed in Drive-by Shooting at Ypsi Mobile Home Park, Detroit, MI, July 10, 2006

Two teenagers were killed and two others wounded in an apparent drive-by shooting at a mobile home park in Ypsilanti Township Sunday night....Green Brier Mobile Home Park was riddled with dozens of bullets at about 11 p.m. after two persons in a car began shooting. Killed at the scene was Krelissa Feldman, 14. Another victim, Scott Bonar, 17, died later at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital. Two other teenagers, Joseph Tibbs, 19 and Chad Yates, 17, were treated at the hospital and then released. "It was 'bang, bang,'" said Matt Kruger, who was in the home when the shooting occurred. "Drywall was flying everywhere. You couldn't see anything." (*The Detroit News*)

Drive-By Shooting Involved Females, Leavenworth, KS, July 13, 2006

Wichita has had plenty of drive-by shootings in recent years, but one late Tuesday night had a twist police say they haven't seen before. It was one group of women targeting another group of women. Seven of the eight people involved were females....An estimated eight shots were fired toward four young women standing in front of a house shortly before 11 p.m....No one was hit...though bullets hit two houses nearby. (www.kansas.com)

Jacksonville Girl, 8, Killed in Drive-by While in Grandmother's House, Jacksonville, FL, July 27, 2006

An 8-year-old girl playing video games inside her grandmother's house was fatally shot during a drive-by shooting....Dreshawna Monique Washington Davis was struck about 6:30 p.m. Wednesday in what was believed to be a retaliation strike against a relative....The shooting likely stemmed from a dispute that occurred earlier in the day...."She loved to dance and dreamed of being a cheerleader," said her aunt Davina Sutton. "They called her momma because she acted like a little momma." (*The Florida Times-Union*)

2 Arrested in Drive-By Shooting of 11-year-old Girl, New York, NY, July 19, 2006

Two teenagers have been arrested in the drive-by killing of an 11-year-old girl, who was shot in the head while running through water from an open fire hydrant outside her Queens home....The victim, Genesis Regalado, was an innocent bystander to a street dispute involving a neighborhood turf war....Genesis and some friends and family members were outside her...home trying to get relief from the heat at the open hydrant...on a day when temperatures soared into the high 90s. Investigators believe the girl was shot in the head after friends of her brother, 17-year-old Jeffrey Regalado, exchanged angry words with another group of young men. Sometime later-with the girl, her brother and his friends gathered outside her home-the second group of men drove by in a dark sedan and opened fire, police said. (*Newsday*)

New Haven Boy Injured in Drive-By Shooting, New Haven, CT, July 30, 2006

A 13-year-old boy was critically wounded when he was shot in an apparent drive-by shooting while riding his bicycle Saturday night. The boy...was shot in the back of the head and taken to Yale-New Haven Hospital. He was [in] critical condition on Sunday. Police said the boy and friends were returning from a carnival at a nearby high school when a car approached them and someone opened fire. Police said it's unclear if the victim was the intended target. "We certainly think the people who fired were firing at a group. Unfortunately, the victim was standing in that group." (Associated Press)

Suspect At Large After Mar Vista Fatal Drive-By, Los Angeles, CA, July 31, 2006

A boy, 16, and a man were killed and another man was critically wounded in a shooting....at 11:30 a.m. Sunday....The victims were with two others in a Toyota Corolla that was double-parked on McLaughlin Avenue as the group waited to pick up a friend for a trip to the beach, authorities said. (*CBS2.com*)

UA Student Wounded in Drive-By at Frat House, Tucson, AZ, September 10, 2006

A University of Arizona freshman was shot and wounded outside a fraternity house early Saturday during a drive-by shooting. The 18-year-old woman and several other people were outside the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house...about 1:15 a.m. when a vehicle drove by. Someone inside the vehicle shot at the house several times, wounding the woman and damaging two vehicles. The freshman was hit in the torso....The drive-by shooting appeared to be random...."They did everything right...[said a police officer]....It just happened." (Arizona Daily Star)

Post Falls Man Arrested on Suspicion of Drive-By Shootings in Montana, Hamilton, MT, September 12, 2006

An Idaho man has been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder, for allegedly shooting at two vehicles on US Highway 93 in western Montana. A bullet struck one woman in the knee. Thirty-eight-year-old Blaine Fadness of Post Falls was arrested late last night. A Missoula County man reported someone shot at his car on US 93, south of Darby, at about 8:45 Monday night. He said the vehicle was traveling in the opposite direction. A short time later, a 52-year-old Idaho woman reported she was northbound on 93, when she was shot by someone in a southbound vehicle. (Associated Press)

10 Wounded in Drive-By Shooting, Chicago, IL, August 17, 2006

Sprays of gunfire from two vehicles into a crowd this morning on the city's South Side sent 10 people to hospitals with various body wounds, but no fatalities were immediately reported, Chicago police said. [T]he shooting stemmed from a dispute that started around closing time at a South Side tavern. (*Chicago Tribune*)

State-by-State Comparisons of Drive-By Shootings

During the study period, California led the nation in the number of drive-by shootings with 115 drive-by shootings, killing 51 and injuring 123. Following California were: Florida, 57 drive-by shootings, killing 18 and injuring 47; Texas, 56 drive-by shootings, killing seven and injuring 41; Illinois, 24 drive-by shootings, killing 11 and injuring 29; and, Ohio, 20 drive-by shootings, killing three and injuring 20. For a listing of the top 12 states ranked by the number of drive-by shootings, please see Chart One below.

During the study period, only five states reported no drive-by shootings: Maine, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and West Virginia. For a chart of all 50 states listed alphabetically with the number of drive-by shootings, and number of those killed and injured, please see the study's Appendix.

Chart One: Top 12 States Ranked by Number of Drive-By Shootings During Study Period

Rank	State	Number of Drive-Bys	Dead	Injured
1	California	115	51	123
2	Florida	57	18	47
3	Texas	56	7	41
4	Illinois	24	11	29
5	Ohio	20	3	20
6	North Carolina	19	6	16
7 (tie)	Georgia	14	5	12
(tie)	Kansas	14	1	5
(tie)	Louisiana	14	1	14
(tie)	New Jersey	14	7	8
(tie)	New York	14	7	9
(tie)	Tennessee	14	5	13

Victims, Location, and Time of Day

During the study period, information was gathered on the number of victims who were under the age of 18, location of the drive-by shooting, and the time that the shooting occurred.

Age

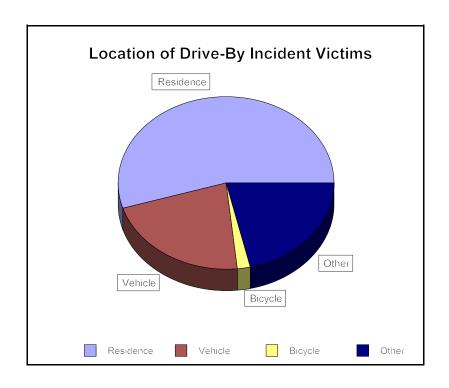
More than three quarters of those killed or injured were 18 years of age or older. Of the total of 621 victims dead or injured, 143 (23 percent) were identified as being under the age of 18.

Location

More than half of all drive-by shootings occurred at a residence. The location of the shooting victims could be identified in 408 of the 549 instances. Of these:

- In more than half of the incidents (224 out of 408, or 55 percent), the victims were at a residence (either indoors or outdoors);
- More than one out of five incidents (89 of 408, or 22 percent) involved shooting at another vehicle;⁷
- In two percent of the incidents, (9 out of 408) the victim was on a bicycle;
- In 21 percent (86 out of 408) of the incidents, the victims were in other locations that included: playground, basketball court, bus stop, coffee shop, church, vacant lot, fast food restaurant, or other business.

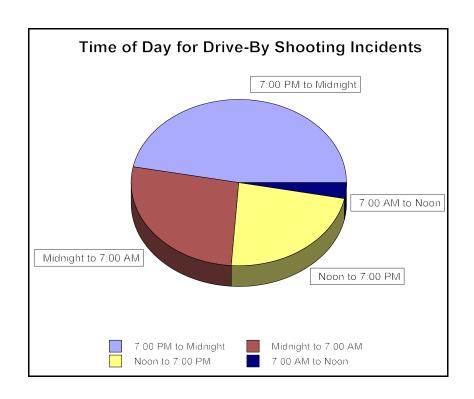
A 1997 study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety by Mizell & Company consulted 30 major newspapers, reports from 16 police departments, and insurance company claim reports for aggressive driving incidents for the period January 1990 to September 1, 1996. Of these 10,037 known aggressive driving incidents, the study found that firearms were the most popular weapon used by aggressive drivers, with guns being used in 37 percent of the cases. The study also noted, "Domestic violence plays a surprisingly large role in aggressive driving." During the study period "at least 322 incidents of domestic violence were played out on roads and Interstates throughout the country." [See, Louis Mizell Inc., Aggressive Driving: A Report by Louis Mizell, Inc. For the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, http://www.aaafoundation.org/resources/index.cfm?button = agdrtext.]



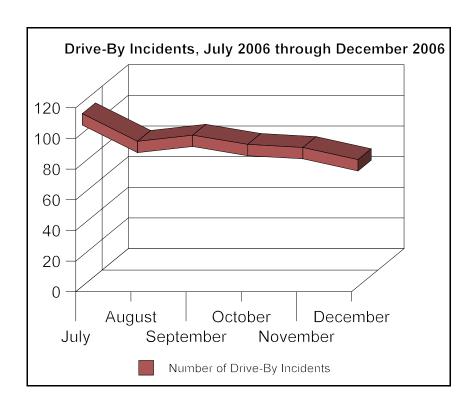
Time of Day

The most common time for drive-by shootings was between the hours of 7:00 PM and midnight. The time of day could be identified in 453 out of 549 instances. Of these:

- Nearly half (214 out of 453, or 47 percent) were between the hours of 7:00 PM and midnight.
- More than a quarter (123 out of 453, or 27 percent) were between midnight and 7:00 AM.
- Nearly a quarter, (104 out of 453, or 23 percent) were between Noon and 7:00 PM.
- Three percent (12 out of 453) were between the hours of 7:00 AM and Noon.



Drive-by shootings peaked in the month of July and continued to decline as the months turned colder.



Suspected Gang Involvement

News reports varied widely in the level of detail provided about the circumstances surrounding each drive-by shooting. Of the 549 drive-by shootings, additional information regarding the circumstances could be determined in 197 of the incidents. Of these incidents, 46 percent (91 of 197) were actually suspected of being gang related.⁸

An incident was categorized as being a suspected gang-related drive-by shooting if a clear assertion of gang involvement was made by law enforcement personnel in the news story. The volume of reported gang involvement depends heavily on reporting procedures of law enforcement, including how the term is defined. How law enforcement defines "gang involvement" varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. For example, according to the 1995 book *The American Street Gang*: "The police in some cities such as Los Angeles define a gang incident by the presence of a gang member as either victim or offender. This member-based definition thus includes as gang crime a liquor store robbery committed by a gang member to fill his own pockets. In cities such as Chicago, a gang-related crime is defined by the police more narrowly by the involvement of a gang motive—retaliation, recruitment, turf battle, filling gang coffers, and so on. Accordingly, based on the motive-based definition, that liquor store robbery would not be tallied with the gang crimes....Prosecutors, too, vary in their use of these two definitional approaches, with those in smaller jurisdictions showing a preference for the narrower definition." [See, Malcolm W. Klein, *The American Street Gang: Its Nature, Prevalence, and Control*, Oxford University Press (New York), 1995, p. 15.]

Woman Killed in a Drive-By Shooting, Chicago, IL, October 8, 2006

Helen Coronado was heading home from the grocery with her 13-year-old son and 11-year-old daughter when shots were fired from a black Chevrolet Astro van at about 8:30 p.m., according to witnesses and police. One shot struck Coronado in the head, police said. Yesenia Torres, 15, who came out of her house when she heard the shots, said Coronado's daughter was screaming, "Mommy, Mommy, talk to me." (*Chicago Tribune*)

90-Year-Old Woman Shot In Apparent Drive-By, Dayton, OH, November 30, 2006

Police said gunfire erupted on Euclid Avenue in Dayton, leaving a 90-year-old woman with two gunshot wounds. Investigators said stray bullets came through the woman's home and hit her in both legs. She was taken to a local hospital, where she is listed in critical condition. Police said bullets hit other homes and cars during the gunfire. (WHIOTV.com)

Pomona Boy, 3, Killed in Drive-By Shooting; Teenage Guest at Boy's Party Also Wounded, Pomona, CA, November 21, 2006

Ethan Esparza was supposed to turn 4 Monday. Instead, he died at his own birthday party Sunday evening. The bullets that killed him came from a light-colored SUV with tinted windows and went into the crowd of 15 to 20 guests who were hanging out in front of Ethan's grandparent's house. A 16-year-old guest from El Monte was shot in the hip....Ethan had gone outside to get a toy car his father brought over earlier in the day as a birthday gift, said Ethan's mother, Alma Torres, who is five-months pregnant. Alma said she heard the gunfire and when she looked out, all the young children who were in the front yard...were screaming and running toward the house. After he was shot, Ethan still managed to run inside, Alma said. "He was gasping for air and he couldn't breathe....He was choking on his own blood," she said weeping. "I could tell he wanted to live. He was suffering. I begged him not to leave," she said. Alma said she's been told her son didn't suffer but she doesn't believe it. (www.dailybulletin.com)

2 Arrested for Alleged Drive-By Shooting, Herman, WI, December 29, 2006

Two teenagers were arrested Wednesday for allegedly shooting into a home in the Town of Herman....Sheriff's deputies allege the teens, a 17-year-old...and an 18-year-old..., shot into the side of the home of Eric Miota....There had been an ongoing feud between the two boys and Miota's son.... About five days before the shooting, the two teens went to the Miota house armed with baseball bats to confront the son. The son and another male, armed with nunchucks and a sword, met the two teens but the confrontation did not become physical....Five days later, the boys shot at the house....No one was injured during the shooting. (www.sheboygan-press.com)

Conclusion

Little is known about the scope and prevalence of drive-by shootings. This analysis, for the first time, explores the relative frequency of such events on a state-by-state basis⁹ while identifying national trends as regards time, location, the age of those victimized, and suspected gang involvement. The overarching conclusion from this analysis is that additional research on the national level looking at drive-by shootings is necessary.

Recommendations developed as the result of this analysis are:

- The feasibility of adding drive-by shooting as a category to the Uniform Crime Reports should be explored.
- Communities that experience a significant number of drive-by shootings should consider establishing their own data collection mechanism.
- Drive-by shootings are facilitated by high-capacity, high-caliber firearms and represent just one symptom of the increasing lethality of firearms available to the general public. State and federal policies should focus on limiting the caliber and capacity of firearms marketed to the general public.

Recognizing the limitations of the reporting process used for this analysis, and the relatively higher tallies of drive-by shootings reported in prior, local studies, we believe that the totals reported for this study are a dramatic underreporting of the frequency of such incidents.

Appendix: Drive-By Shooting Incidents by State and District of Columbia

State	Number of Drive-Bys	Number Killed	Number Injured
Alabama	6	4	5
Alaska	1	0	1
Arizona	8	4	10
Arkansas	3	0	1
California	115	51	123
Colorado	4	3	1
Connecticut	5	1	7
Delaware	1	0	1
District of Columbia	2	2	6
Florida	57	18	47
Georgia	14	5	12
Hawaii	1	0	0
Idaho	5	0	0
Illinois	24	11	29
Indiana	3	2	2
lowa	5	1	5
Kansas	14	1	5
Kentucky	1	0	0
Louisiana	14	1	14
Maine	0	0	0
Maryland	2	1	1
Massachusetts	7	1	5
Michigan	12	4	14
Minnesota	5	1	2
Mississippi	10	1	3
Missouri	13	3	9

State	Number of Drive-Bys	Number Killed	Number Injured
Montana	1	0	1
Nebraska	7	2	6
Nevada	2	0	1
New Hampshire	1	0	0
New Jersey	14	7	8
New Mexico	5	1	1
New York	14	7	9
North Carolina	19	6	16
North Dakota	0	0	0
Ohio	20	3	20
Oklahoma	13	2	8
Oregon	5	0	4
Pennsylvania	9	0	8
Rhode Island	2	0	2
South Carolina	5	1	4
South Dakota	0	0	0
Tennessee	14	5	13
Texas	56	7	41
Utah	5	0	5
Vermont	0	0	0
Virginia	13	0	10
Washington	4	0	2
West Virginia	0	0	0
Wisconsin	7	0	2
Wyoming	1	0	1
Total	549	156	465