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# **When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2006 Homicide Data**

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

**September 2008**

**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 authored by VPC Policy Analyst Marty Langley and was funded in part with the support of The Herb Block Foundation, The David Bohnett Foundation, and The Joyce Foundation. Past VPC studies include:

- *American Roulette: Murder-Suicide in the United States* (April 2008)
- *Black Homicide Victimization in the United States: An Analysis of 2005 Homicide Data* (January 2008)
- *When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2005 Homicide Data* (September 2007)
- *An Analysis of the Decline in Gun Dealers: 1994 to 2007* (August 2007)
- *Drive-By America* (July 2007)
- *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)
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- *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)

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## Introduction

Intimate partner violence against women is all too common and takes many forms. The most serious is homicide by an intimate partner.<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>

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

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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.

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 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.

*When Men Murder Women* is an annual report prepared by the Violence Policy Center detailing the reality of homicides committed against women. The study analyzes the most recent Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) data submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).<sup>9</sup> The information used for this report is for the year 2006. Once again, this is the most recent data available. This is the first analysis of the 2006 data on female homicide victims to offer breakdowns of cases in the 10 states with the highest female victim/male offender homicide rates, and the first to rank the states by the rate of female homicides.

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

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<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.

<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> According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports, in 2007 there were only 198 justifiable homicides (the justified killing of a felon during the commission of a felony) committed by private citizens using firearms. Of these, only 159 involved handguns. While firearms are at times used by private citizens to kill criminals or to stop crimes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the most common scenarios of gun use in America in 2005, the most recent final data available, are suicide (17,002), homicide (12,682), or fatal unintentional injury (789).

<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.

In 2006, there were 1,836 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 women.

- o For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 92 percent of female victims (1,572 out of 1,701) were murdered by someone they knew.
- o More than 12 times as many females were murdered by a male they knew (1,572 victims) than were killed by male strangers (129 victims).
- o For victims who knew their offenders, 60 percent (949) of female homicide victims were wives or intimate acquaintances of their killers.<sup>11</sup>
- o There were 309 women shot and killed by either their husband or intimate acquaintance during the course of an argument.
- o Nationwide, more female homicides were committed with firearms (54 percent) than with any other weapon. Knives and other cutting instruments accounted for 20 percent of all female murders, bodily force 12 percent, and murder by blunt object seven percent. Of the homicides committed with firearms, 73 percent were committed with handguns.
- o In 88 percent of all incidents where the circumstances could be determined, homicides were *not* related to the commission of any other felony, such as rape or robbery.

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

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<sup>10</sup> In 2006, as in years past, the state of Florida did not submit any data to the FBI Supplementary Homicide Report. Data from Florida was not requested individually because the difference in collection techniques would create a bias in the study results.

<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 2006, the homicide rate among female victims murdered by males in single victim/single offender incidents nationally was 1.29 per 100,000. For that year, Nevada ranked first as the state with the highest homicide rate among female victims killed by male offenders in single victim/single offender incidents. Its rate of 3.27 per 100,000 was more than two and one half times the national average. Nevada was followed by South Carolina (2.84 per 100,000) and Alabama (2.20 per 100,000). The remaining states that comprise the top 10 can be found in Chart One on page six. For a ranking of all states that submitted data to the FBI, please see Appendix One on page 15.

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

In single female victim/single male offender homicides reported for 2006, nine percent of the victims were younger than 18 years old (153 victims) and nine percent were 65 years of age or older (152 victims). The average age of female homicide victims was 38 years old. Homicides in which race was identified (1,818 victims) included: 21 American Indian or Alaskan Native females; 38 Asian or Pacific Islander females; 551 black females; and 1,208 white females. Eighty-eight percent (1,593 out of 1,801) of the homicides where the race of the female victim and male offender were known were intra-racial.<sup>12</sup> Overall, black women were murdered by men at a rate (2.70 per 100,000) nearly three times higher than white women (1.00 per 100,000).

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



American Indian and Alaskan Native women (1.33 per 100,000) were more likely than white women to be murdered by a male offender, while Asian and Pacific Islander women were the least likely (0.52 per 100,000) women of any race to be murdered by a male offender. Unfortunately, Hispanic ethnicity could not be determined on a national level because of the inadequacy of data collection and reporting. Of the 49 states reporting, only eight states reported having at least one Hispanic female homicide victim. Yet, even most of these states did not code a sufficient number of their female victims' ethnicity as either Hispanic or non-Hispanic to run a valid analysis.

**Chart One: Number of Females Murdered by Males in Single Victim/Single Offender Homicides and Rates by State in 2006, Ranked by Rate**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Number of Homicides</b>	<b>Homicide Rate per 100,000</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Nevada</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>3.27</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>2.84</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Alabama</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>2.20</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Oklahoma</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>2.10</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Louisiana</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>1.97</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Vermont</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.90</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>1.82</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1.74</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Arizona</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1.72</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Tennessee</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1.70</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, 92 percent of female victims (1,572 out of 1,701) were murdered by someone they knew. More than 12 times as many females were murdered by a male they knew (1,572 victims) than were killed by male strangers (129 victims) in single victim/single offender incidents in 2006.<sup>13</sup> Of victims who knew their offenders, 60 percent (949 out of 1,572) 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 2006. For homicides in which the weapon could be identified, 54 percent of female victims (907 out of 1,675) were killed with a gun. (The weapon used was identified in 1,675 out of 1,836 incidents). 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 (539 victims) was more than four times higher than the total number murdered by male strangers using all weapons combined (129 victims) in single victim/single offender incidents in 2006. In homicides where males used firearms to kill females, handguns were clearly the weapon of choice over rifles and shotguns. In 2006, 73 percent of female firearm homicide victims (666 out of 907) were killed with handguns.

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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 2006 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 1,701 of 1,836 incidents. In 135 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 initially unsolved homicides would eventually be determined to have been committed by a stranger, follow-up data from one large metropolitan police jurisdiction (Los Angeles) suggest that a substantial number involve an acquaintance or relative of the victim.

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

The overwhelming majority of homicides among females by male offenders in single victim/single offender incidents in 2006 were not related to any other felony crime. Most often, females were killed by males in the course of an argument—usually with a firearm. In 2006 there were 1,496 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, 88 percent (1,309 out of 1,496) were not related to the commission of any other felony.

Of the homicides not related to the commission of another felony, 59 percent (775 out of 1,309) involved arguments between the female victim and male offender. Fifty-three percent (414 out of 775) of the homicides stemming from an argument involved guns. According to the Supplementary Homicide Report data, in 2006 there were 309 women shot and killed by their husbands or intimate acquaintances in single victim/single offender incidents during the course of an argument.

## **Section Two: Black Women**

The disproportionate burden of fatal and nonfatal violence borne by black women has almost always been overshadowed by the toll violence has taken on black men. In 2006, black women were murdered at a rate nearly three times higher than white women: 2.70 per 100,000 versus 1.00 per 100,000.

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

In single female victim/single male offender homicides reported for 2006, 12 percent of black female victims were less than 18 years old (65 victims) and three percent were 65 years of age or older (16 victims). The average age of black female homicide victims was 32 years old.

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

Compared to a black man, a black woman is far more likely to be killed by her spouse, an intimate acquaintance, or a family member than by a stranger. Where the relationship could be determined, 90 percent of black females killed by males in single victim/single offender incidents knew their killers (428 of 475). Nine times as many black females were murdered by a male they knew (428 victims) than were killed by male strangers (47 victims) in single victim/single offender incidents in 2006. Of black victims who knew their offenders, 54 percent (231 out of 428) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Ninety-five percent (518 out of 545) of the homicides of black women where the race of the male offender was known were intra-racial.

### ***Black Female Homicide Victims and Weapons***

As with female homicide victims in general, firearms—especially handguns—were the most common weapons used by males to murder black females in 2006. In the 515 homicides for which the murder weapon could be identified, 59 percent of black female victims (305 victims) were shot and killed with guns. And when these women were killed with a gun, it was most often a handgun (236 victims or 77 percent). The number of black females shot and killed by their husband or intimate acquaintance (132 victims) was nearly three times as high as the total number murdered by male strangers using all weapons combined (47 victims) in single

victim/single offender incidents in 2006.

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

The overwhelming majority of homicides of black females by male offenders in single victim/single offender incidents in 2006 were not related to any other felony crime. Most often, black females were killed by males in the course of an argument—most commonly with a firearm. In 2006, for the 412 homicides in which the circumstances between the black female victim and male offender could be identified, 89 percent (365 out of 412) were not related to the commission of any other felony.

Nearly two-thirds of non-felony related homicides (225 out of 365) involved arguments between the black female victim and male offender. Fifty-eight percent (130 victims) were shot and killed with guns during those arguments.

### **Section Three: Laws that Help Protect Women from Abusers**

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

In 1993, the late Senator Paul Wellstone (D-MN) attached an amendment to the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act to prohibit individuals who are the subject of a protective order involving domestic violence from buying or possessing firearms. The Wellstone amendment became law in 1994.<sup>14</sup> Twenty-two states supplement the federal prohibition with a similar state law.

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

These laws are enforced in part by the Brady Law background checks performed on firearm transactions conducted through Federal Firearms License holders (FFLs). In 2005, the most recent year for which data is available, the two domestic violence prohibited categories accounted for approximately 15 percent of rejected firearm transfers.<sup>17</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 background checks. Moreover, the U.S. Department of Justice identifies 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.

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<sup>14</sup> 18 USC § 922 (g)(8).

<sup>15</sup> 18 USC § 922 (g)(9).

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

<sup>17</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Background Checks for Firearm Transfers, 2005* (November 2006)

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

## Conclusion

Many women—those in abusive relationships, those who have left such relationships, those who fear, in general, for their safety—have considered bringing a gun into their home as a measure of protection. Yet, gun ownership contains clear risks that should deeply concern women. One study that examined the risk factors of violent death for women in the home in three United States counties found that when there were one or more guns in the home, the risk of homicide increased more than three times.<sup>18</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>19</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 US 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>20</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>18</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>19</sup> Linda E. Salzman et al., "Weapon Involvement and Injury Outcomes in Family and Intimate Assaults," *JAMA* 267, no. 22 (1992): 3043-3047.

<sup>20</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, 2006**

<b>State Ranking by Rate</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Number of Homicide Victims</b>	<b>Homicide Rate per 100,000</b>
3	Alabama	52	2.20
15	Alaska	5	1.53
9	Arizona	53	1.72
8	Arkansas	25	1.74
25	California	210	1.16
24	Colorado	29	1.23
39	Connecticut	15	0.84
47	Delaware	2	0.46
	Florida	NA	NA
14	Georgia	75	1.58
34 (tie)	Hawaii	6	0.95
20	Idaho	10	1.37
48	Illinois	23	0.35
19	Indiana	44	1.38
26	Iowa	17	1.13
11	Kansas	23	1.66
33	Kentucky	22	1.02
5	Louisiana	43	1.97
32	Maine	7	1.04
16	Maryland	42	1.45
43	Massachusetts	22	0.66
30 (tie)	Michigan	54	1.05
36	Minnesota	23	0.89
21	Mississippi	20	1.34
12	Missouri	49	1.64
44 (tie)	Montana	3	0.63

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<b>State Ranking by Rate</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Number of Homicide Victims</b>	<b>Homicide Rate per 100,000</b>
42	Nebraska	6	0.67
1	Nevada	40	3.27
49	New Hampshire	0	0.00
37 (tie)	New Jersey	39	0.88
18	New Mexico	14	1.42
30 (tie)	New York	104	1.05
13	North Carolina	74	1.63
44 (tie)	North Dakota	2	0.63
34 (tie)	Ohio	56	0.95
4	Oklahoma	38	2.10
28 (tie)	Oregon	20	1.08
17	Pennsylvania	91	1.43
41	Rhode Island	4	0.73
2	South Carolina	63	2.84
46	South Dakota	2	0.51
10	Tennessee	53	1.70
7	Texas	214	1.82
23	Utah	16	1.25
6	Vermont	6	1.90
22	Virginia	49	1.26
37 (tie)	Washington	28	0.88
28 (tie)	West Virginia	10	1.08
27	Wisconsin	31	1.11
40	Wyoming	2	0.79
	<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>1.29</b>

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



## **Nevada**

*40 females were murdered by males in Nevada in 2006*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Nevada was 3.27 per 100,000 in 2006*

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

### **Age**

One female homicide victim (3 percent) was less than 18 years old and 5 victims (14 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 44 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 39 female homicide victims, 1 was Asian or Pacific Islander, 6 were black, 1 was American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 31 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 46 percent of female victims (18 out of 39) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 50 percent (9 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 8 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 4 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, 92 percent of female victims (36 out of 39) were murdered by someone they knew. Three female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 64 percent (23 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 48 percent (11 victims) were killed with guns; 36 percent of these (4 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 91 percent (32 out of 35) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 16 percent (5 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **South Carolina**

*63 females were murdered by males in South Carolina in 2006*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in South Carolina was 2.84 per 100,000 in 2006*

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

### **Age**

Seven female homicide victims (11 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 41 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 63 female homicide victims, 1 was Asian or Pacific Islander, 31 were black, and 31 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 58 percent of female victims (33 out of 57) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 70 percent (23 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 13 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 5 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, 98 percent of female victims (57 out of 58) were murdered by someone they knew. One female victim was killed by a stranger. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 63 percent (36 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 64 percent (23 victims) were killed with guns; 74 percent of these (17 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 75 percent (39 out of 52) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 85 percent (33 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Alabama**

*52 females were murdered by males in Alabama in 2006*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Alabama was 2.20 per 100,000 in 2006*

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

### **Age**

One female homicide victim (2 percent) was less than 18 years old and 3 victims (6 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 36 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 51 female homicide victims, 28 were black, and 23 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 87 percent of female victims (33 out of 38) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 85 percent (28 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 3 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, and 2 females killed by bodily force.

### **Victim/Offender Relationship**

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 91 percent of female victims (40 out of 44) were murdered by someone they knew. Four female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 63 percent (25 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 72 percent (18 victims) were killed with guns; 83 percent of these (15 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 96 percent (24 out of 25) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 88 percent (21 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.



## **Oklahoma**

*38 females were murdered by males in Oklahoma in 2006*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Oklahoma was 2.10 per 100,000 in 2006*

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

### **Age**

Five female homicide victims (14 percent) were less than 18 years old and 3 victims (8 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 37 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 38 female homicide victims, 6 were black, 2 were American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 30 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 56 percent of female victims (20 out of 36) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 55 percent (11 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 4 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 3 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, 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, 64 percent (14 victims) were killed with guns; 57 percent of these (8 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 86 percent (31 out of 36) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 61 percent (19 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Louisiana**

*43 females were murdered by males in Louisiana in 2006*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Louisiana was 1.97 per 100,000 in 2006*

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

### **Age**

One female homicide victim (3 percent) was less than 18 years old and 8 victims (20 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 42 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 43 female homicide victims, 1 was Asian or Pacific Islander, 23 were black, and 19 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 71 percent of female victims (29 out of 41) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 83 percent (24 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 5 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 2 females killed by a blunt object, and 4 females killed by bodily force.

### **Victim/Offender Relationship**

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 90 percent of female victims (38 out of 42) were murdered by someone they knew. Four female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 63 percent (24 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 79 percent (19 victims) were killed with guns; 84 percent of these (16 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 81 percent (30 out of 37) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 60 percent (18 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Vermont**

*6 females were murdered by males in Vermont in 2006*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Vermont was 1.90 per 100,000 in 2006*

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

### **Age**

The average age of female homicide victims was 42 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 5 female homicide victims, 5 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 80 percent of female victims (4 out of 5) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 100 percent (4 victims) were killed with handguns. There was 1 female killed by bodily force.

### **Victim/Offender Relationship**

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 67 percent of female victims (4 out of 6) were murdered by someone they knew. Two female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 75 percent (3 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 67 percent (2 victims) were killed with guns; 100 percent of these (2 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **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. Of these, 40 percent (2 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Texas**

*214 females were murdered by males in Texas in 2006*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Texas was 1.82 per 100,000 in 2006*

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

### **Age**

Twenty-six female homicide victims (13 percent) were less than 18 years old and 15 victims (7 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 37 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 214 female homicide victims, 7 were Asian or Pacific Islander, 53 were black, and 154 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 62 percent of female victims (122 out of 198) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 72 percent (88 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 32 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 13 females killed by a blunt object, and 27 females killed by bodily force.

### **Victim/Offender Relationship**

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 88 percent of female victims (176 out of 199) were murdered by someone they knew. Twenty-three female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 60 percent (106 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 66 percent (70 victims) were killed with guns; 71 percent of these (50 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 91 percent (178 out of 196) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 49 percent (87 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Arkansas**

*25 females were murdered by males in Arkansas in 2006*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Arkansas was 1.74 per 100,000 in 2006*

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

### **Age**

Six female homicide victims (25 percent) were less than 18 years old and 2 victims (8 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 32 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 25 female homicide victims, 2 were Asian or Pacific Islander, 12 were black, and 11 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 68 percent of female victims (15 out of 22) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 60 percent (9 victims) were killed with handguns. There was 1 female 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, 96 percent of female victims (23 out of 24) were murdered by someone they knew. One female victim was killed by a stranger. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 48 percent (11 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 82 percent (9 victims) were killed with guns; 67 percent of these (6 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 100 percent (15 out of 15) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 53 percent (8 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Arizona**

*53 females were murdered by males in Arizona in 2006*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Arizona was 1.72 per 100,000 in 2006*

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

### **Age**

Six female homicide victims (12 percent) were less than 18 years old and 8 victims (16 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 39 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 53 female homicide victims, 1 was Asian or Pacific Islander, 6 were black, 1 was American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 45 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 51 percent of female victims (27 out of 53) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 74 percent (20 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 10 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 9 females killed by a blunt object, and 4 females killed by bodily force.

### **Victim/Offender Relationship**

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 92 percent of female victims (49 out of 53) were murdered by someone they knew. Four female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 61 percent (30 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 57 percent (17 victims) were killed with guns; 76 percent of these (13 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 92 percent (48 out of 52) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 58 percent (28 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **Tennessee**

*53 females were murdered by males in Tennessee in 2006*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in Tennessee was 1.70 per 100,000 in 2006*

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

### **Age**

One female homicide victim (2 percent) was less than 18 years old and 5 victims (10 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 41 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 52 female homicide victims, 1 was Asian or Pacific Islander, 22 were black, and 29 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 63 percent of female victims (30 out of 48) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 80 percent (24 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 6 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 2 females killed by a blunt object, and 9 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 (46 out of 49) were murdered by someone they knew. Three female victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 61 percent (28 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 64 percent (18 victims) were killed with guns; 89 percent of these (16 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 95 percent (35 out of 37) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 74 percent (26 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

## **United States**

*1,836 females were murdered by males in the United States in 2006*

*The homicide rate among females murdered by males in the United States was 1.29 per 100,000 in 2006*

### **Age**

There were 153 female homicide victims (9 percent) who were less than 18 years old and 152 victims (9 percent) who were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 38 years old.

### **Race**

Out of 1,818 female homicide victims where race was identified, 38 were Asian or Pacific Islander, 551 were black, 21 were American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 1,208 were white.

### **Most Common Weapons**

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 54 percent of female victims (907 out of 1,675) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 73 percent (666 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 327 females killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 117 females killed by a blunt object, and 198 females killed by bodily force.

### **Victim/Offender Relationship**

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 92 percent of female victims (1,572 out of 1,701) were murdered by someone they knew. There were 129 female victims killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 60 percent (949 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Among the female intimates who were murdered, 57 percent (539 victims) were killed with guns; 73 percent of these (395 victims) were shot and killed with handguns.

### **Circumstance**

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 88 percent (1,309 out of 1,496) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 59 percent (775 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 2006 from the U.S. Census Bureau.

### **Ranking**

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

### **Age**

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

### **Race**

This section identifies the race of female victims.

### **Most Common Weapons**

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

### **Victim/Offender Relationship**

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

### **Circumstance**

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

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



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

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

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

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

<sup>a</sup>Extent of flagging and ability to distinguish domestic crimes from other misdemeanors varies significantly by jurisdiction.

<sup>b</sup>Domestic misdemeanors are not flagged because all crimes of violence are disqualifying offenses.

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