
An Analysis of Austin, Texas Homicide: Offenses, Victims, and Suspects in 2010

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Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
ABOUT THE DATA	3
DEFINITION	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
STATISTICAL REPRESENTATION	5
HOMICIDE DATA.....	5
HOMICIDE TOTALS BY YEAR	5
HOMICIDE TOTALS BY MONTH.....	5
HOMICIDES BY DAY OF THE WEEK	6
HOMICIDES BY TIME OF THE DAY.....	6
HOMICIDES BY LOCATION – POINT MAP.....	7
HOMICIDES BY AREA COMMAND.....	8
HOMICIDES BY TYPE OF PREMISE	8
TYPES OF WEAPONS USED.....	9
HOMICIDE MOTIVES	9
VICTIMS & SUSPECTS	10
HOMICIDES BY AGE	10
HOMICIDES BY GENDER.....	10
HOMICIDES BY RACE/ETHNICITY	11
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VICTIM AND SUSPECT	11
MISCELLANEOUS VICTIM AND SUSPECT INFORMATION.....	12
HOMICIDE AND ADDITIONAL OFFENSES, MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION.....	12
HOMICIDE CLEARANCE RATE.....	12

Introduction

The following data reflects all homicide information reported to the Texas Department of Public Safety for UCR purposes for 2010 in its entirety. This report is meant as a descriptive summary of the homicide specifics and characteristics within Austin city limits. Data sources include U.S. Department of Justice's **Crime in the United States 2009**, Texas Department of Public Safety's **2009 Crime in Texas Report**, City of Austin Demographer (2000 census), Versadex (APD's record management system), APD Planning Unit's log, APD Homicide Unit's log, and case jacket information directly maintained by detectives assigned to each case.

Since the release of the 2010 versions of the U.S. Department of Justice's **Crime in the United States** and the Texas Department of Public Safety's **Crime in Texas** are typically not released until September, comparison to 2009 data was used for this report.

About the Data

AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT DATA DISCLAIMER

Understanding the following conditions about crime information tallied from the Versadex mainframe database will allow you to get the most value out of the data provided:

- *Due to methodological differences in data collection, different data sources or reports may produce different statistics.*
- *The data is continuously being updated. The data provided represents a particular point in time and does not reflect the dynamic nature of the Versadex mainframe database.*
- *The data here may not reflect official Texas DPS, FBI UCR or NIBRS numbers.*
- *If the information provided here is used outside the department, then the following disclaimer applies-*

“The Austin Police Department cannot assume any liability for any decision made or action taken or not taken by the recipient in reliance upon any information or data provided.”

Definition

According to **2009 Crime in Texas** “murder and non-negligent manslaughter, as defined in the UCR program, is the willful killing of one human being by another.” Included in this category is any death resulting from a “fight, argument, quarrel, assault or commission of a crime.” Not included in the murder classification are deaths resulting from suicide, accidents, justifiable homicides, or homicides caused by criminal negligence. Attempts at murder and assault with intent to kill are recorded under Aggravated Assaults.

Police investigations are the sole basis for this classification. Any determinations made by courts, medical examiners, juries, or other judicial bodies are excluded.

Executive Summary

The following summation may be made from the 2010 homicide data as of March 31, 2011.

- There were 38 homicides in Austin in 2010 for a rate of 4.9 murders per 100,000 population.
- The most active months for murder were April, September and November with five murders each.
- Eight (21%) of 2010's homicides occurred in Central East Area Command and eight in North Central Area Command.
- Sixteen (42%) of the homicides occurred in a single-family residence or apartment.
- A gun was used in 18 of the 38 murders, accounting for 47% of the weapon types used in the 2010 murders.
- Fifteen (39%) of the murders were motivated by issues stemming from an argument or were revenge for an earlier issue. (Historically, this category was called "personal insult/revenge.")
- Twelve (32%) of the murders met the Texas Penal Code & Family Code definition for family violence.
- A robbery motive accounted for four (11%) of the murders.
- Two murders (5%) were motivated by issues stemming from gang membership or affiliation.
- A total of 38 victims and 50 suspects were documented for the 2010 murders.
- Twenty-one victims (55%) were between the ages of 20 and 39.
- Twenty-seven of the suspects (54%) were between the ages of 20 and 39.
- One (3%) of the homicide victims in 2010 was Asian, 12 (32%) were African American, 12 (32%) were White, and 13 (34%) were Hispanic.
- One (2%) of the homicide suspects was Asian, 15 (30%) were African American, 15 (30%) were White, and 18 (36%) were Hispanic.
- Thirteen murders were considered stranger on stranger murders (34%). These murders include cases in which the victim was chosen at random as well as cases in which the victim and suspect were brought together by a location (such as a nightclub) or an activity (such as buying drugs.) As of March 31, 2011, 11 of the 13 murders have been solved. None are believed to be related or committed by the same suspect(s).
- One of the homicides was a double homicide.
- One case involved both of the parties killing each other. This case counts as two murders.
- Eight of the 38 homicides (21%) involved multiple suspects.
- As of March 31, 2011, 34 of the 38 2010 murders have been solved, for a 89% clearance rate.

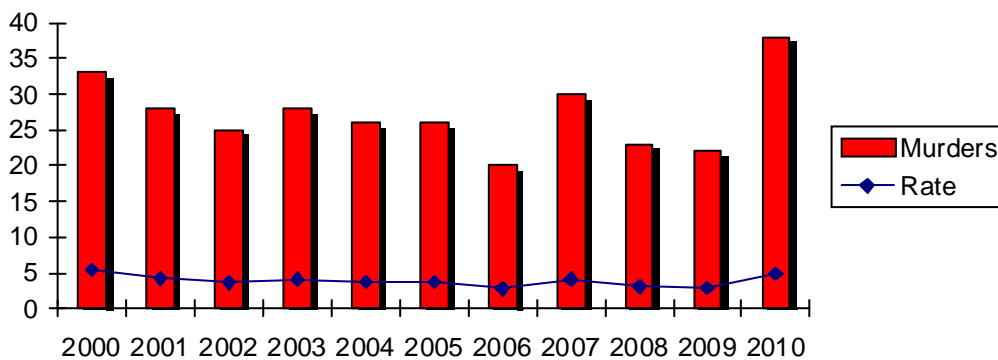
Statistical Representation

Homicide Data

- The analysis contained in this report was based on 2010 homicide data as of March 31, 2011.

Homicide Totals by Year

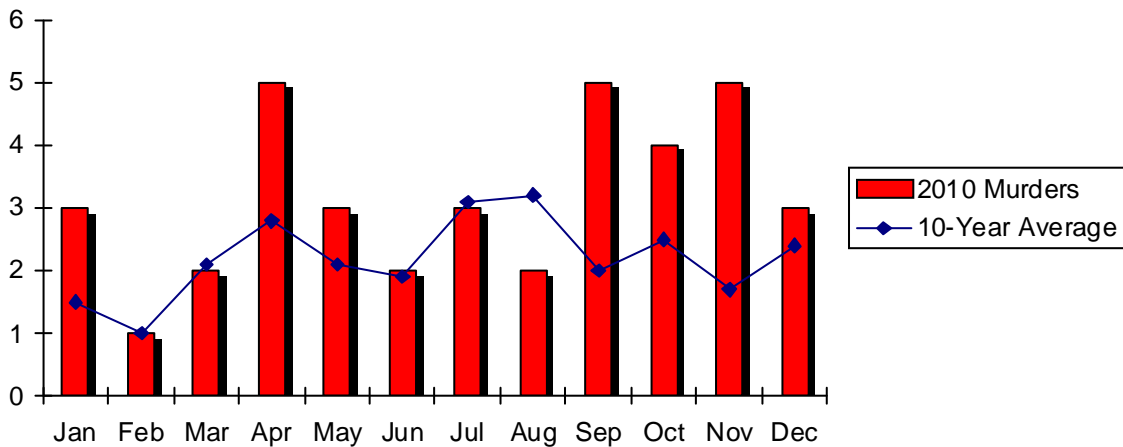
- There were 38 homicides documented in Austin, Texas in 2010. This calculates to a rate of 4.9 murders per 100,000 population.
- In 2009, there were 22 homicides in Austin, 2.9 murders per 100,000 population.
- According to the U.S. Department of Justice's **Crime in the United States 2009** report, the homicide rate for cities with populations between 500,000 and 999,999 was 11.4 per 100,000 population.



Source: APD Planning Unit Annual Crime Rate

Homicide Totals by Month

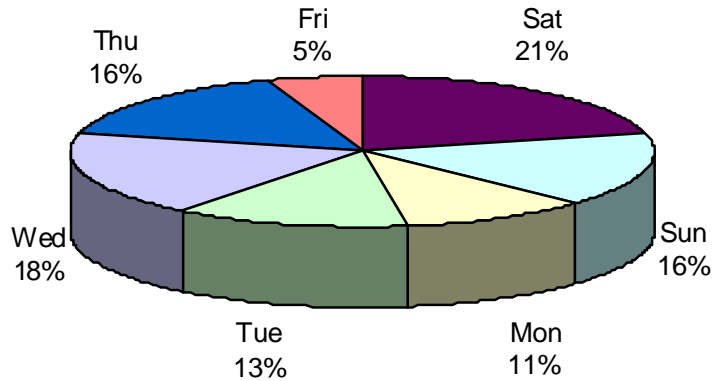
- The most active months for murder were April, September and November with five murders each.
- The least active month was February with one murder.



Source: Versadex

Homicides by Day of the Week

- Eight (21%) of the homicides occurred or were discovered on a Saturday. Seven (18%) occurred or were discovered on a Wednesday.
- The fewest number of homicides, two, occurred or were discovered on a Friday.

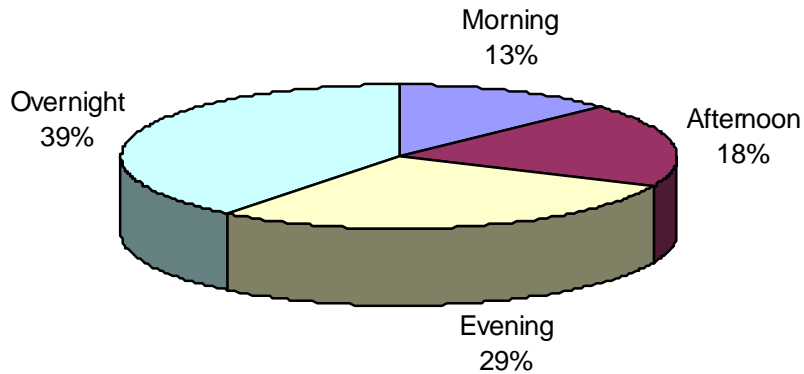


Source: Versadex

Homicides by Time of the Day

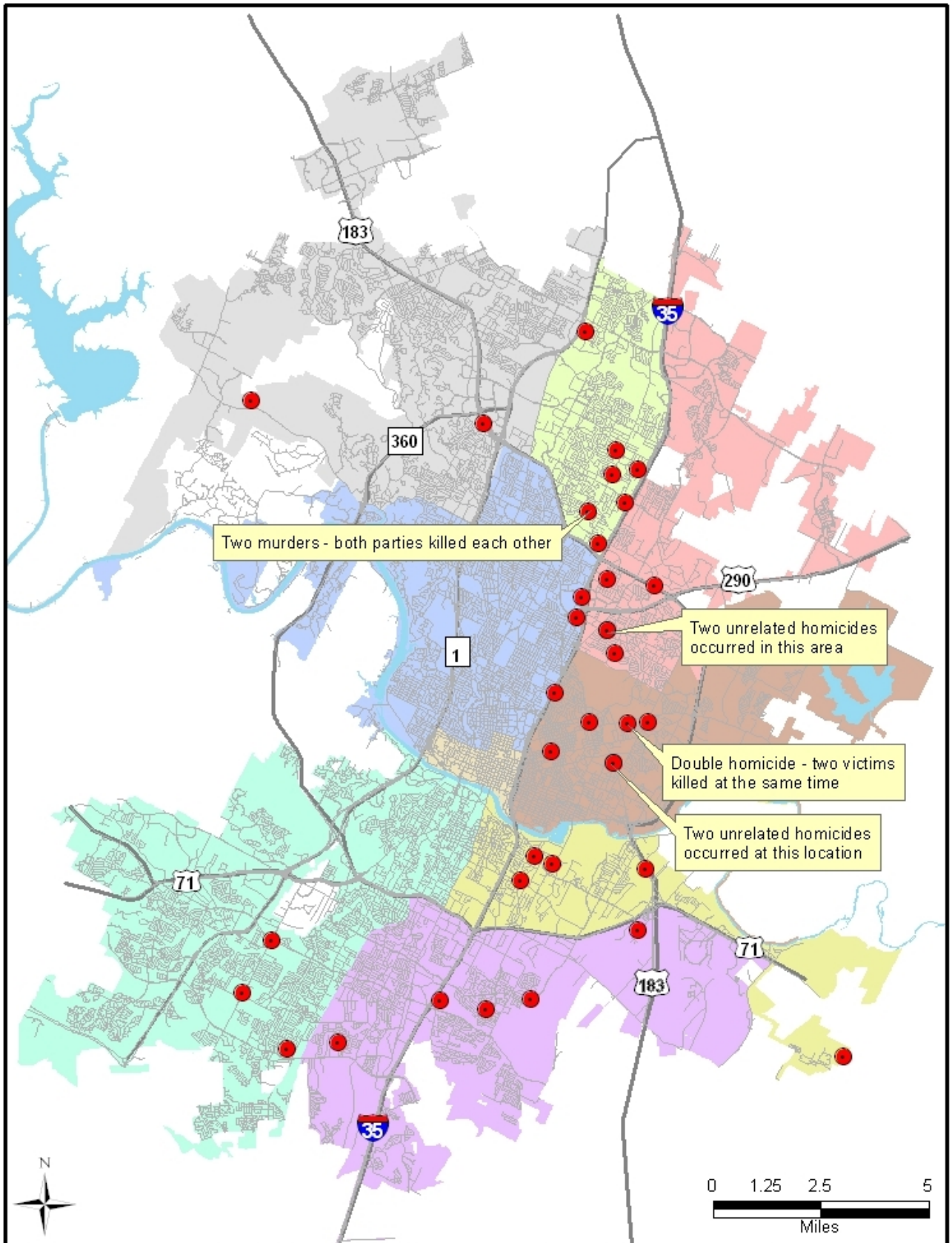
- Fifteen (39%) of the homicides occurred during overnight hours.
- Eleven (29%) of the homicides occurred during evening hours.

Time is broken into four intervals: Morning equals 6:00 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.
Afternoon equals 12 noon to 5:59 p.m.
Evening equals 6:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.
Overnight equals 12 midnight to 5:59 a.m.



Source: Versadex

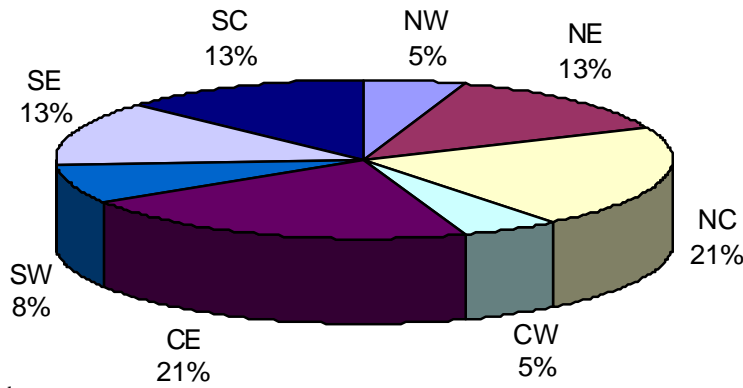
Homicides by Location – Point Map



This map has been produced by the Austin Police Department's Crime Analysis Unit for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made for its accuracy or completeness.

Homicides by Area Command

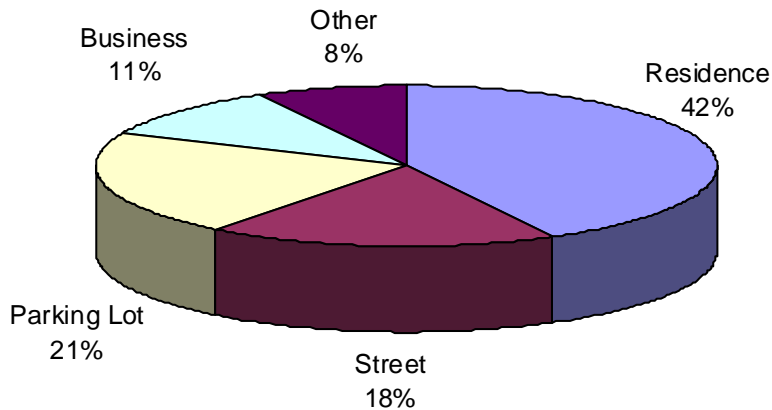
- Eight (21%) of 2010's homicides occurred in Central East Area Command and eight in North Central Area Command.
- No murders occurred in the Downtown Area Command.



Source: Versadex

Homicides by Type of Premise

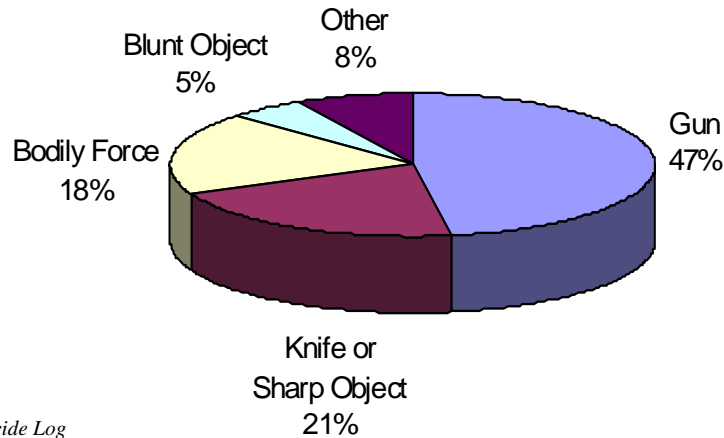
- Sixteen (42%) of the homicides occurred in a single-family residence or apartment. Of those, thirteen occurred inside the residence or apartment.
- Eight homicides (21%) occurred in a parking lot.



Source: APD Homicide Log

Types of Weapons Used

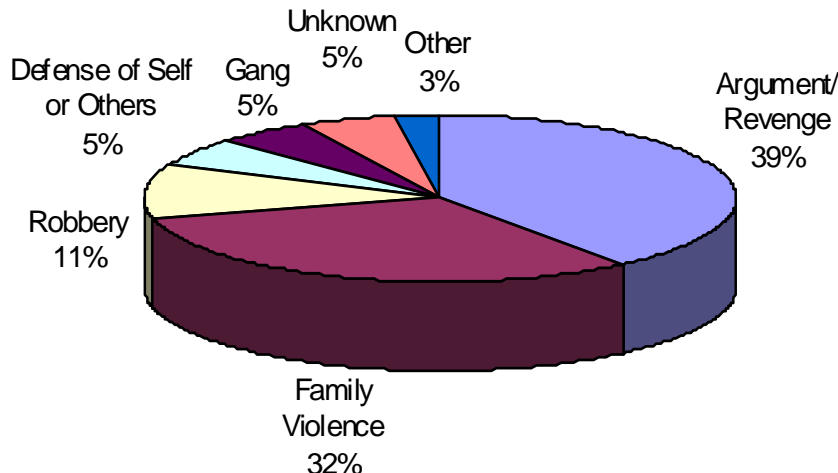
- A gun was used in 18 of the 38 murders, accounting for 47% of the weapon types used in the 2010 murders.
 - Thirteen of the guns were semi-automatic handguns. Two were revolvers. One was an assault rifle, and two were shotguns.
- A knife or a sharp object was used in eight cases (21%).



Source: APD Homicide Log

Homicide Motives

- Fifteen (39%) of the murders were motivated by issues stemming from an argument or were revenge for an earlier issue. (Historically, this category was called “personal insult/revenge.”)
- Twelve (32%) of the murders met the Texas Penal Code & Family Code definition for family violence.
 - The murders were motivated by issues stemming from a close family, intimate partner, or ex-partner relationship and involved family members, significant others or members of the same household.
 - Of the 12 family violence murders, seven were committed by intimate partners.
- A robbery motive accounted for four (11%) of the murders.
- Two murders (5%) were motivated by issues stemming from gang membership or affiliation.



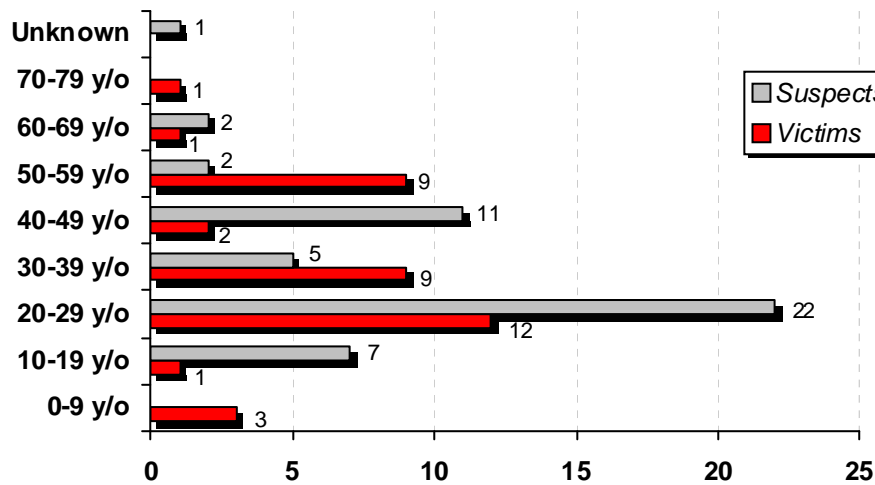
Source: APD Homicide Log

Victims & Suspects

- A total of 38 victims and 50 suspects were documented for the 2010 murders.

Homicides by Age

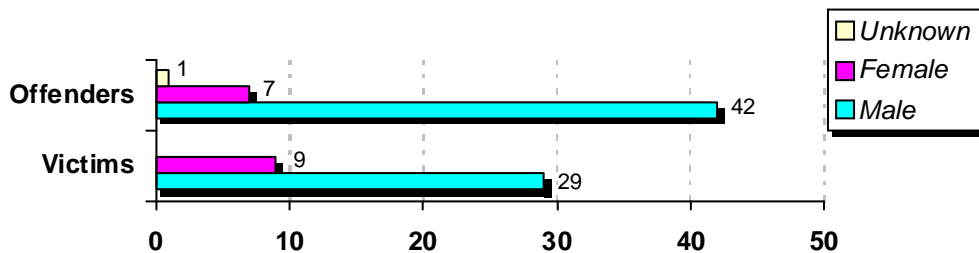
- The youngest victim was two years old and the oldest was 75 years old, with 21 of the victims (55%) falling between the ages of 20 and 39.
- In the cases in which the suspect's age was known, the youngest suspect was 14 years old and the oldest was 63 years old, with 27 of the suspects (54%) falling between the ages of 20 and 39.



Source: APD Homicide Log

Homicides by Gender

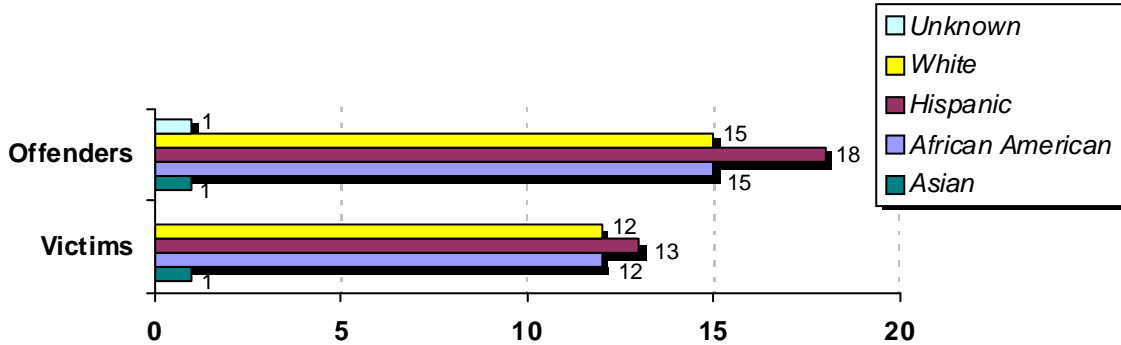
- Twenty-nine males (76%) were victims in 2010.
- Forty-two suspects were males (84%). The gender of one suspect is unknown because no witnesses have come forward in that case.



Source: APD Homicide Log

Homicides by Race/Ethnicity

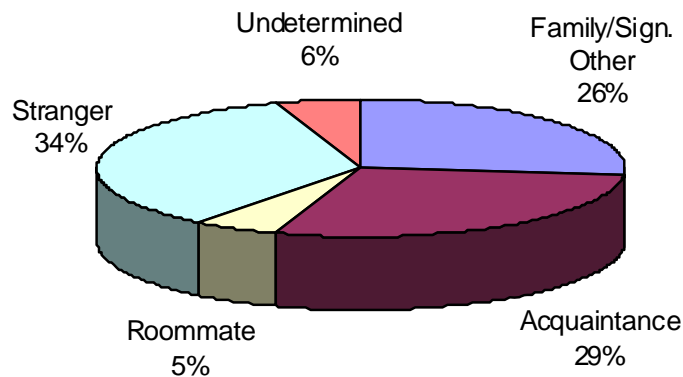
- One (3%) of the homicide victims in 2010 was Asian, 12 (32%) were African American, 12 (32%) were White, and 13 (34%) were Hispanic.
- One (2%) of the homicide suspects was Asian, 15 (30%) were African American, 15 (30%) were White, and 18 (36%) were Hispanic. The race of one suspect is unknown because no witnesses have come forward in that case.



Source: APD Homicide Log

Relationship between Victim and Suspect

- The relationship between victim and suspect(s) was established in 36 cases, while the relationship was undetermined in two (5%) murders.
- At least one suspect was an acquaintance in 11 murders (29%). The suspect was a family member or significant other in ten cases (26%). The suspect was a roommate in two murders (5%).
- Thirteen murders were considered stranger on stranger murders (34%).
 - These murders include cases in which the victim was chosen at random as well as cases in which the victim and suspect were brought together by a location (such as a nightclub) or an activity (such as buying drugs.)
 - As of March 31, 2011, 11 of the 13 murders have been solved.
 - None are believed to be related or committed by the same suspect(s).



Source: APD Homicide Log

Miscellaneous Victim and Suspect Information

- Three victims were transients. Four of the known suspects were transients.
- Gang membership of victims is not tracked. Three suspects were possible gang members.
- One of the homicides was a double homicide – two victims.
- Four other homicides involved multiple victims but only one victim died.
 - Three involved two victims.
 - One involved multiple victims when the suspect flew a plane into an occupied building.
- Eight of the homicides involved multiple suspects.
 - Five involved two suspects.
 - Two involved three suspects.
 - One involved four suspects.
- One case involved both of the parties killing each other. This case counts as two murders.
- The suspect in one murder was killed by police.

Source: Versadex & APD Homicide Log

Homicide and Additional Offenses, Miscellaneous Information

- Alcohol was believed to be a contributing factor in 12 (32%) of the homicides.
- Drugs were believed to be a contributing factor in five (13%) of the homicides.
- Five of the homicides were documented as Capital Murder, which includes the commission of an additional felony at the time of the murder, the murder of a law enforcement officer, the murder of more than one victim, or the murder of an individual under six years of age.
- Three of the homicides were documented as Manslaughter. A person commits Manslaughter if he/she recklessly causes the death of an individual.
- Three of the homicides were murder/suicides.

Source: Versadex & APD Homicide Log

Homicide Clearance Rate

- As of March 31, 2011, 34 of the 38 2010 murders have been solved, for a 89% clearance rate.
 - Thirty-two of the 2010 cases were cleared during 2010.
 - One 2009 murder was cleared during 2010 and the suspect arrested.
 - One 2000 murder was solved during 2010 and the suspect arrested.
 - One 1995 murder was solved during 2010 and the suspect arrested.
 - One 1978 murder was solved during 2010 and the suspect arrested.
- According to the U.S. Department of Justice's **Crime in the United States 2009**, the clearance rate for cities with populations between 500,000 and 999,999 was 59.8%.

Source: Versadex & APD Homicide Log