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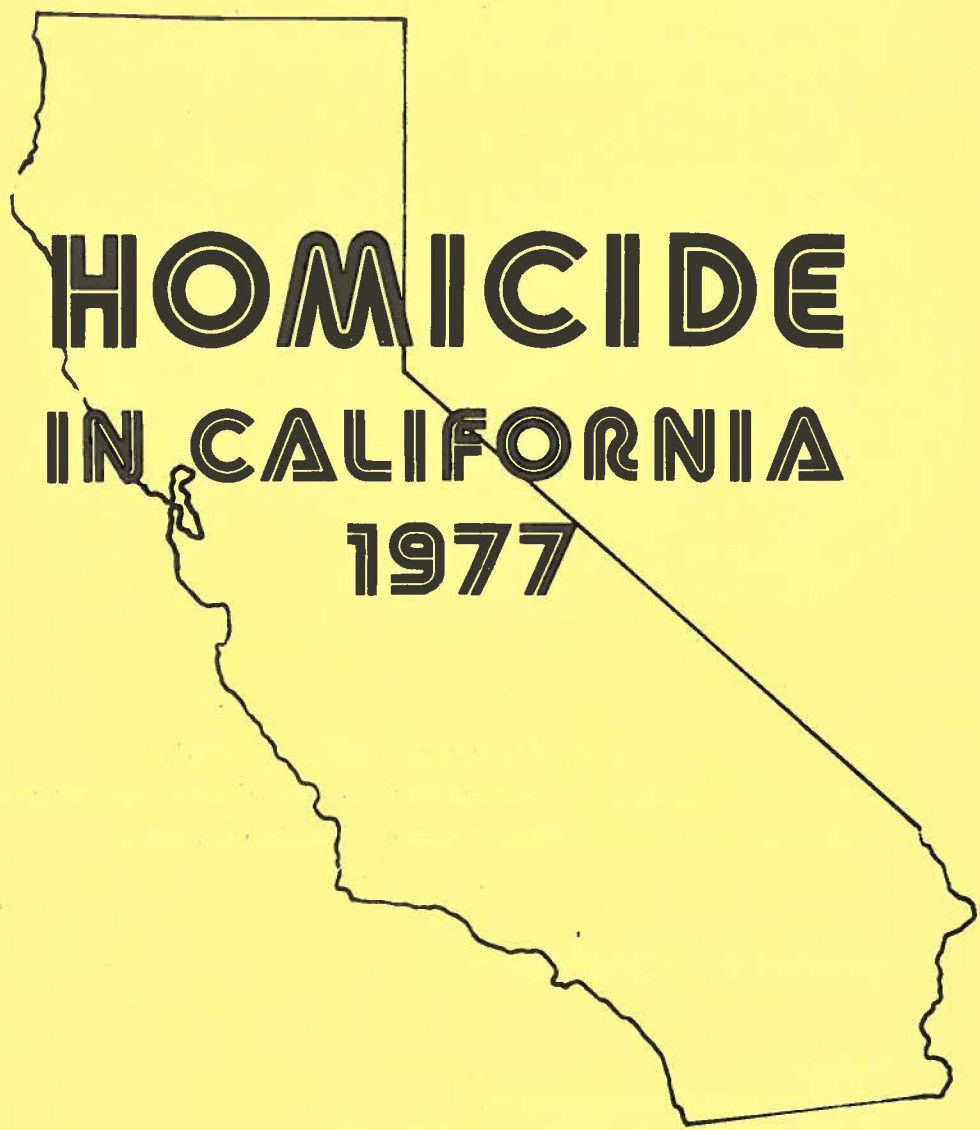


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HOMICIDE IN CALIFORNIA 1977

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HOMICIDE IN CALIFORNIA 1977

Prepared by

DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
IDENTIFICATION AND INFORMATION
BUREAU OF CRIMINAL STATISTICS

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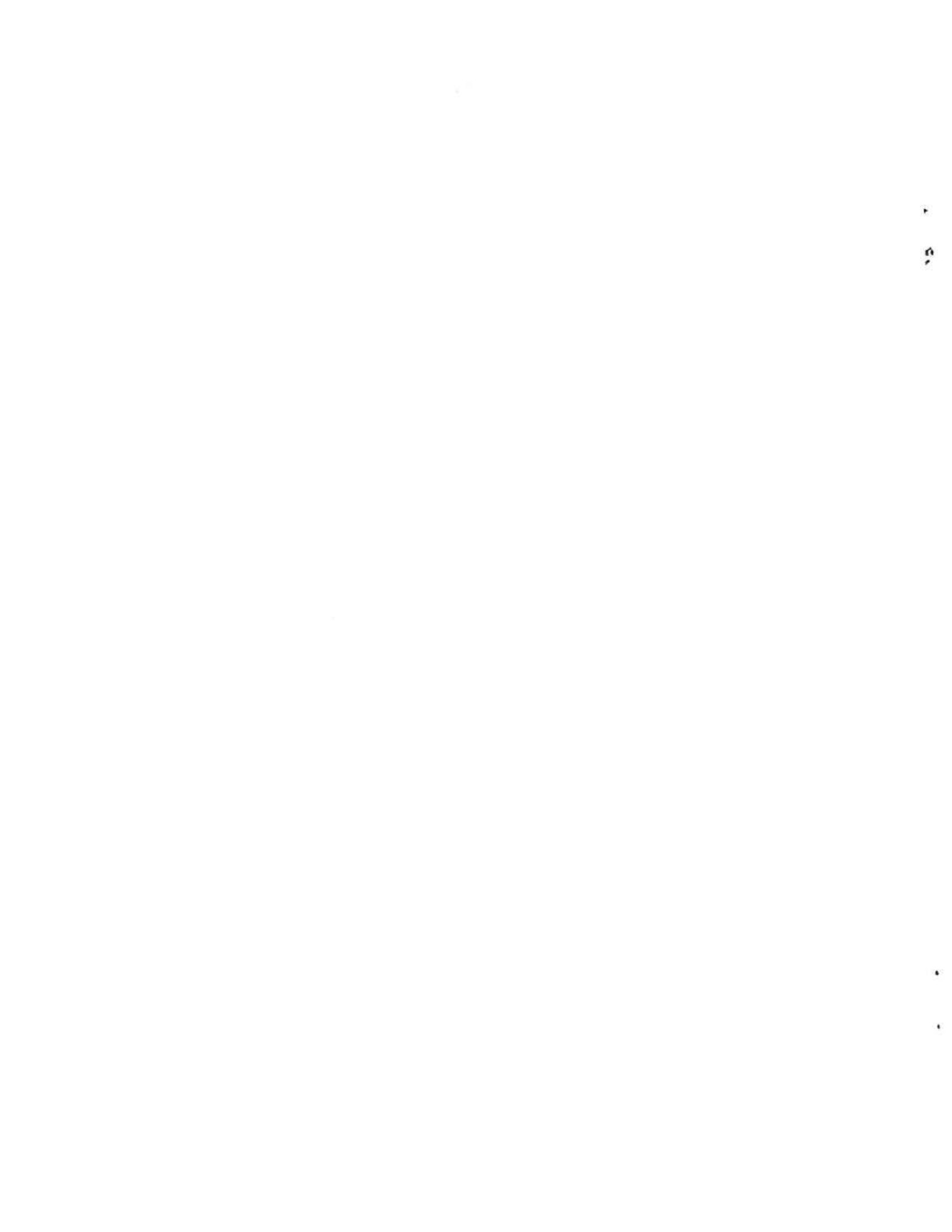
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HIGHLIGHTS

- During 1977, 2,481 individuals were the victims of willful homicides in California. This translates into 11.3 willful homicides for every 100,000 persons in the state.
- The number of willful homicides occurring in 1977 was slightly more than 12 percent above that of 1976 and 83 percent above that of 1970.
- Forty-five percent of California's 1977 willful homicides occurred in Los Angeles County, which contains nearly a third of the state's population.
- Whites made up approximately 48 percent of the race-known victims of willful homicides in 1977, Negroes 29 percent, Mexican-Americans 20 percent, and other racial groups 3 percent.
- Nearly three out of every four of the victims of willful homicides in 1977 were males.
- More than seven out of ten 1977 willful homicide victims whose ages were known were between 15 and 44 years of age. The median age of the victim was 29.6 years.
- Firearms of all types were used in more than half of the willful homicides; handguns were used in 40 percent. (The type of weapon used was known for nearly 98 percent of the willful homicides.)
- Where the precipitating event was known, more than five out of every eight willful homicides reported grew out of arguments. (The precipitating event was known for less than 80 percent of the willful homicides.)
- Of the willful homicides in which the location of the crime was known, nearly 40 percent occurred in the victim's home. (The location was known for less than 90 percent of the willful homicides.)
- Of the willful homicides where the victim-offender relationship was known, the victim was acquainted with the offender in approximately 84 percent of the cases. (The relationship was known for less than 60 percent of the willful homicides that occurred in 1977.)
- Thirteen peace officers were killed in the line of duty during 1977. This is the highest number since 1973, when 16 were killed.
- Approximately 37 percent of the persons arrested for murder in 1977 were Negroes, 30 percent Mexican-Americans, 29 percent whites, and 3 percent other racial groups.

- Nearly seven of eight persons arrested for murder in 1977 were males.
- Approximately 70 percent of those arrested for murder in 1977 were between 15 and 29 years of age. The median age of those arrested was 24.5 years.
- About 78 percent of the individuals arrested for murder and convicted in superior court of either murder or some lesser offense had prior criminal records; approximately one out of seven had previously been in prison.
- Nearly six out of every ten adults who had been arrested for murder and whose cases were disposed of in 1977 were convicted. Of those convicted, approximately 43 percent were convicted of murder, 36 percent of manslaughter, and 21 percent of "other offenses."
- The killings of 97 felons by peace officers were determined to be justifiable homicides. During this same time, peace officers made 327,434 felony-level arrests.

INTRODUCTION

This report is a continuation of a series of Bureau of Criminal Statistics (BCS) publications on the subject of homicide in California. The series was begun in the early 1960s using limited sources of data. Since that time, the Bureau has developed additional data collection methods and is able to present a comprehensive report on the crime of homicide.

This report differs somewhat from the earlier studies in that it includes data regarding homicide arrests and final dispositions that occurred in 1977. As in past studies, the homicides described are those that were reported to the police during the study year (99.2 percent of the 2,481 homicides reported to law enforcement agencies during 1977 occurred within the year; less than 1 percent [19] occurred in earlier years). The arrests and dispositions described also occurred during 1977, but in many cases stemmed from crimes that occurred in prior years. The discussion of dispositions is limited to the final 1977 disposition of adults arrested for murder. No data regarding the disposition of juveniles arrested for this offense are available at this time.

This report serves three primary purposes. First, it provides the criminal justice community with an overview of significant patterns relative to the crime of homicide in California. Second, the report provides detailed information on the circumstances surrounding homicide cases. Finally, it provides information on topics of special interest to the criminal justice community and the general public, such as, peace officers killed in the line of duty, and justifiable homicides.

This report covers two main categories of homicides, willful and justifiable. The definitions of these categories are those supplied by the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program administered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. A willful homicide is defined as "the willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another." A justifiable homicide is defined as "the killing of a felon, by a private citizen or a peace officer, during the commission of a felony." While the California Penal Code defines self-defense as a justifiable homicide, the national UCR Program does not. Therefore self-defense cases are treated in this report as willful rather than justifiable homicides. A justifiable homicide is sometimes referred to as an excusable homicide.

METHODOLOGY

The data contained in this report were gathered from several sources. The primary source of crime data was the Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) which is part of the national UCR Program. Additional data were gathered from crime reports, coroners' reports, and newspaper clippings.

The SHR was submitted, on a monthly basis, by each California law enforcement agency in whose jurisdiction a homicide occurred. Upon receipt of the SHR, BCS initiated a manual file for each homicide incident reported.

As stated in the California Penal Code, all law enforcement agencies are required to submit copies of crime reports for specified felony offenses to the Department of Justice (DOJ). These crime reports contain more detailed information about the incident, victim, and offender than the SHR. At DOJ's Organized Crime and Criminal Intelligence Branch, these crime reports are sorted by type of offense and those relative to homicides are sent to BCS for inclusion in the manual file. Often, coroners' reports are attached to the crime reports, and are also placed in the manual file.

In 1974, BCS began using newspaper clippings as an additional source of data. The clippings not only provide supplemental data, but each possible homicide incident appearing in the press is checked against the manual file to verify agency reporting on the SHR. Unreported incidents are brought to the attention of the agency having reporting responsibility and an amended SHR is requested for all valid homicide incidents that had been omitted because of reporting agency oversight or error.

After all available information on a particular case is collected, the manual file is coded and updated to an automated master file. The automated file is used to prepare tables for this report. This file was also used to respond to requests for homicide information from the criminal justice community.

Data regarding arrests and adult dispositions are drawn from the Bureau's regular data collection systems. Approximately 96 percent of all arrests made by California's law enforcement agencies in 1977 were reported to the Bureau through the Arrest and Citation Register (the remaining arrests were reported in summary fashion). Arrest information received via the Arrest Register is reported individually and in a form which permits statistical analysis. Data reported include the age, sex, and race of the person arrested, in addition to the most serious offense charged.

The Offender-Based Transaction Statistics (OBTS) system collects information concerning the disposition of adult felony arrests. It is designed to follow the adult felony arrestee from the time of arrest until final disposition of his or her case. Final dispositions can occur at the law enforcement agency, prosecutor, lower court, or superior court levels.

WILLFUL HOMICIDES

Incidents

During 1977 there were 2,481 willful homicides reported in California. As shown in Table 1, this represents a 12.1 percent increase over the 1976 total and an 83.1 percent increase since 1970.

TABLE 1
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1970-1977

Year	Number
1970	1,355
1971	1,633
1972	1,789
1973	1,862
1974	1,970
1975	2,196
1976	2,214
1977	2,481
Percent change	
1970-1971 . .	20.5
1971-1972 . .	9.6
1972-1973 . .	4.1
1973-1974 . .	5.8
1974-1975 . .	11.5
1975-1976 . .	0.8
1976-1977 . .	12.1

Table 2 shows the number of willful homicides reported in California and the rate per 100,000 population for each year since 1954. The number reported increased during this period from 419 in 1954 to 2,481 in 1977, a percent change of 492.1 percent over the 24-year period.

The increase in willful homicides was part of a general increase in reported crimes against persons between 1954 and 1977. Reported forcible rapes, for example, increased from 2,187 in 1954 to 10,715 in 1977 (389.9 percent). Reported robberies increased from 10,038 in 1954 to 62,207 in 1977 (519.7 percent), and reported aggravated assaults rose from 10,769 in 1954 to 77,424 in 1977 (619.0 percent).

As can be seen in Table 2, the number of willful homicides increased much more rapidly from 1954 to 1977 than did the state's population. In 1954, there were 3.3 reported willful homicides for every 100,000 California residents. By 1977, the rate had increased 242.4 percent, to 11.3 willful homicides per 100,000 population.

TABLE 2
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1954-1977
Number and Rate Per 100,000 Population

Year	Willful homicide crimes ^a	Population ^b	Rate per 100,000 population
1954	419	12,595,000	3.3
1955	417	13,035,000	3.2
1956	474	13,600,000	3.5
1957	497	14,190,000	3.5
1958	547	14,752,000	3.7
1959	515	15,280,000	3.4
1960	620	15,860,000	3.9
1961	609	16,445,000	3.7
1962	671	17,044,000	3.9
1963	656	17,675,000	3.7
1964	758	18,234,000	4.2
1965	892	18,756,000	4.8
1966	897	19,132,000	4.7
1967	1,051	19,478,000	5.4
1968	1,171	19,554,000	6.0
1969	1,376	19,856,000	6.9
1970	1,355	20,003,000	6.8
1971	1,633	20,265,000	8.1
1972	1,789	20,524,000	8.7
1973	1,862	20,741,000	9.0
1974	1,970	20,933,000	9.4
1975	2,196	21,113,000	10.4
1976	2,214	21,520,000	10.3
1977	2,481	21,896,000	11.3

^a"Crime in California" 1954-1965, "Crime and Delinquency in California", 1966-1977, California Department of Justice, Bureau of Criminal Statistics annual reports are the source of these data.

^bCalifornia population estimates are based on California Department of Finance figures.

The greatest increases in willful homicides occurred in the late 1960's and early 1970's. This can be seen in Table 3, which divides the 1954-1977 period into six four-year periods and shows the growth in willful homicides occurring in each four-year period. Between 1954 and 1965 the average annual rate of increase was 7.1 percent. From 1966 through 1973 willful homicides increased at an average annual rate of 11.0 percent. Since 1973 the average annual increase has been 7.4 percent.

TABLE 3
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1954-1977^a
Number of Crimes and Percent Increase by Four-Year Periods

Years	Number	Percent increase
1954-1957	1,807	—
1958-1961	2,291	26.8
1962-1965	2,977	29.9
1966-1969	4,495	51.0
1970-1973	6,639	47.7
1974-1977	8,861	33.5

^a“Crime in California,” 1954-1965 and “Crime and Delinquency in California”, 1966-1977, California Department of Justice, Bureau of Criminal Statistics annual reports.

The distribution of 1977 willful homicides by county is presented in Table 4. As in 1976, Los Angeles County, which contains 32.1 percent of the state's population, accounted for 45.0 percent of the state's willful homicides. Five additional counties accounted for another 24.1 percent of the willful homicides: San Francisco, 5.7 percent; Alameda, 5.5 percent; San Diego, 4.6 percent; San Bernardino, 4.2 percent; and Fresno, 4.1 percent. Altogether, slightly more than two-thirds (69.1 percent) of the state's willful homicides occurred in these six counties, which together contained slightly more than one-half (53.3 percent) of the state's population.

TABLE 4
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
Victim's Race by County

County	Total	Victim's race				
		White	Mexican-American	Negro	Other	Unknown
Total	2,481	1,184	482	723	80	12
Alameda	137	64	7	64	2	0
Alpine	1	1	0	0	0	0
Amador	0	0	0	0	0	0
Butte	12	11	0	1	0	0
Calaveras	1	0	0	0	1	0
Colusa	2	2	0	0	0	0
Contra Costa	51	24	3	23	0	1
Del Norte	1	0	0	0	1	0
El Dorado	5	5	0	0	0	0
Fresno	102	32	47	16	7	0
Glenn	2	0	2	0	0	0
Humboldt	5	4	1	0	0	0
Imperial	6	4	0	2	0	0
Inyo	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kern	50	23	21	4	0	2
Kings	4	2	2	0	0	0
Lake	2	2	0	0	0	0
Lassen	5	2	0	3	0	0
Los Angeles	1,117	456	207	427	22	5
Madera	5	3	2	0	0	0
Marin	12	9	2	1	0	0
Mariposa	2	2	0	0	0	0
Mendocino	1	1	0	0	0	0
Merced	13	5	6	2	0	0
Modoc	1	0	0	0	1	0
Mono	0	0	0	0	0	0
Monterey	38	15	11	7	5	0
Napa	5	5	0	0	0	0
Nevada	3	3	0	0	0	0
Orange	71	48	15	5	3	0
Placer	9	9	0	0	0	0
Plumas	1	1	0	0	0	0
Riverside	73	47	13	12	0	1
Sacramento	65	37	9	17	2	0
San Benito	2	0	2	0	0	0

TABLE 4 – Continued
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
Victim's Race by County

County	Total	Victim's race				
		White	Mexican-American	Negro	Other	Unknown
San Bernardino	104	61	32	10	1	0
San Diego	113	67	24	17	4	1
San Francisco	141	59	2	60	20	0
San Joaquin	48	21	11	13	3	0
San Luis Obispo	6	5	0	1	0	0
San Mateo	40	24	0	16	0	0
Santa Barbara	13	8	4	1	0	0
Santa Clara	67	36	21	7	2	1
Santa Cruz	8	3	4	1	0	0
Shasta	10	8	0	0	2	0
Sierra	0	0	0	0	0	0
Siskiyou	4	4	0	0	0	0
Solano	9	5	1	3	0	0
Sonoma	11	10	1	0	0	0
Stanislaus	21	11	7	3	0	0
Sutter	2	2	0	0	0	0
Tehama	1	1	0	0	0	0
Trinity	2	2	0	0	0	0
Tulare	29	17	8	2	2	0
Tuolumne	3	2	0	0	1	0
Ventura	29	10	15	3	0	1
Yolo	12	9	1	1	1	0
Yuba	4	2	1	1	0	0

The county with the highest rate of willful homicides relative to its population was Fresno, with 21.7 willful homicides per 100,000 population. Fresno was followed closely by San Francisco, which had a rate of 21.5, and then by Los Angeles (15.9), San Joaquin (15.6), and San Bernardino (14.1) counties.

In Fresno County reported homicides increased from 56 in 1976 to 102 in 1977, a jump of 82.1 percent. The significant rise has been attributed to an escalation of ethnic gang activity in the county.

Willful homicides involving Negro victims were concentrated primarily in Los Angeles County (59.1 percent). In comparison, 38.5 percent of the white victims and 42.9 percent of the Mexican-American victims were killed in Los Angeles County.

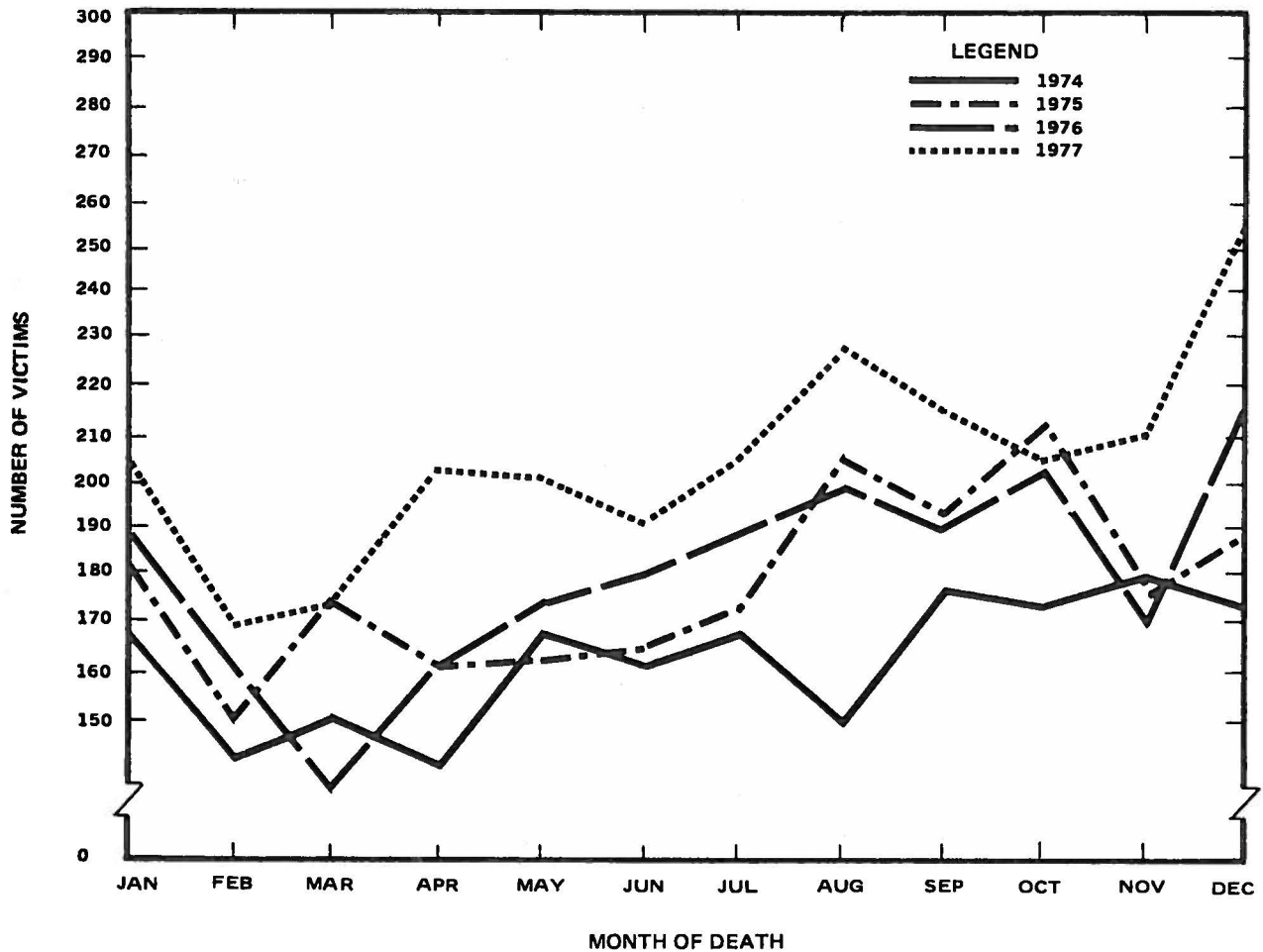
Table 5 shows the six counties reporting the greatest number of willful homicides of each of these three racial groups. There are numerous differences in, first, the counties listed and, secondly, in the relative rankings of those counties which appear for more than one racial group. For example, San Francisco, which is the second-ranked county in terms of the number of reported willful homicides of whites, is third for willful homicides of Negroes and not among the highest six counties for the Mexican-American willful homicide victims. The same pattern holds true for the counties which are second in terms of Mexican-American victims (Fresno) and Negro victims (Alameda).

TABLE 5
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
Counties With the Highest Frequency of Reported Willful Homicides
Ranked by Victim's Race

Rank	White	Mexican-American	Negro
1	Los Angeles (38.5%)	Los Angeles (42.9%)	Los Angeles (59.1%)
2	San Diego (5.7%)	Fresno (9.8%)	Alameda (8.9%)
3	Alameda (5.4%)	San Bernardino (6.6%)	San Francisco (8.3%)
4	San Bernardino (5.2%)	San Diego (5.0%)	Contra Costa (3.2%)
5	San Francisco (5.0%)	Kern (4.4%)	Sacramento (2.4%)
6	Orange (4.1%)	Santa Clara (4.4%)	San Diego (2.4%)
Remainder of state	36.1%	26.9%	15.7%

Charts 1 and 2 present the number of willful homicides reported by known month for 1974 through 1977. Each year is shown separately in Chart 1. Chart 2 shows the percent of the four-years' total willful homicides that occurred in each month. The year-to-year fluctuations in monthly patterns can clearly be seen in Chart 1. For example, the number of willful homicides occurring in November was slightly higher than the preceding October's total in 1974 and 1977, but sharply below it in 1975 and 1976. By totaling the four years as one period as is done in Chart 2, the influences of these year-to-year fluctuations can be minimized.

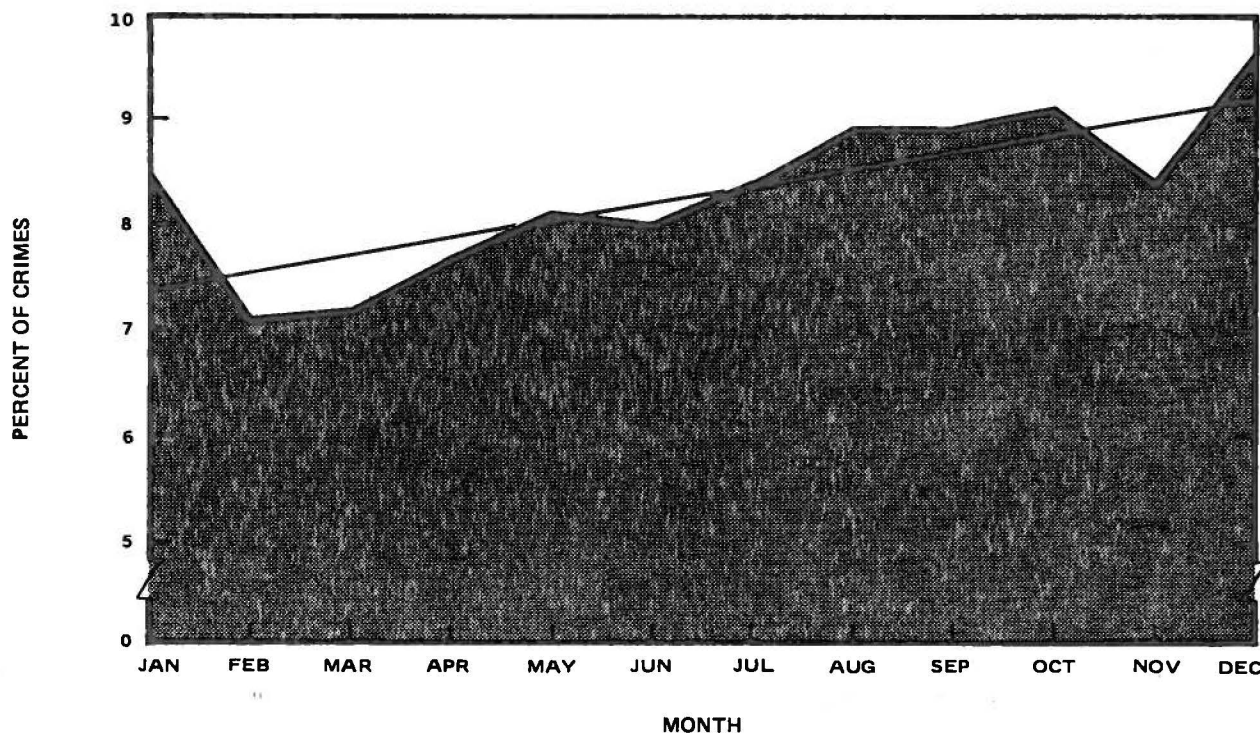
CHART 1
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1974 - 1977
 Number of Victims by Year and Known Month of Death



NOTE: This chart excludes unknowns which accounted for 12 in 1974, 39 in 1975, 31 in 1976, and 10 in 1977.

Chart 2 shows a general upward trend throughout the year. This would be expected given the long-term "growth" trend in willful homicides. To allow for this, a trend line has been superimposed on Chart 2. The monthly percentages should be viewed in their relationship to this line, not necessarily to each other. The two "peak" periods appear to be July through October (summer and early fall) and December and January (the Christmas-New Year's season). February, March, April, and November are, relatively speaking, normally the months with fewest homicides.

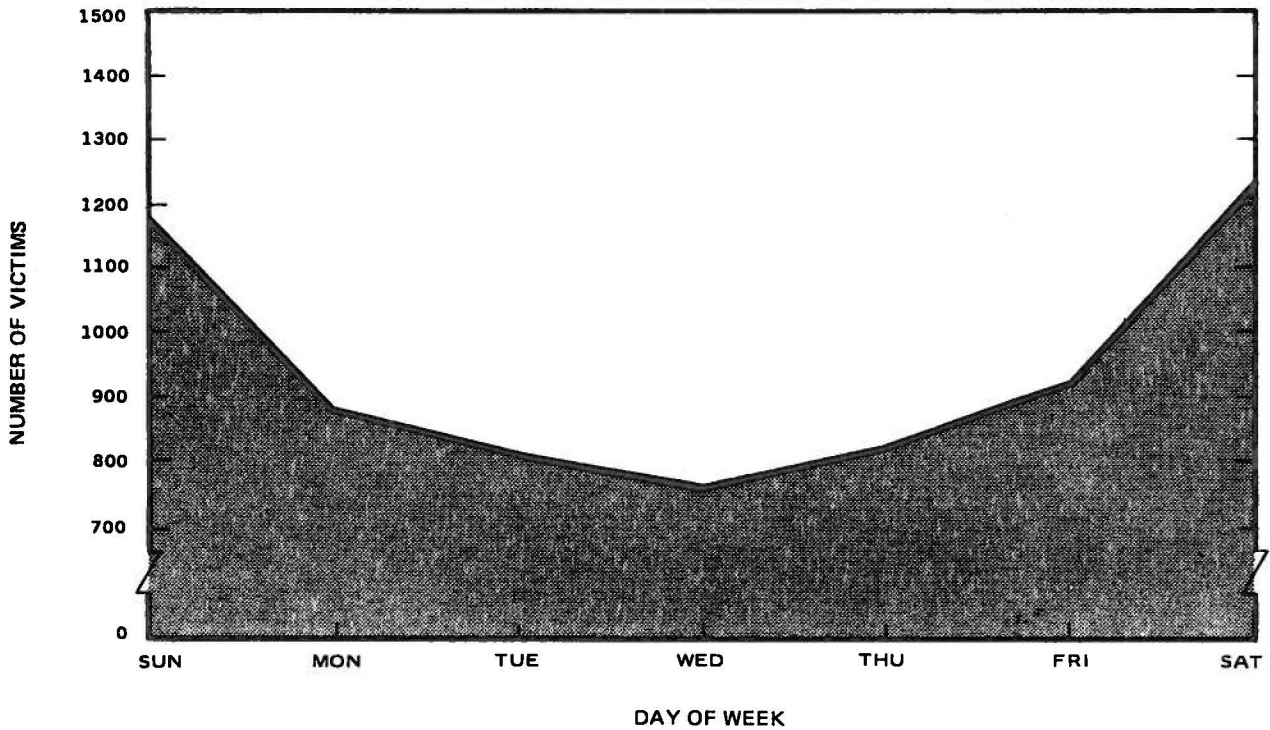
CHART 2
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1974 - 1977
Percent of Crimes Occurring Each Month



NOTE: This chart excludes 92 unknowns.

Saturdays and Sundays were the “known days” that willful homicides were most likely to occur. (See Chart 3.) Over the four-year period from 1974 through 1977, the frequency of willful homicides would normally decline from its Sunday peak, reaching its lowest point on Wednesday, and then rise again as the weekend approached producing a “U-shaped” pattern of activity.

CHART 3
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1974 - 1977
 Number of Victims by Known Day of the Week Death Occurred



NOTE: This chart excludes unknowns which accounted for 2,251 cases (25.4% of the total) for the four-year period, 1974-1977.

The total willful homicides over the four-year period for each of the three major racial groups roughly followed this same "U-shaped" pattern. (See Table 6.) The pattern was most pronounced among the Mexican-American victims: 46.3 percent of the day-known Mexican-American victims were killed on weekends compared to 33.2 percent of the whites and 36.1 percent of the Negroes. Monday was the "peak" day for the victims from the "other racial groups."

TABLE 6
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1974-1977
Victim's Race by Day of the Week Death Occurred

Day of week	Total	Victim's race				
		White	Mexican-American	Negro	Other	Unknown
1977 Total . . .	2,481	1,184	482	723	80	12
Sunday	309	116	86	96	11	0
Monday	228	120	36	59	13	0
Tuesday	214	109	35	65	5	0
Wednesday	184	89	27	58	10	0
Thursday	180	86	27	61	6	0
Friday	219	109	43	62	4	1
Saturday	348	139	84	115	10	0
Unknown	799	416	144	207	21	11
1974-1977 Total	8,861	4,228	1,658	2,644	276	55
Sunday	1,178	477	305	364	32	0
Monday	884	429	155	262	36	2
Tuesday	807	398	120	260	29	0
Wednesday	762	376	107	250	29	0
Thursday	823	387	127	280	28	1
Friday	924	439	164	285	25	11
Saturday	1,232	530	275	392	34	1
Unknown	2,251	1,192	405	551	63	40

The willful homicide incidents for each year from 1974 through 1977, in terms of the number of victims and the number of offenders, are shown in Table 7. Incidents involving more than one victim or more than one offender were relatively rare. In 1977, 90.4 percent of the victims murdered were "single victims" and, considering only those cases where the number of offenders was known, 78.4 percent of the offenders acted alone. The majority (70.3 percent) of the number-known willful homicides involved a single offender killing a single victim.

However, since 1974 significant increases have occurred in willful homicides involving multiple victims and/or multiple offenders. Multiple-victim willful homicides increased 71.9 percent and multiple-offender willful homicides 41.4 percent from 1974 to 1977. Over this same period, single-victim/single-offender homicides increased 6.8 percent.

TABLE 7
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1974-1977
Number of Victims and Offenders for Each Homicide Incident

Victims and offenders for each homicide incident	Total	Year			
		1974	1975	1976	1977
Total	8,861	1,970	2,196	2,214	2,481
Single victim	8,123	1,831	2,020	2,030	2,242
Single offender	4,917	1,178	1,301	1,180	1,258
Multiple offenders	1,276	253	321	343	359
Number unknown	1,930	400	398	507	625
Multiple victims	738	139	176	184	239
Single offender	457	90	104	118	145
Multiple offenders	112	20	41	24	27
Number unknown	169	29	31	42	67

Victims

This section contains detailed information about the personal characteristics of the victims. Among those characteristics are the victim's race, sex, and age.

Table 8 presents the racial distribution of 1977 willful homicide victims by race, sex, and age. Nearly three-fourths (74.0 percent) of the victims of willful homicides in 1977 were males. The ratio of approximately three male victims for every female victim has remained constant each year since 1974. This higher risk for males than females is reflected in the respective 1977 rates of willful homicides per 100,000 population, 16.9 for males as compared to 5.8 for females.

As was the case for the past three years, nearly half (48.0 percent) of the victims of willful homicides in 1977 whose race was known were white. Negroes, who constituted the second largest racial group of victims, made up 29.3 percent of the race-known total, Mexican-Americans 19.5 percent, and "other racial groups" 3.2 percent. Over the four-year period from 1974-1977, whites made up 48.0 percent of the race-known victims, Negroes 30.0 percent, Mexican-Americans 18.8 percent, and other racial groups 3.1 percent. (Data for 1974-1976 can be found in "Homicide in California, 1974-1976.")

The racial distributions of male and female victims were quite different in 1977. This can be clearly seen in the respective male-to-female ratios of the three major racial groups. There were 2.2 white male victims for every white female victim. For Negroes the ratio was slightly higher, 2.9 males for every female. Among Mexican-Americans the difference in the relative incidences was considerably more pronounced, 5.5 males for every female victim.

Mexican-Americans, who constituted 19.5 percent of the total age-known victims in 1977, made up 34.0 percent of the victims in the 15-19 age group (and 43.2 percent of the male victims in this age group). Their proportion declined steadily as victim age increased so that only 2.7 percent of the victims aged 55 and older were Mexican-Americans. Negroes constituted 34.8 percent of the victims between 25 and 49 years of age, but only 24.4 percent of the other age-known victims.

Whites were the largest racial group at all ages, but their relative proportion varied directly with victim age, the older the age group the greater the proportion who were white. Nearly three-fourths (74.2 percent) of the victims aged 55 years and older were white.

Nearly three-fourths (71.9 percent) of the willful homicide victims whose age was known were between 15 and 44 years of age. A third (33.5 percent) were in their twenties.

TABLE 8
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
Victim's Race by Sex and Age

Victim's sex and age	Total	Victim's race				
		White	Mexican-American	Negro	Other	Unknown
Total	2,481	1,184	482	723	80	12
Male	1,835	818	408	539	62	8
Under 15	65	32	9	21	3	0
15-19	199	71	86	35	7	0
20-24	313	127	91	85	10	0
25-29	302	108	87	100	7	0
30-34	218	90	41	81	6	0
35-39	168	68	37	55	8	0
40-44	134	61	20	49	4	0
45-49	81	39	8	31	3	0
50-54	94	51	12	27	4	0
55-59	66	40	4	18	4	0
60-64	61	48	2	11	0	0
65-69	40	29	1	8	2	0
70 and over	64	47	2	11	4	0
Unknown	30	7	8	7	0	8
Female	646	366	74	184	18	4
Under 15	69	29	13	25	0	2
15-19	101	61	16	22	2	0
20-24	112	56	17	37	2	0
25-29	92	50	4	33	4	1
30-34	48	25	5	17	1	0
35-39	42	20	5	13	3	1
40-44	29	15	4	10	0	0
45-49	26	8	10	8	0	0
50-54	23	17	0	5	1	0
55-59	22	14	0	6	2	0
60-64	25	19	0	3	3	0
65-69	15	14	0	1	0	0
70 and over	36	33	0	3	0	0
Unknown	6	5	0	1	0	0

Table 9 presents the median ages of the 1977 willful homicide victims by their race and sex. In 1977, the median age of the males was 30.5 years, while the median age of the female victims was 3.4 years younger at 27.1 years. The 1977 male median age is consistent with those of the previous three years (31.0, 30.9, and 30.2 years) but the 1977 female median is well below the 1974, 1975, and 1976 female medians of 29.8, 31.3, and 29.7 years of age.

White victims, on the average, were 32.3 years of age, approximately two years older than the "average" Negro victim and seven years older than the "average" Mexican-American victim. In each of the three racial groups, female victims tended to be younger than male victims by three to five years.

TABLE 9
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
Median Age of Victims by Their Race and Sex

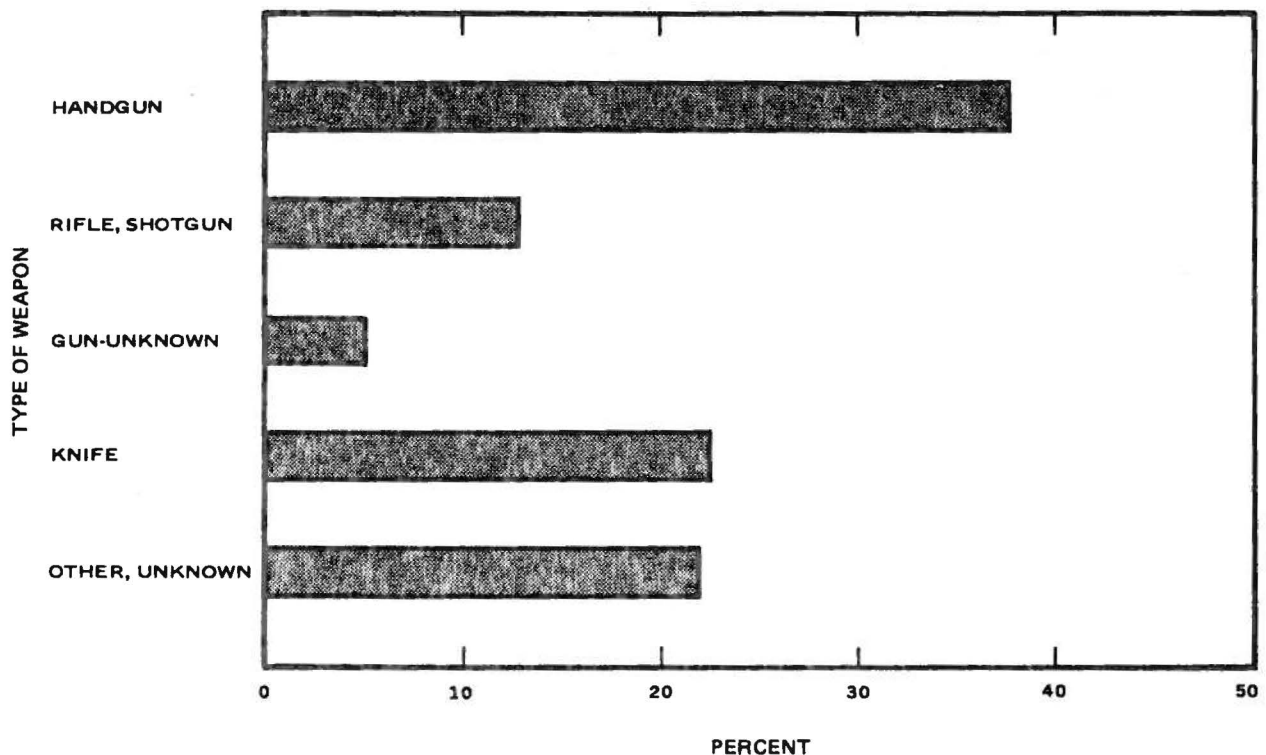
Victim's race	Total	Victim's sex	
		Male	Female
Total	29.6	30.5	27.1
White	32.3	33.8	28.4
Mexican-American	25.3	25.8	22.4
Negro	30.0	31.5	26.1
Other	32.5	32.5	33.0

Circumstances

This section presents data on the circumstances surrounding the willful homicides that occurred in 1977. The circumstances discussed include the weapon used to inflict the fatal wound, the wound area, the event leading up to the homicide, the location of occurrence, and the relationship between the victim and the offender. As would be expected, in a number of instances one or more of these circumstances were "unknown." In the discussion and tables that follow, the proportion unknown or unreported will be noted for each "circumstance."

The distribution of weapons used to inflict the fatal wound is shown in Chart 4. Firearms were used in over half (55.6 percent) of the total willful homicides that occurred in 1977 and 55.4 percent of those that occurred over the four-year period from 1974 to 1977. Handguns were the most frequently used type of firearm. In 1977, they were used in 37.8 percent of the total homicides, while long guns (rifles and shotguns) were used in 12.9 percent, and guns of unknown type in 4.9 percent. Knives and other cutting instruments were used in 22.3 percent of the reported willful homicides. These percentages were nearly identical to those for the four-year period of 1974 through 1977.

CHART 4
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1974 - 1977
By Offender's Type of Weapon



The relative frequency of handguns and long guns as "murder weapons" in willful homicides seems to be related to the size of the community. Table 10 distributes the willful homicides of the past four years where the type of gun was known by the size of the county in which the homicides occurred. The counties are grouped into four categories according to population. The percentage of homicide incidents involving the use of a long gun tended to increase as the size of the county decreased. This tendency was evident regardless of whether the victim was white or of some other racial group and whether the homicide occurred within a residence or not.

TABLE 10
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1974-1977
Use of Handguns and Long Guns in Residential and Nonresidential
Willful Homicides by Size of County and Victim's Race

Location, victim's race, and county size	Number			Percent		
	Total	Handguns	Long guns	Total	Handguns	Long guns
Residential ^a	2,048	1,435	613	100.0	70.1	29.9
White	938	626	312	100.0	66.7	33.3
Los Angeles	297	217	80	100.0	73.1	26.9
Second-tenth ^b	361	240	121	100.0	66.5	33.5
Eleventh-twentieth ^c	162	105	57	100.0	64.8	35.2
Remainder of state	118	64	54	100.0	54.2	45.8
Nonwhite	1,110	809	301	100.0	72.9	27.1
Los Angeles	600	445	155	100.0	74.2	25.8
Second-tenth ^b	338	255	83	100.0	75.4	24.6
Eleventh-twentieth ^c	133	87	46	100.0	65.4	34.6
Remainder of state	39	22	17	100.0	56.4	43.6
Nonresidential ^d	2,051	1,583	468	100.0	77.2	22.8
White	853	654	199	100.0	76.7	23.3
Los Angeles	316	242	74	100.0	76.6	23.4
Second-tenth ^b	321	260	61	100.0	81.0	19.0
Eleventh-twentieth ^c	113	88	25	100.0	77.9	22.1
Remainder of state	103	64	39	100.0	62.1	37.9
Nonwhite	1,198	929	269	100.0	77.5	22.5
Los Angeles	658	515	143	100.0	78.3	21.7
Second-tenth ^b	320	258	62	100.0	80.6	19.4
Eleventh-twentieth ^c	160	115	45	100.0	71.9	28.1
Remainder of state	60	41	19	100.0	68.3	31.7

^aExcludes a victim who was killed with a handgun but whose race was unknown.

^bIncludes Alameda, Contra Costa, Orange, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties.

^cIncludes Fresno, Kern, Marin, Monterey, Riverside, San Joaquin, Santa Barbara, Sonoma, Stanislaus, and Ventura counties.

^dExcludes 6 victims who were killed with handguns but whose races were unknown.

Note: Counties are ranked according to population.

Table 11 shows the type of weapon used in willful homicides during 1977 by the race of the victims. Guns were used to kill 51.9 percent of the white victims whose murder weapon was known, 58.6 percent of the weapon-known Mexican-American victims, and 63.8 percent of the weapon-known Negro victims. Knives, which were used to kill 20 to 22 percent of white and Negro victims, killed 28.9 percent of the Mexican-American victims. One hundred twenty-seven (60.5 percent) of the 210 persons who were murdered by the use of "hands, fists, feet, etc." were white, as were 84 (or 59.6 percent) of the 141 persons killed with clubs, and 34 (or 59.7 percent) of the 57 killed with "ropes-garrotes."

TABLE 11
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
Victim's Race by Offender's Type of Weapon

Offender's type of weapon	Total	Victim's race				
		White	Mexican-American	Negro	Other	Unknown
Total	2,481	1,184	482	723	80	12
Handgun	937	398	189	319	29	2
Rifle	152	81	41	22	8	0
Shotgun	169	70	32	61	6	0
Gun - unknown	122	50	18	52	2	0
Knife	554	250	138	147	17	2
Club	141	84	18	31	8	0
Hands, fists, feet, etc.	210	127	27	47	7	2
Rope, garrote	57	34	8	15	0	0
Drugs	15	9	1	4	1	0
Other	73	51	6	14	2	0
Unknown	51	30	4	11	0	6

The type of weapon used in willful homicides during 1977 is displayed in Table 12 by the sex and age of the victim. Only among those victims killed with "ropes and garrotes" did the females outnumber the males: 37 to 20. The number of females killed with "hands, fists, feet, etc." was only slightly less than the number of males: 104 females compared to 106 males. For all other types of weapons, however, the number of male victims was far greater than that of female victims. Four times as many males as females were killed with firearms; 3.4 times as many males were killed with knives; and 1.9 times as many males were killed with clubs.

The relative frequency with which each of the various types of weapons was used was markedly different for the very young and the older victims than it was for victims whose ages fell in between. Firearms were used to kill 61.1 percent of the weapon-known victims aged 15 to 59 compared to 21.1 percent of the weapon-known victims under 15 and 38.8 percent of those 60 and over. Weapons other than guns and knives were used to kill 62.6 percent of the weapon-known victims under 15 and 43.0 percent of the victims 60 years of age and older. Only 15.1 percent of the weapon-known victims between 15 and 59 were killed with these types of weapons.

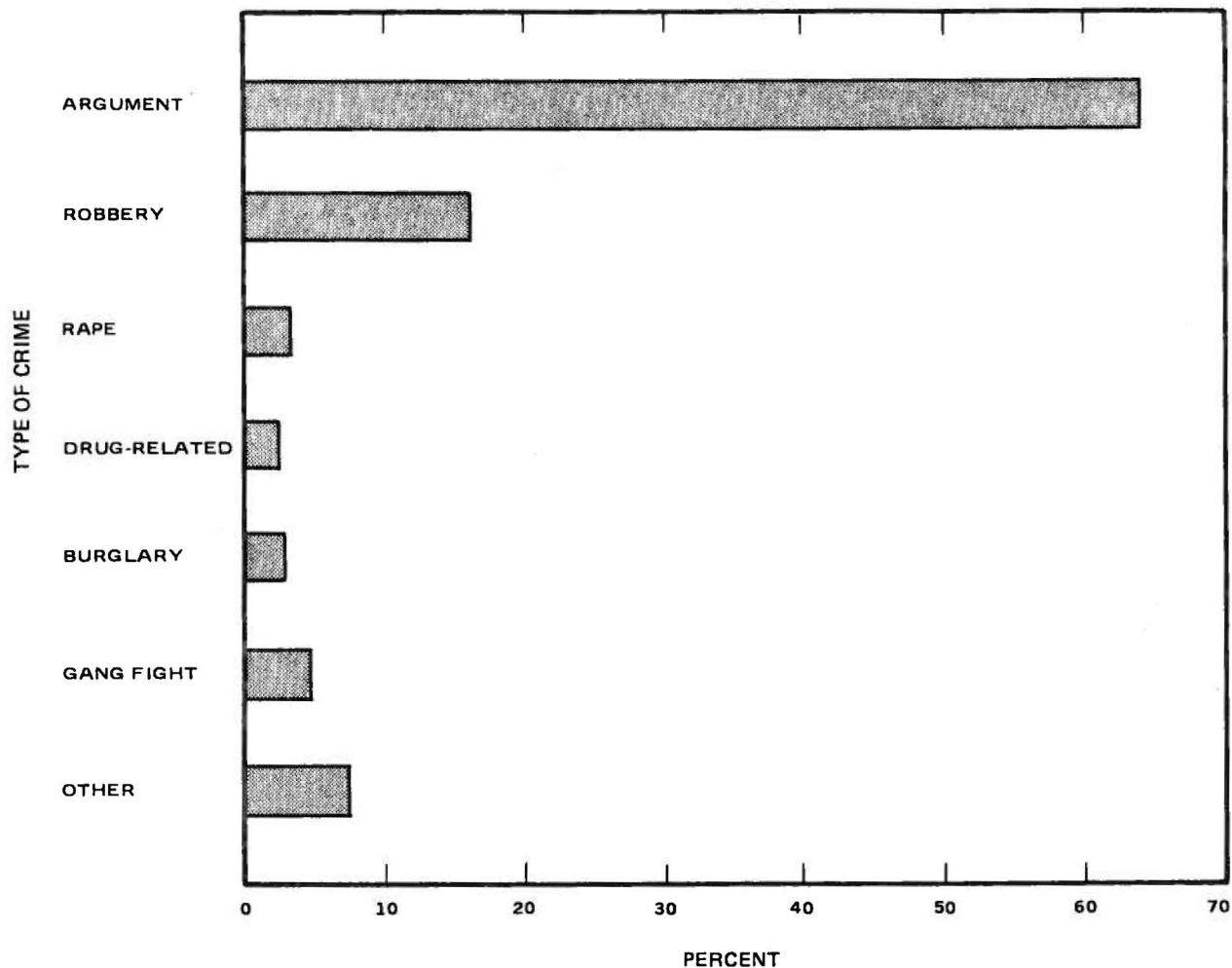
“Hands, fists, feet, etc.” was the type of weapon most frequently used to kill children under 15. These “personal weapons” were used to kill 41 (33.3 percent) of the 123 weapon-known victims in this age group.

TABLE 12
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
Offender's Type of Weapon by Victim's Sex and Age

Victim's sex and age	Total	Offender's type of weapon							
		Firearm	Knife	Club	Hands, fists, feet, etc.	Rope, garrote	Drugs	Other	Unknown
Total	2,481	1,380	554	141	210	57	15	73	51
Male	1,835	1,104	428	92	106	20	8	53	24
Female	646	276	126	49	104	37	7	20	27
Under 15	134	26	20	11	41	7	1	17	11
15-29	1,119	666	283	48	52	25	9	19	17
30-44	639	421	131	26	26	13	3	16	3
45-59	312	161	71	24	34	6	0	8	8
60 and over	241	92	43	30	53	5	1	13	4
Unknown	36	14	6	2	4	1	1	0	8

One-half (50.3 percent) of the willful homicides that occurred in 1977 were known to have grown out of arguments. The proportion increases to 64.1 percent if only those incidents where the precipitating event was known are considered. (See Chart 5.) (In 533 cases, or 21.5 percent of the total, the precipitating event was unknown.) Robbery was the second most common precipitating event in 1977; 311 willful homicides were identified as having resulted from robberies (in 1977, 62,207 robberies were reported to law enforcement agencies). These 311 killings constituted 16.0 percent of those willful homicides where the precipitating event was known. Relatively few (51, or 2.6 percent of the cases where the precipitating event was known) homicides resulted from burglaries. In the four-year period from 1974 through 1977, 63.7 percent of precipitating event-known willful homicides stemmed from arguments, 15.8 percent from robberies, and 2.2 percent from burglaries.

CHART 5
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
By Known Precipitating Event



NOTE: Excludes 533 willful homicides whose precipitating event was not known.

Again considering only those cases where the precipitating event was known in 1977, 80.3 percent of the Negro-victim willful homicides in 1977 stemmed from arguments, compared to 62.8 percent of the Mexican-American-victim and 55.5 percent of the white-victim willful homicides. (See Table 13.) Whites, who comprised 48.0 percent of the race-known victims, constituted 61.4 percent of the victims where deaths resulted from robberies and 68.9 percent (42 out of 61) of those where murders resulted from rapes. Ninety homicides were known to have resulted from gang fights; 51 of these victims were reported as Mexican-Americans.

Females made up the majority (86.9 percent) of the 61 victims where deaths stemmed from rape. Men, on the other hand, made up disproportionately large percentages of those incidents where deaths resulted from robberies and gang fights, 87.8 percent and 94.4 percent respectively.

TABLE 13
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
Victim's Sex and Race by Precipitating Event

Precipitating event	Total	Sex		Race				
		Male	Female	White	Mexican-American	Negro	Other	Unknown
Total	2,481	1,835	646	1,184	482	723	80	12
Argument	1,249	932	317	503	245	469	29	3
Robbery	311	273	38	191	42	56	21	1
Rape	61	8	53	42	10	8	1	0
Drug-related	45	39	6	21	7	17	0	0
Burglary	51	30	21	42	3	5	1	0
Gang fight	90	85	5	28	51	6	5	0
Other	141	102	39	79	32	23	7	0
Unknown	533	366	167	278	92	139	16	8

Table 14 shows the locations where the 1977 homicides occurred. Of the willful homicides in which the location was known, 38.5 percent occurred in the victim's residence. Another 12.0 percent occurred at other residences while 15.4 percent took place on the "highway or street." In 325 cases, 13.1 percent of the total, the location was unknown. In the four-year period between 1974 and 1977, 39.5 percent of the location-known willful homicides occurred in the victim's residence, 11.0 percent in other residences, and 16.8 percent on "highways and streets."

In 1977, the victim's residence was the most common known location for willful homicides of whites and Negroes (42.5 percent and 44.0 percent, respectively) while "highway or street" was the foremost location for willful homicides of Mexican-Americans (23.3 percent). For every white victim killed on the "highway or street," 3.6 were killed in their residence. And for every Negro victim killed on the "highway or street," 2.5 were killed in their residence. In contrast, nine more Mexican-American victims were known to have been killed on "highway or street" than in their own residences (98 compared to 89).

TABLE 14
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
Victim's Race by Location of Homicide

Location of homicide	Total	Victim's race				
		White	Mexican-American	Negro	Other	Unknown
Total	2,481	1,184	482	723	80	12
Victim's residence	830	442	89	270	27	2
Other residence .	258	97	60	89	11	1
Hotel/motel . . .	46	22	4	19	1	0
Liquor business .	86	41	27	16	2	0
Other business . .	98	62	6	19	11	0
Parking lot	93	33	34	26	0	0
Highway/street .	333	124	98	106	5	0
Field/park	153	82	45	18	7	1
In vehicle	141	73	33	31	3	1
Other	118	63	25	20	6	4
Unknown	325	145	61	109	7	3

More than half (56.0 percent) of the location-known female willful homicide victims were murdered in their own residences. (See Table 15.) The victim's residence was also the primary site of the location-known willful homicides of male victims as a whole (32.2 percent). However, among male victims aged 15 to 24 years, "highway or street" (23.2 percent) was the primary site, followed by "other residence" (21.8 percent), and "victim's residence" (15.5 percent).

Both male and female victims between 15 and 29 years of age were much more likely to be killed away from their own residences than were victims of other ages: 80.7 percent of the male victims and 55.3 percent of the female victims between 15 and 29 were killed away from their residences compared to 57.0 percent of the other male victims and 33.6 percent of the other female victims.

TABLE 15
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
Location of Homicide by the Victim's Sex and Age

Victim's sex and age	Total	Location of homicide										
		Victim's residence	Other residence	Hotel/motel	Liquor business	Other business	Parking lot	Highway/street	Field/park	In vehicle	Other	Unknown
Total	2,481	830	258	46	86	98	93	333	153	141	118	325
Male	1,835	510	219	33	75	84	81	290	101	109	83	250
Under 15 . . .	65	35	7	0	0	0	1	4	3	1	1	13
15-19	199	25	37	0	2	9	8	49	18	15	9	27
20-24	313	43	59	3	11	15	22	53	23	23	16	45
25-29	302	67	33	8	18	5	17	55	20	21	16	42
30-34	218	55	33	4	8	6	8	44	9	15	9	27
35-39	168	56	15	6	5	8	5	30	9	10	8	16
40-44	134	48	17	2	5	11	5	13	4	6	3	20
45-49	81	30	5	1	9	4	5	12	3	4	2	6
50-54	94	38	4	1	8	5	5	7	3	4	6	13
55-59	66	26	3	5	2	5	1	5	1	4	3	11
60-64	61	27	3	1	2	10	1	3	1	1	4	8
65-69	40	18	0	2	4	3	2	5	1	1	1	3
70 and over .	64	38	1	0	1	3	0	6	1	3	0	11
Unknown . . .	30	4	2	0	0	0	1	4	5	1	5	8
Female	646	320	39	13	11	14	12	43	52	32	35	75
Under 15 . . .	69	36	4	1	0	0	0	4	6	4	3	11
15-19	101	25	9	2	0	3	2	11	16	3	13	17
20-24	112	45	7	2	1	1	5	6	14	8	11	12
25-29	92	48	5	1	1	1	0	7	10	5	2	12
30-34	48	24	3	2	4	1	3	4	1	3	0	3
35-39	42	24	5	2	2	1	0	0	2	3	1	2
40-44	29	15	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	6
45-49	26	16	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	4
50-54	23	13	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	2
55-59	22	13	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	3
60-64	25	19	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	0
65-69	15	13	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
70 and over .	36	29	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	1	0
Unknown . . .	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3

Table 16 presents data concerning the relationship of the victim to his or her killer(s). The reader, in interpreting these data, should bear in mind that the relationship was "unknown" in 41.7 percent of the cases. Such a large proportion of unknowns obviously means that any conclusions drawn from the data would be at best tentative.

In those cases where the relationship was known, the offender was a "friend or associate" of the victim 59.1 percent of the time and a member of the victim's immediate family 22.5 percent of the time. The offender was a "stranger" in only 15.3 percent of the cases. In the four years between 1974 and 1977 the offender was a "friend or associate" of the victim in 54.0 percent of the relationship-known willful homicides, a member of the victim's family in 22.5 percent, and a stranger in 20.8 percent.

Relatively speaking, in 1977 white victims were killed much less frequently by “friends or associates” than were Mexican-American and Negro victims: 48.9 percent of the relationship-known whites as compared to 75.1 percent of the relationship-known Mexican-Americans and 65.2 percent of the relationship-known Negroes. Mexican-American victims, on the other hand, were the least likely to have been killed by relatives: 11.9 percent compared to 29.3 percent and 25.4 percent of the white and Negro victims, respectively.

TABLE 16
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
Victim's Race by Victim-Offender Relationship

Victim-offender relationship	Total	Victim's race				
		White	Mexican-American	Negro	Other	Unknown
Total	2,481	1,184	482	723	80	12
Friend/associate	855	320	208	306	20	1
Spouse	193	102	14	71	5	1
Parent/child	108	63	10	32	3	0
Brother/sister	25	11	2	9	3	0
Other relative	32	16	7	7	2	0
Peace officer	13	13	0	0	0	0
Stranger	221	130	36	44	11	0
Unknown	1,034	529	205	254	36	10

Although the number of male victims in 1977 was far greater than that of female victims (1,835 to 646), the numbers killed by relatives were identical. In 1977, 179 male and 179 female victims were known to have been killed by relatives. While more women than men were killed by their spouses, more men than women were killed by their siblings, parents, children, or other relatives. (See Table 17.)

TABLE 17
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
Victim's Sex by Victim-Offender Relationship

Victim-offender relationship	Total	Victim's sex	
		Male	Female
Total	2,481	1,835	646
Friend/associate . .	855	692	163
Spouse	193	74	119
Parent/child	108	65	43
Brother/sister . . .	25	20	5
Other relative . . .	32	20	12
Peace officer	13	13	0
Stranger	221	172	49
Unknown	1,034	779	255

The relationship between the victim and his or her killer(s) seems to be related also to the age of the victim. Parents killed 61.0 percent of the relationship-known willful homicide victims under 15 years of age. Relatives of all types killed 70.0 percent of these children. (See Table 18.) The killers of victims aged 15 through 69, when the relationship was known, were most likely to be "friends or associates" of the victim. The relative frequency of victims killed by "friends or associates" was greatest for victims aged 15 through 19. It then declined as the age of the victims increased. "Strangers" was the most frequent category of relationship-known killers of willful homicide victims 70 years of age and older (35.9 percent).

TABLE 18
Willful Homicide Crimes, 1977
Victim-Offender Relationship by Victim's Age

Victim's age	Total	Victim-offender relationship							
		Friend/associate	Spouse	Parent/child	Brother/sister	Other relative	Peace officer	Stranger	Unknown
Total	2,481	855	193	108	25	32	13	221	1,034
Under 15	134	24	1	61	4	4	0	6	34
15-19	300	146	8	3	5	2	0	29	107
20-24	425	175	19	1	7	5	1	38	179
25-29	394	143	26	2	4	7	2	34	176
30-34	266	105	23	2	1	1	5	22	107
35-39	210	81	26	3	1	0	1	16	82
40-44	163	50	24	8	0	4	3	16	58
45-49	107	24	19	6	0	1	0	8	49
50-54	117	36	12	9	1	2	0	13	44
55-59	88	19	11	6	0	1	1	6	44
60-64	86	23	11	1	1	3	0	10	37
65-69	55	9	5	2	0	1	0	8	30
70 and over	100	13	7	3	1	1	0	14	61
Unknown	36	7	1	1	0	0	0	1	26

Table 19 distributes the victims according to "wound area." Of those cases where the wound area was reported, 23.3 percent of the victims died from wounds in the head, 33.9 percent from wounds in the upper torso, 34.9 percent from multiple wounds, and 8.0 percent from wounds to other areas. The wound area was not reported in 486 cases (19.6 percent).

TABLE 19
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1977
By Victim's Wound Area

Victim's wound area	Number	Percent
Total	2,481	100.0
Head	464	18.7
Upper torso	676	27.2
Lower torso	101	4.1
Internal ^a	18	0.7
Multiple	696	28.1
Other	40	1.6
Unknown	486	19.6

^aRefers to willful homicides resulting from drug overdoses and poisonings.

Peace Officers Killed in the Line of Duty

This section provides information on those peace officers who were killed during the performance of their duties. It includes the race and sex of the officer as well as the type of weapon used and the event precipitating the willful homicide. Since the number of officers killed in any one year is small, the tables include information for several years, primarily 1974 through 1977.

In 1977, 13 officers were killed while performing law enforcement duties. All 13 were white males. The deaths of two of these officers resulted from arguments while the other 11 officers were killed by individuals engaged in "criminal activities." Twelve officers were killed by firearms: nine by handguns and three by long guns. The thirteenth, an undercover narcotics officer, died from injuries received in a scuffle with two men.

Table 20 compares the number of peace officers killed to the number of individuals killed by peace officers while performing their duties from 1971 through 1977. During this period, 77 peace officers were killed in the line of duty while 595 persons were justifiably killed by peace officers. Details on persons killed by peace officers are included in the section on justifiable homicides.

TABLE 20
HOMICIDES INVOLVING PEACE OFFICERS, 1971-1977

Year	Killed by peace officer in the line of duty	Peace officer killed in the line of duty
1971	93	14
1972	76	6
1973	64	16
1974	84	10
1975	87	12
1976	94	6
1977	97	13

The racial and sexual distributions of officers killed in the line of duty from 1974 through 1977 are shown in Table 21. Of the 41 officers killed, all but three were white and all were males.

TABLE 21
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES – PEACE OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY, 1974–1977
By Victim's Sex and Race

Victim's race	Total	Victim's sex	
		Male	Female
Total	41	41	0
White	38	38	0
Mexican-American	2	2	0
Negro	1	1	0
Other	0	0	0

The events precipitating the 41 killings of peace officers occurring from 1974 through 1977 are shown in Table 22. Twenty-nine deaths were known to have grown out of confrontations brought on by criminal acts in which the killer had been engaged. (Most of these acts are shown under the ill-defined "other criminal acts" category. "Other" includes such things as ambushes, traffic stops, kidnappings, and incidents lacking sufficient detail to determine what type of crime was involved.) Eleven were known to have resulted from noncriminal acts such as arguments. The precipitating event of one of the killings is unknown.

TABLE 22
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES – PEACE OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY, 1974–1977
By Precipitating Event

Precipitating event	1977	1974–1977
Total	13	41
Criminal acts	11	29
Robbery	2	7
Burglary	1	3
Drugs	1	2
Other	7	17
Noncriminal acts	2	11
Argument	2	5
Other	0	6
Unknown	0	1

Table 23 displays the type of weapon used to murder the peace officers killed in the line of duty from 1974 through 1977. All but five of the 41 were killed with firearms. Between 1974 and 1976, six officers were killed with either their own or a fellow officer's handgun. In 1977, no officers were killed by their own or a fellow officer's gun.

TABLE 23
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES – PEACE OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY, 1974–1977
By Offender's Type of Weapon

Offender's type of weapon	1977	1974–1977
Total	13	41
Handgun	9	24
Offender's . . .	9	18
Officer's	0	4
Fellow officer's .	0	2
Rifle	2	7
Offender's . . .	2	7
Shotgun	1	5
Offender's . . .	1	5
Other	1	5

The wound area, by type of weapon used in the willful homicide, is shown in Table 24 for 1974 through 1977. Eleven officers were killed by gunshots to the upper torso.

TABLE 24
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES – PEACE OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY, 1974–1977
Officer's Wound Area by Offender's Type of Weapon

Offender's type of weapon	Total	Officer's wound area					
		Head	Upper torso	Lower torso	Internal	Multiple	Unknown
Total	41	12	12	3	1	12	1
Handgun	24	6	7	3	0	7	1
Rifle	7	1	3	0	0	3	0
Shotgun	5	3	1	0	0	1	0
Club	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Other	3	0	1	0	1	1	0

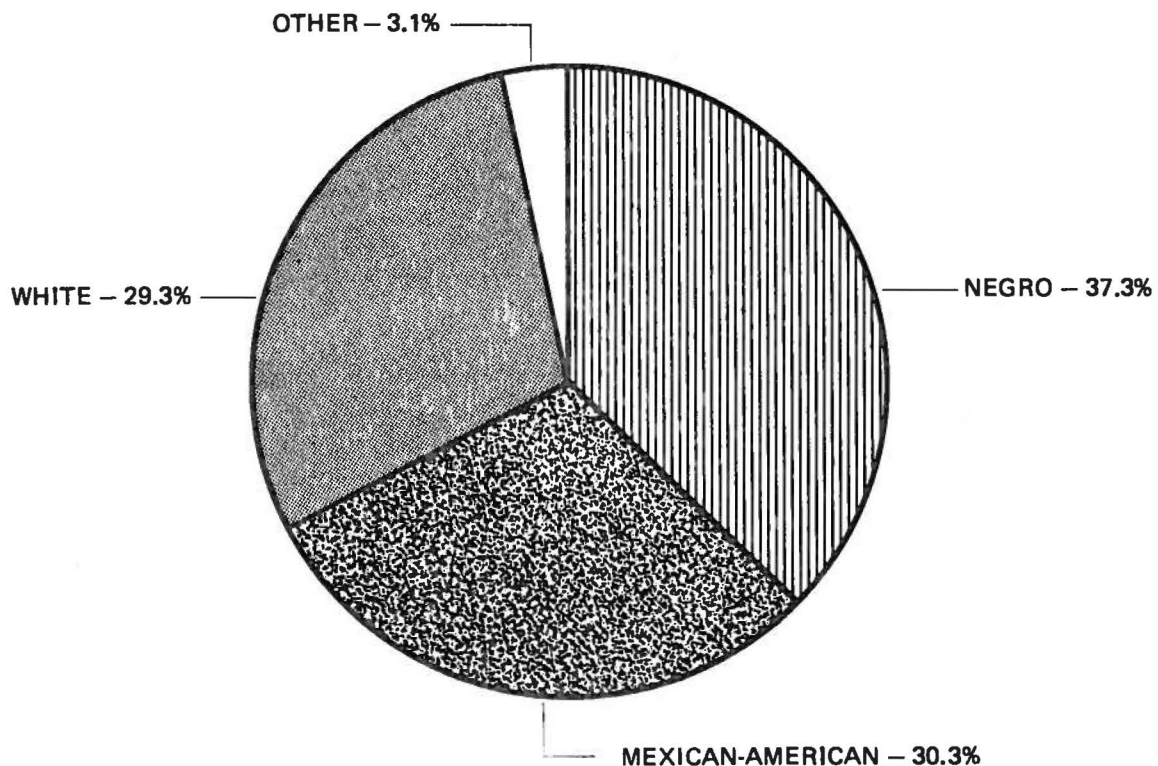
Arrests

This section presents data on persons arrested in California in 1977 for murder. The crimes for which they were arrested may or may not have occurred in 1977. The persons described in this section are those whose arrests were reported to the Bureau of Criminal Statistics via the Arrest and Citation Register. The Arrest Register is a system developed by the Bureau for collecting data about each individual arrest. It was introduced on a "pilot" basis in 1971 and has been expanded gradually, until in 1977, 96 percent of California's arrests were reported in this fashion. Prior to 1971, all arrests were reported in summary fashion.

During 1977, California law enforcement agencies made 2,429¹ arrests for murder. Of these, 2,368 were reported via the Arrest Register; 41 adults arrested by the San Diego Police Department, 17 adults arrested by the San Diego Sheriff's Department, and 3 juveniles arrested by the San Jose Police Department were reported in summary fashion and are not included in the discussion that follows.

The racial distribution of persons whose arrests for murder reported via the Arrest Register in 1977, are graphically displayed in Chart 6. Negroes made up 37.3 percent of the total and were the largest racial group. Mexican-Americans constituted 30.3 percent, whites 29.3 percent, and "other racial groups" 3.1 percent.

CHART 6
ARRESTS FOR MURDER, 1977
By Arrestee's Race



¹This total excludes arrests for non-vehicular manslaughter, and thus differs from the total number of "homicides" (as distinct from "murder") shown in *Crime and Delinquency in California, 1977 - Part I*.

Table 25 compares the racial distribution of the victims of willful homicides with that of the individuals arrested for murder in 1977. The differences are pronounced. Nearly half (47.7 percent) of the victims but less than a third (29.3 percent) of the arrestees were white. Mexican-Americans made up 19.4 percent of the victims and 30.3 percent of the arrestees while Negroes constituted 29.1 percent of the victims and 37.3 percent of the arrestees.

TABLE 25
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES AND MURDER ARRESTS, 1977
Racial Distributions of Victims of Willful Homicide and
Persons Arrested for Murder^a

Race	Victims		Arrestees	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	2,481	100.0	2,368	100.0
White	1,184	47.7	694	29.3
Mexican-American	482	19.4	717	30.3
Negro	723	29.1	884	37.3
Other	80	3.2	73	3.1
Unknown	12	0.5	0	0.0

^aMurder arrests as reported on the Monthly Arrest and Citation Register.
Note: Percents may not total 100.0 due to rounding.

Males were arrested for murder far more often than were females: 6.6 times as often. Table 26 shows the male-female breakdown by race and age distribution of the arrestees. This male predominance was characteristic of all racial groups. However, it was most pronounced among Mexican-Americans of all ages and Negro juveniles. Females, who made up 13.2 percent of all arrests for murder, constituted 7.7 percent of the Mexican-Americans and 4.4 percent of the Negro juveniles arrested. The proportion of females was greatest among white juveniles (29.2 percent) and Negro adults (17.8 percent). Overall, females constituted 15.9 percent of the whites arrested and 16.1 percent of the Negroes arrested.

The median age of those arrested was 24.5 years. Slightly more than half, 50.7 percent, were in the 15 to 24 age group. Again, there were differences among the racial groups, with whites and Mexican-Americans at the extremes and Negroes in between. The white median age of 26.7 years was 4.1 years older than that of the Mexican-American arrestees (22.6 years). The Negro median age of 25.2 years was close to that of the whites. Nearly two-thirds (62.8 percent) of the Mexican-American arrestees were in the 15 to 24 age group compared to only 48.6 percent of the Negroes and 41.2 percent of the whites.

TABLE 26
ARRESTS FOR MURDER, 1977^a
Arrestee's Race by Sex and Age

Arrestee's sex and age	Total	Arrestee's race			
		White	Mexican-American	Negro	Other
Total	2,368	694	717	884	73
Male . . .	2,055	584	662	742	67
Female . .	313	110	55	142	6
Juvenile . . .	316	72	117	114	13
Male . . .	280	51	107	109	13
Female . .	36	21	10	5	0
Adult	2,052	622	600	770	60
Male . . .	1,775	533	555	633	54
Female . .	277	89	45	137	6
Under 15 . .	41	16	21	4	0
15-19	563	120	214	212	17
20-24	638	166	236	218	18
25-29	455	130	127	186	12
30-34	265	99	59	99	8
35-39	148	53	31	56	8
40-44	97	45	12	39	1
45-49	58	26	8	20	4
50-54	43	16	5	21	1
55-59	27	16	1	10	0
60-64	13	2	1	8	2
65-69	11	3	2	5	1
70 and over .	9	2	0	6	1
Median age .	24.5	26.7	22.6	25.2	25.6

^aAs reported on the Monthly Arrest and Citation Register.

Half (50.8 percent) of the state's arrests for murder occurred in Los Angeles County. (See Table 27.) Of those reported via the Arrest and Citation Register, 62.1 percent of the Negro, 56.6 percent of the Mexican-American, and 33.3 percent of the white arrests for murder occurred in Los Angeles County. Three counties (Alameda, Los Angeles, and San Francisco) accounted for 79.6 percent of the Negro arrests reported via the Arrest and Citation Register. Mexican-American arrests were also concentrated, but to a somewhat lesser extent. Fresno, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties together accounted for 72.4 percent of the statewide Mexican-American arrests for murder. White arrests were more widely dispersed among the counties. The three "largest" counties in terms of the numbers of whites arrested for murder (Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino counties) together accounted for 47.4 percent of these arrests.

TABLE 27
ARRESTS FOR MURDER, 1977^a
Arrestee's Race by County of Arrest

County	Total	Arrestee's race			
		White	Mexican-American	Negro	Other
Total	2,368	694	717	884	73
Alameda	101	12	7	80	2
Alpine	0	0	0	0	0
Amador	0	0	0	0	0
Butte	9	8	0	1	0
Calaveras	4	1	0	0	3
Colusa	3	2	1	0	0
Contra Costa	50	18	9	23	0
Del Norte	2	1	0	0	1
El Dorado	2	2	0	0	0
Fresno	111	18	70	18	5
Glenn	3	0	3	0	0
Humboldt	3	2	1	0	0
Imperial	11	5	5	1	0
Inyo	0	0	0	0	0
Kern	41	14	22	4	1
Kings	4	3	1	0	0
Lake	1	1	0	0	0
Lassen	5	2	0	1	2
Los Angeles	1,205	231	406	549	19
Madera	5	4	1	0	0
Marin	6	2	1	2	1
Mariposa	1	1	0	0	0
Mendocino	1	1	0	0	0
Merced	17	5	9	3	0
Modoc	1	0	0	0	1
Mono	0	0	0	0	0
Monterey	38	14	13	8	3
Napa	3	2	1	0	0
Nevada	2	2	0	0	0
Orange	76	49	11	14	2
Placer	7	5	1	0	1
Plumas	0	0	0	0	0
Riverside	66	31	20	14	1
Sacramento	51	27	8	15	1
San Benito	3	0	3	0	0

TABLE 27 – Continued
ARRESTS FOR MURDER, 1977^a
Arrestee's Race by County of Arrest

County	Total	Arrestee's race			
		White	Mexican-American	Negro	Other
San Bernardino	117	49	43	25	0
San Diego . . .	32	18	9	3	2
San Francisco .	133	44	0	75	14
San Joaquin . .	32	15	4	10	3
San Luis Obispo	3	2	0	0	1
San Mateo . . .	17	7	1	8	1
Santa Barbara .	6	4	1	0	1
Santa Clara . .	61	29	23	8	1
Santa Cruz . . .	7	2	5	0	0
Shasta	8	7	0	0	1
Sierra	0	0	0	0	0
Siskiyou	4	3	0	0	1
Solano	14	5	1	8	0
Sonoma	7	4	1	2	0
Stanislaus . . .	11	5	2	4	0
Sutter	3	3	0	0	0
Tehama	0	0	0	0	0
Trinity	0	0	0	0	0
Tulare	37	19	13	2	?
Tuolumne	2	2	0	0	0
Ventura	26	4	19	2	1
Yolo	9	6	1	1	1
Yuba	7	3	1	3	0

^aAs reported on the Monthly Arrest and Citation Register.

Dispositions of Adults Arrested for Murder

This section looks at the final 1977 dispositions of 1,407 adults who were arrested for murder in 1977 or in a prior year. Discussed are the nature of the dispositions and, for those convicted, the nature of the court proceedings, the convicted offenses, and the types of sentences received.

The discussion is based upon data from the Bureau's Offender-Based Transaction Statistics (OBTS) system. The OBTS system contains data regarding the dispositions of adults arrested on felony charges in California. These data were reported to the Bureau of Criminal Statistics by law enforcement agencies, prosecutor's offices, and the courts. OBTS was implemented in California in 1973 on a pilot basis and by 1976 it had been expanded to include disposition data from 57 of the state's 58 counties (data from Santa Clara County were not included).

Table 28 shows the 1977 dispositions of 1,407 adults arrested for murder: 58.2 percent of these individuals were convicted of some offense while 41.8 percent were released, acquitted, or had their cases dismissed. In comparison to other violent crimes against persons, OBTS data show that 42.1 percent of the adult arrests for forcible rape, 49.5 percent of the adult arrests for robbery, and 53.5 percent of the adult arrests for felony assaults led to convictions for some offense.

TABLE 28
1977 DISPOSITIONS OF CASES INVOLVING ADULTS ARRESTED FOR MURDER^a

Type of disposition	Number	Percent
Total	1,407	100.0
Not convicted	588	41.8
Released by law enforcement	196	13.9
Released by prosecutor	145	10.3
Dismissed, lower court	112	8.0
Acquitted, lower court	1	0.1
Dismissed, superior court	65	4.6
Acquitted, superior court	69	4.9
Convicted	819	58.2
Lower court	16	1.1
Superior court	803	57.1

^aAs reported through the Offender-Based Transaction Statistics system on the JUS 8715 form.

Roughly speaking, out of every ten adults arrested for murder, one is released by the police and another by the prosecutor's office. Complaints are filed against the remaining eight (75.8 percent, to be precise). The courts either acquit or dismiss the cases against two of these individuals. The remaining six are convicted of some charge, almost always at the superior court level.

The police and prosecutor's offices were more likely to release younger adults arrested for murder than the older ones. Table 29 shows that 30.8 percent of those under 20 and 25.6 percent of those in their 20's were released, compared to 20.7 percent of those 30 years of age or older. However, once complaints were filed, there was little difference in the conviction rates of the various age groups shown.

TABLE 29
1977 DISPOSITIONS OF CASES INVOLVING ADULTS ARRESTED FOR MURDER
Type of Disposition by Arrestee's Age

Type of disposition	Total	Arrestee's age				
		Under 20	20-29	30-39	40 & over	Unknown
Total	1,407	133	778	295	183	18
Not convicted	588	59	334	116	72	7
Released by law enforcement	196	24	117	31	23	1
Released by prosecutor . . .	145	17	82	30	16	0
Dismissed, lower court . . .	112	9	70	20	13	0
Acquitted, lower court . . .	1	0	0	0	1	0
Dismissed, superior court . .	65	6	28	19	9	3
Acquitted, superior court . .	69	3	37	16	10	3
Convicted	819	74	444	179	111	11
Lower court	16	1	5	4	5	1
Superior court	803	73	439	175	106	10

The dispositions of adult males and females arrested for murder are shown in Table 30. Like the younger arrestees, females were more likely to be released by either the police or the prosecutor's office (31.8 percent compared to 23.1 percent of the males). But again, once the complaints were filed, the conviction rates were quite similar (76.6 percent for males and 77.4 percent for females).

TABLE 30
1977 DISPOSITIONS OF CASES INVOLVING ADULTS ARRESTED FOR MURDER
Type of Disposition by Arrestee's Sex

Type of disposition	Total	Arrestee's sex		
		Male	Female	Unknown
Total	1,407	1,199	195	13
Not convicted	588	493	92	3
Released by law enforcement	196	158	38	0
Released by prosecutor . . .	145	119	24	2
Dismissed, lower court . . .	112	99	13	0
Acquitted, lower court . . .	1	1	0	0
Dismissed, superior court . .	65	57	8	0
Acquitted, superior court . .	69	59	9	1
Convicted	819	706	103	10
Lower court	16	15	1	0
Superior court	803	691	102	10

The remainder of this section focuses on the 819 defendants who were convicted, looking first at the offenses for which they were convicted. Table 31 shows that of those convicted, 43.2 percent were convicted of murder, 35.7 percent of manslaughter, and 21.1 percent of some other offense (e.g., robbery, assault, etc.). In terms of the original 1,407 arrested for murder, 25.2 percent of those arrested were ultimately convicted of murder, 20.8 percent were convicted of manslaughter, and 12.3 percent of some other offense.

TABLE 31
1977 DISPOSITIONS OF ADULTS ARRESTED FOR MURDER
AND SUBSEQUENTLY CONVICTED
Number of Convictions by Convicted Offense

Convicted offense	Number	Percent
Total	819	100.0
Murder	354	43.2
With firearm	24	2.9
First degree	156	19.0
Second degree	174	21.2
Manslaughter	292	35.7
Other	173	21.1
Felony assault	62	7.6
Robbery	28	3.4
Other	83	10.1

It was mentioned earlier that women arrested for murder were more likely than men to be released either by the police or the prosecutor's office. Differences also existed in the offenses for which men and women were convicted, as can be seen in Table 32. Women arrested for murder and subsequently convicted were much more likely to be convicted of manslaughter than were men (and thus much less likely to be convicted of murder): 59.2 percent of the convicted women were convicted of manslaughter compared to only 32.0 percent of the convicted men.

TABLE 32
1977 DISPOSITIONS OF ADULTS ARRESTED FOR MURDER
AND SUBSEQUENTLY CONVICTED
Arrestee's Sex by Convicted Offense

Convicted offense	Total	Arrestee's sex		
		Male	Female	Unknown
Total	819	706	103	10
Murder	354	322	27	5
With firearm	24	21	3	0
First degree	156	142	11	3
Second degree	174	159	13	2
Manslaughter	292	226	61	5
Other	173	158	15	0
Felony assault	62	59	3	0
Robbery	28	27	1	0
Other	83	72	11	0

Table 33 shows the convicted offenses by age group. "Murder" was the most frequent convicted offense for all age groups except for those 40 and older. It was the convicted offense of 50.0 percent of those convicted under the age of 20 and 44.6 percent of those between 20 and 39. In contrast, only 32.7 percent of the convicted who were 40 years of age and older were convicted of murder.

Manslaughter and "other offenses" as convicted offenses evidenced opposite patterns relative to age. The relative frequency of manslaughter increased sharply with age. The majority (57.5 percent) of those convicted who were 40 years of age or older were convicted of manslaughter, while only 16.7 percent of those under 20 were convicted of manslaughter. The relative frequency of "other offenses" as the convicted offense, on the other hand, declined steadily with age: from 33.3 percent for those under 20 to 9.7 percent for those 40 years of age and older.

TABLE 33
1977 DISPOSITIONS OF ADULTS ARRESTED FOR MURDER
AND SUBSEQUENTLY CONVICTED
Arrestee's Age by Convicted Offense

Convicted offense	Total	Arrestee's age				
		Under 20	20-29	30-39	40 and over	Unknown
Total convictions	819	66	447	183	113	10
Murder	354	33	196	85	37	3
With firearm	24	0	16	4	4	0
First degree	156	20	88	40	8	0
Second degree	174	13	92	41	25	3
Manslaughter	292	11	148	66	65	2
Other	173	22	103	32	11	5
Felony assault	62	5	38	14	3	2
Robbery	28	6	20	2	0	0
Other	83	11	45	16	8	3

The manner in which guilt was determined is shown in Table 34, by convicted offense. Fifty-six percent of those convicted plead guilty to the charges against them: 12.2 percent entered an original plea of guilty and 43.8 percent originally plead "not guilty" to the charges, but later changed their plea to guilty. The guilt of the remaining 44.0 percent was determined through the trial process either by judge, by court, or by transcript.

Defendants who plead guilty tended to be convicted of lesser offenses more often than those whose guilt was determined by trials. Of those who plead guilty, 27.0 percent were convicted of murder, 44.4 percent of manslaughter, and 28.5 percent of other offenses. In contrast, 63.9 percent of those whose guilt was determined through trials were convicted of murder, 24.4 percent of manslaughter, and 11.7 percent of other offenses.

TABLE 34
1977 DISPOSITIONS OF ADULTS ARRESTED FOR MURDER
AND SUBSEQUENTLY CONVICTED
Manner in Which Guilt was Determined by Convicted Offense

Manner in which guilt was determined	Total	Convicted offense				
		Murder	Manslaughter	Robbery	Assault ^a	Other
Total	819	354	292	28	70	75
Original guilty plea . . .	100	15	47	4	19	15
Change plea, not guilty to guilty	359	109	157	17	32	44
Jury trial	305	204	66	7	16	12
Court trial	44	22	15	0	3	4
Trial by transcript . . .	11	4	7	0	0	0

^aIncludes both felony and misdemeanor assaults.

Table 35 shows the types of punishment received by adults whose arrests for murder led to convictions in 1977. Two-thirds (66.3 percent) of the convicted defendants were sent to prison, 5.9 percent to the California Youth Authority, and 23.5 percent to county jails. Only 4.0 percent of the convicted defendants were not incarcerated in one form of institution or other; these 33 individuals received straight probation.

The type of sentence received by these individuals, arrested for murder and convicted, appears to be related to several factors. One obvious factor is the convicted offense. Almost all (95.5 percent) of those convicted of murder were sent either to prison or the California Youth Authority. The percentage sent to these types of institutions was lower among those convicted of other offenses: robbery, 85.7 percent; manslaughter 55.1 percent; assault, 54.3 percent; and "other offenses" 40.0 percent.

TABLE 35
1977 DISPOSITIONS
Type of Sentence Received by Adults Arrested For
Murder and Subsequently Convicted by Convicted Offense

Type of sentence	Total		Convicted offense				
	Number	Percent	Murder	Manslaughter	Robbery	Assault ^a	Other
Total	819	100.0	354	292	28	70	75
Prison	543	66.3	326	145	17	29	26
California Youth Authority	48	5.9	12	16	7	9	4
Probation	33	4.0	2	18	0	5	8
Probation and jail	187	22.8	13	112	4	24	34
Jail	6	0.7	0	0	0	3	3
State hospital (mentally disordered sex offender) .	2	0.2	1	1	0	0	0

^aIncludes both felony and misdemeanor assaults.
Note: Percents may not total 100.0 due to rounding.

Also influencing the type of sentence received were the defendant's prior criminal record and his or her "existing criminal status." Defendants convicted in superior court and who had no prior criminal record were sent to prison or the California Youth Authority 59.3 percent of the time. Those with "miscellaneous" prior records (a prior record but no prison) were sent to prison or Youth Authority 73.9 percent of the time and those who previously had been in prison were either sentenced to prison or sent to the California Youth Authority 94.1 percent of the time. (Sixty-three percent of the defendants convicted in superior court had "miscellaneous" prior records, 18.7 percent had no prior record, and 14.7 percent had prison records. The prior criminal records of 3.6 percent were "unknown.") (See Table 36.)

TABLE 36
1977 DISPOSITIONS
Type of Sentence Received by Adults Arrested for
Murder and Subsequently Convicted in Superior Court
by Prior Criminal Record

Type of sentence	Total	Prior criminal record			
		None	Miscellaneous	Prison	Unknown
Total convicted in superior court . . .	803	150	506	118	29
Prison	543	72	343	111	17
California Youth Authority	48	17	31	0	0
Straight probation	27	10	16	0	1
Probation with jail	178	51	110	6	11
Jail	5	0	4	1	0
Fine	0	0	0	0	0
State hospital (mentally disordered sex offender)	2	0	2	0	0

The types of sentences received by the defendants convicted in superior courts in light of their "existing criminal status" are shown in Table 37. Those who were on parole at the time of their arrest were sent to prison or the California Youth Authority 94.0 percent of the time. Those who had been on probation were sent to prison or the California Youth Authority 78.3 percent of the time. Those who were "not under commitment" (i.e., those who were not in jail, a Youth Authority facility, or prison, or on probation or parole) were sent to prison or the California Youth Authority 67.9 percent of the time. (Most, 61.3 percent, of those defendants convicted in superior court were known to be "not under commitment" at the time of their arrest for murder. Twenty percent were on probation, 14.4 percent had been on parole, and 0.6 percent had been in prison. The criminal status of 3.6 percent of the defendants was unknown.)

TABLE 37
1977 DISPOSITIONS
Type of Sentence Received by Adults Arrested for Murder
and Subsequently Convicted in Superior Court by
Existing Criminal Status

Type of sentence	Total	Existing criminal status						Unknown
		Not under commitment	On probation	On parole			Serving prison term	
				CRC	Youth Authority	Prison		
Total convicted in superior court	803	492	161	8	36	72	5	29
Prison	543	294	123	7	29	68	5	17
California Youth Authority	48	40	3	0	5	0	0	0
Straight probation	27	24	2	0	0	0	0	1
Probation with jail	178	131	30	1	2	3	0	11
Jail	5	2	2	0	0	1	0	0
Fine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
State hospital (mentally disordered sex offender)	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0

JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDES

As stated in the Introduction to this report, a justifiable homicide is defined as the killing of a felon, by a private citizen or a peace officer, during the commission of a felony. These types of homicides are sometimes termed noncriminal. That is, in the eyes of the law the person responsible for the homicide was justified in killing the felon and therefore did not commit a crime. Since a justifiable homicide may be committed by either a peace officer or a private citizen, each type will be discussed separately.

Justifiable Homicides by Peace Officers

In the discussion of justifiable homicides by peace officers that follows, the data for the 1974-1977 period as a whole are shown along with the 1977 data. This is done because justifiable homicides are relatively infrequent and thus the data concerning them are subject to sharp fluctuations from one year to the next.

In 1977, 97 felons were killed by peace officers. The number has increased steadily every year since 1974, when 84 justifiable homicides by peace officers were recorded.

Table 38 shows the sex and age of the felons killed by peace officers. In 1977, only two of the 97 deceased were females. In the four years from 1974 through 1977, 96.7 percent of the felons killed were males.

The median age of the felons killed by peace officers during the past four years was 28.5 years. The median age of 28.5 years is approximately seven years older than that for all felony arrests and five and one-half years older than that for felony arrests for crimes against persons.

TABLE 38
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDES BY PEACE OFFICERS, 1974-1977
By Sex and Age of the Deceased

Sex and age of the deceased	1977	1974- 1977
Total	97	362
Male	95	350
Female	2	12
Under 15	1	1
15-19	6	35
20-24	24	83
25-29	24	89
30-34	16	59
35-39	9	30
40-44	4	16
45-49	4	15
50-54	5	11
55-59	1	7
60-64	3	9
65-69	0	6
Unknown	0	1
Median age . . .	28.6	28.5

The racial distribution of the felons killed by peace officers is presented in Table 39. From 1974 through 1977, whites were the largest racial group, accounting for 43.4 percent of the deceased. Negroes, the second largest group, constituted 37.3 percent of the deceased while Mexican-Americans constituted 17.1 percent. Also shown, for comparison purposes, are the racial distributions of those arrested for all felony crimes and for felony "crimes against persons" in California during 1977.

TABLE 39
RACIAL DISTRIBUTIONS OF FELONS JUSTIFIABLY KILLED BY
PEACE OFFICERS, 1974-1977,
AND OF PERSONS ARRESTED FOR FELONIES IN 1977

Race	Felons justifiably killed by peace officers				Persons arrested for felonies in 1977 ^a			
	1977		1974-1977		All felonies		Crimes against persons	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	97	100.0	362	100.0	315,263	100.0	69,403	100.0
White	44	45.4	157	43.4	154,090	48.9	25,741	37.1
Mexican-American	19	19.6	62	17.1	67,114	21.3	18,354	26.4
Negro	31	32.0	135	37.3	87,833	27.9	23,509	33.9
Other	3	3.1	4	1.1	6,226	2.0	1,799	2.6
Unknown	0	0.0	4	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0

^aFelony arrests as reported on the Monthly Arrest and Citation Register.
Note: Percents may not total 100.0 due to rounding.

Very seldom was the weapon used by a peace officer to kill a felon anything other than a firearm, as can be seen in Table 40. In 1977, firearms were used in all cases, while in the past four years they were known to have been used in 354 out of the 362 cases. Usually, the type of firearm used was a handgun; between 1974 and 1977, handguns were used in approximately three-fourths of the justifiable homicides by peace officers.

TABLE 40
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDES BY PEACE OFFICERS, 1974-1977
By Officer's Type of Weapon

Officer's type of weapon	1977	1974-1977
Total	97	362
Handgun	77	268
Rifle	0	14
Shotgun	18	55
Gun - unknown	2	17
Knife	0	1
Other	0	6
Unknown	0	1

The circumstances surrounding the justifiable homicides by peace officers in 1976 and 1977 are presented in Table 41. In 1977, nearly half (45.4 percent) stemmed from an attack by the deceased on a peace officer. Another 18.6 percent of the deceased felons were resisting arrest at the time of the shooting.

TABLE 41
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDES BY PEACE OFFICERS, 1976-1977
By Precipitating Event

Precipitating event	1977	1976-1977
Total	97	191
Felon attacking peace officer	44	91
Felon attacking civilian	2	3
Felon attempting flight	6	13
Felon in commission of a crime	26	52
Felon resisting arrest	18	28
Not stated	1	4

Table 42 presents the locations where the justifiable homicides by peace officers occurred. The most frequent location was "highway or street." Between 1974 and 1977, 43.7 percent of the location-known incidents occurred there. In 1977, the percentage was 61.4. The victim's residence, the most common site of willful homicides, was the second most frequent site of justifiable homicides by peace officers, with 19.6 percent of the 1974-1977 incidents occurring there.

TABLE 42
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDES BY PEACE OFFICERS, 1974-1977
By Location of the Justifiable Homicide

Location of the justifiable homicide	1977	1974-1977
Total	97	362
Victim's residence	10	65
Other residence	6	26
Hotel/motel	1	5
Liquor business	5	11
Other business	5	31
Parking lot	2	11
Highway/street	54	145
Field/park	0	5
In vehicle	3	22
Other	2	11
Unknown	9	30

Justifiable Homicides by Private Citizens

Because of extensive changes in data collection methods and coding procedures, data for 1974 are not included in the discussion of justifiable homicides by private citizens. Data for 1975 through 1977 will be displayed along with the 1977 data.

In 1977, 44 felons were killed by private citizens. This is somewhat below the 1975 and 1976 totals of 61 and 65.

Like the felons killed by peace officers, nearly all felons killed by private citizens were males. Table 43 shows that 168 of the 170 felons killed by private citizens over the past three years were males. All 44 of the felons killed in 1977 were males.

Also shown in Table 43 are the age distributions of the felons killed by private citizens. These individuals tended to be somewhat younger than the felons killed by peace officers. Their median age was 25.5 years.

TABLE 43
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDES BY PRIVATE CITIZENS, 1975-1977
By Sex and Age of the Deceased

Sex and age of the deceased	1977	1975-1977
Total	44	170
Male	44	168
Female	0	2
Under 15	1	1
15-19	9	27
20-24	18	53
25-29	9	43
30-34	2	16
35-39	2	10
40-44	1	6
45-49	1	3
50-54	0	4
55-59	0	2
60-64	0	0
65-69	0	2
70 and over	0	1
Unknown	1	2
Median age	23.3	25.4

The felons killed by private citizens differed markedly in their racial composition from those felons who were killed by peace officers. (See Table 44.) Whereas whites made up the largest racial group of felons killed by peace officers, over half (57.6 percent between 1975 and 1977) of felons killed by private citizens were Negroes.

TABLE 44
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDES BY PRIVATE CITIZENS, 1975-1977
By Race of the Deceased

Race of the deceased	1977	1975-1977
Total	44	170
White	11	40
Mexican-American	7	24
Negro	23	98
Other	2	6
Unknown	1	2

The type of weapons used in justifiable homicides by private citizens is shown in Table 45, Private citizens did use weapons other than firearms to a somewhat greater extent than did peace officers. However, again the use of firearms predominated. Handguns were known to have been used in 74.1 percent of the cases from 1975 through 1977 and firearms in general were used in 91.8 percent of the cases during the three-year period.

TABLE 45
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDES BY PRIVATE CITIZENS, 1975-1977
By Type of Weapon

Type of weapon	1977	1975-1977
Total	44	170
Handgun	36	126
Rifle	2	9
Shotgun	4	16
Gun - unknown	1	5
Knife	0	9
Club	1	4
Hands, fists, feet, etc.	0	1

As was the case in justifiable homicides by peace officers, precipitating event information is presented for 1976 and 1977 only. (See Table 46.) Three out of four felons (74.3 percent) were killed in the commission of crimes.

TABLE 46
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDES BY PRIVATE CITIZENS, 1976-1977
By Precipitating Event

Precipitating event	1977	1976-1977
Total	44	109
Felon attacking peace officer	0	0
Felon attacking civilian	4	17
Felon attempting flight	0	4
Felon in commission of a crime	34	81
Felon resisting arrest	6	6
Not stated	0	1

Table 47 shows the locations where the justifiable homicides of private citizens occurred. Of those cases where the location was reported, the majority occurred either in the perpetrator's residence or in a business establishment. Between 1975 and 1977, 51 justifiable homicides by private citizens occurred at each of these locations. Together these two sites accounted for 69.4 percent of the location-known total.

TABLE 47
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDES BY PRIVATE CITIZENS, 1975-1977
By Location of the Justifiable Homicide

Location of the justifiable homicide	1977	1975-1977
Total	44	170
Victim's residence	1	13
Perpetrator's residence	11	51
Other residence	1	8
Hotel/motel	0	3
Liquor business	7	15
Other business	12	36
Parking lot	1	3
Highway/street	6	15
In vehicle	0	2
Other	1	1
Unknown	4	23

APPENDIX

TABLE A-1
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1974-1977
Precipitating Event by Location of Homicide

Location of homicide	Total	Precipitating event							
		Argument	Robbery	Rape	Drug-related	Burglary	Gang fight	Other	Unknown
1977	2,481	1,249	311	61	45	51	90	141	533
Victim's residence	830	481	92	19	16	41	7	26	148
Other residence	258	177	9	4	5	4	17	20	22
Hotel/motel	46	23	7	2	2	0	0	5	7
Liquor business	86	63	16	0	0	0	0	4	3
Other business	98	21	60	1	0	0	0	0	16
Parking lot	93	55	9	0	1	0	8	4	16
Highway/street	333	154	44	6	4	1	28	23	73
Field/park	153	37	13	10	3	0	6	15	69
In vehicle	141	41	26	4	5	2	12	13	38
Other	118	41	14	8	2	2	2	14	35
Unknown	325	156	21	7	7	1	10	17	106
1974-1977	8,861	4,523	1,120	206	238	158	262	613	1,741
Victim's residence	3,095	1,801	295	80	68	127	17	227	480
Other residence	890	633	35	11	37	8	25	64	77
Hotel/motel	189	79	32	8	10	2	0	22	36
Liquor business	342	241	59	0	2	3	2	14	21
Other business	393	103	214	1	3	5	8	16	43
Parking lot	292	168	35	4	2	1	14	11	57
Highway/street	1,295	617	195	11	23	3	108	77	261
Field/park	529	127	52	43	19	0	13	36	239
In vehicle	488	139	91	9	22	2	29	47	149
Other	380	145	34	19	9	3	13	41	116
Unknown	968	470	78	20	43	4	33	58	262

TABLE A-2
WILLFUL HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1974-1977
Precipitating Event by Victim-Offender Relationship

Victim-offender relationship	Total	Precipitating event							
		Argument	Robbery	Rape	Drug-related	Burglary	Gang fight	Other	Unknown
1977	2,481	1,249	311	61	45	51	90	141	533
Friend/associate	855	611	28	5	15	11	85	50	50
Spouse	193	178	0	1	0	0	0	8	6
Parent/child	108	97	0	1	2	0	0	1	7
Brother/sister	25	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other relative	32	22	1	0	0	1	0	4	4
Peace officer	13	2	2	0	1	1	0	7	0
Stranger	221	69	82	13	0	14	1	20	22
Unknown	1,034	246	198	41	27	24	4	51	443
1974-1977	8,861	4,523	1,120	206	238	158	262	613	1,741
Friend/associate	3,390	2,378	138	40	156	21	213	210	234
Spouse	898	819	1	2	2	0	0	63	11
Parent/child	402	340	1	2	4	0	1	44	10
Brother/sister	83	72	3	0	0	0	0	4	4
Other relative	129	109	3	0	1	1	0	11	4
Peace officer	40	6	6	0	2	3	0	22	1
Stranger	1,198	260	526	56	8	74	23	124	127
Unknown	2,721	539	442	106	65	59	25	135	1,350

TABLE A-3

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
 DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
 BUREAU OF CRIMINAL STATISTICS
 OFFENDER BASED TRANSACTION STATISTICS

1977 DISPOSITIONS OF ADULT FELONY ARRESTS
 IN 67 COUNTIES (EXCLUDING SANTA CLARA)
 FOR MURDER OFFENSES

FELONY ARREST DISPOSITION SUMMARY
 POLICE AND PROSECUTOR PROCESSING

TOTAL ARREST DISPOSITIONS

1,407
 100.0%

P O L I C E					T O L O W E R / S U P E R I O R C O U R T (A)		T O S U P E R I O R C O U R T (B)		P R O S E C U T O R	
*****					*****		*****		*****	
* WARRANTS * 127 * 9.0% *					* INDICTMENTS * 55 * 3.9% *		* COMPLAINT REQUESTED * 1,029 * 73.1% *			
* RELEASE * 849B PC * 196 * 13.9% *							* COMPLAINT DENIED * 145 * 10.3% *		* COMPLAINT GRANTED * 884 * 62.8% *	
*****					*****		*****		*****	
* INSUFF EVID * 71 * 5.0%	* EXONERATED * 43 * 3.1%	* VICTIM REFUSES TO PROSECUTE * 0 * 0.0%	* FURTHER INVEST * 59 * 4.2%	* UNSPFC OR OTHER * 23 * 1.6%			* MISDEMEANOR COMPLAINT * 17 * 1.2% *		* FELONY COMPLAINT * 867 * 61.6% *	
							* TO LOWER COURT (C) *		* TO LOWER COURT (C) *	
*****					*****		*****		*****	
* LACK OF CORPUS * 32 * 2.3% *					* INTEREST OF JUSTICE * 4 * 0.3% *		* WITNESS UNAVAILABLE * 0 * 0.0% *		* ILLEGAL SEARCH * 0 * 0.0% *	
* LACK OF PROBABLE CAUSE * 70 * 5.0% *					* VICTIM REFUSES TO PROSECUTE * 0 * 0.0% *		* COMBINED WITH OTHER COUNTS * 0 * 0.0% *		* UNKNOWN, OTHER * 39 * 2.8% *	

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(A) WARRANTS CONTINUED ON PAGES 58 AND 59
 (B) GRAND JURY INDICTMENTS CONTINUED ON PAGE 59
 (C) LOWER COURT PROCESSING CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

TABLE A-3 - CONTINUED

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
 DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
 BUREAU OF CRIMINAL STATISTICS
 OFFENDER BASED TRANSACTION STATISTICS
 JUNE 21, 1978

1977 DISPOSITIONS OF ADULT FELONY ARRESTS
 IN 57 COUNTIES (EXCLUDING SANTA CLARA)
 FOR MURDER OFFENSES

FELONY ARREST DISPOSITION SUMMARY
 LOWER COURT PROCESSING

LOWER COURT DISPOSITIONS(A) (B)

1,011
 71.9%

MISD. COMPLAINTS(A)
 17
 1.2%

FELONY COMPLAINTS(B)
 994
 70.6%

MISD. COMPLAINTS(A)						FELONY COMPLAINTS(B)																										
CONVICTED			NOT CONVICTED			TO SUPERIOR COURT(C)			NOT CONVICTED			CONVICTED																				
12 0.9%			5 0.4%			882 62.7%			108 7.7%			4 0.3%																				
DISMISSED			ACQUITTED			JUV. COURT			DISMISSED			ACQUITTED			JUV. COURT																	
5 0.4%			0 0.0%			0 0.0%			107 7.6%			1 0.1%			0 0.0%																	
GUILTY PLEA			NOLD COURT			JURY			HELD TO ANSWER			CERTIFIED GUILTY PLEA			GUILTY PLEA			NOLD COURT			JURY											
9 0.6%			3 0.2%			0 0.0%			0 0.0%			852 60.6%			30 2.1%			4 0.3%			0 0.0%			0 0.0%								
STRAIGHT PROB			PROB + JAIL			COUNTY JAIL			FINE			OTHER			STRAIGHT PROB			PROB + JAIL			COUNTY JAIL			FINE			OTHER					
0 0.0%			4 0.3%			7 0.5%			1 0.1%			0 0.0%			0 0.0%			0 0.0%			2 0.1%			2 0.1%			0 0.0%			0 0.0%		

58

(A) INCLUDES 17 MISDEMEANOR COMPLAINTS GRANTED AND
 (B) INCLUDES 867 FELONY COMPLAINTS GRANTED AND
 (C) SUPERIOR COURT PROCESSING CONTINUED ON PAGE 59

127 0 MISDEMEANOR WARRANTS FROM PAGE 57
 FELONY WARRANTS FROM PAGE 57

TABLE A-3 - CONTINUED

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
 DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
 BUREAU OF CRIMINAL STATISTICS
 OFFENDER BASED TRANSACTION STATISTICS
 JUNE 21, 197*

1977 DISPOSITIONS OF ADULT FELONY ARRESTS
 IN 57 COUNTIES (EXCLUDING SANTA CLARA)
 FOR MURDER OFFENSES

FELONY ARREST DISPOSITION SUMMARY
 SUPERIOR COURT PROCESSING

SUPERIOR COURT DISPOSITIONS(A)

937
 66.6%

*****				*****						*****	
* NOT CONVICTED										* CONVICTED	
* 134										* 803	
* 9.5%										* 57.1%	
*****				*****						*****	
* DISMISSED	* ACQUITTED	* NOT GUILTY INSANE	* TO JUV. COURT								
* 6*	* 62	* 7	* 0								
* 4.6%	* 4.4%	* 0.5%	* 0.0%								
*****				*****						*****	
				* GUILTY PLEA	* NOT GUILTY TO GUILTY	* NOLO CONDO	* JURY	* COURT	* TRANSCRIPT		
				* 50	* 359	* 34	* 305	* 44	* 11		
				* 3.6%	* 25.5%	* 2.4%	* 21.7%	* 3.1%	* 0.8%		
*****				*****						*****	
* DEATH	* STATE PRISON	* CYA	* STRAIGHT PROBATION	* PROBATION AND JAIL	* COUNTY JAIL	* FINE	* TO CRC	* TO STATE HOSPITAL- MDSO	* OTHER		
* 0	* 543	* 48	* 27	* 178	* 5	* 0	* 0	* 2	* 0		
* 0.0%	* 38.6%	* 3.4%	* 1.9%	* 12.7%	* 0.4%	* 0.0%	* 0.0%	* 0.1%	* 0.0%		

59

(A) INCLUDES

882 DEPENDANTS RECEIVED FROM LOWER COURT (PAGE 58) AND

55 GRAND JURY INDICTMENTS FROM PAGE 67

