Serial Killer Statistics

The tables in this report are based on information from the Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database. The purpose of the database is to gather data so that researchers and teachers will have accurate information about serial killers. In 2012, Radford University partnered with Florida Gulf Coast University to ensure that the database is continually updated and that summary reports will be made available on an annual basis.

As of September 4, 2016, the database contains information on 4,743 serial killers and 13,105 victims[1] of serial killers. The statistics in this report are based on the serial killer definition derived by the FBI at its 2005 symposium in San Antonio, TX[2]: *The unlawful killing of two or more victims by the same offender(s), in separate events*.

When citing information from this report, the following reference should be used:

Aamodt, M. G. (2016, September 4). *Serial killer statistics*. Retrieved (insert date of retrieval) from http://maamodt.asp.radford.edu/serial killer information center/project description.htm

Questions about the database or the statistics in this report can be addressed to Dr. Mike Aamodt at Radford University, maamodt@radford.edu

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[1] The victim information contains mostly victims from the U.S. and Canada. At some point, individual victims from other countries will be added to the database.
[2] https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/serial-murder#two

Serial Killer Frequency by Decade
(Decade of First Kill)

Decade	US	International	Total
1900	49	23	72
1910	52	23	75
1920	62	41	103
1930	55	31	86
1940	55	45	100
1950	72	41	113
1960	217	76	293
1970	605	160	765
1980	768	217	985
1990	669	322	991
2000	371	295	666
2010	117	113	230

Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database

Updated   9/4/2016

These tables can be used to answer the question, "In any given year, how many serial killers are active in the United States?"

Year	Definition of Serial Killer	
	2 or More	3 or More
1920	16	15
1921	20	17
1922	10	10
1923	22	20
1924	11	9
1925	13	10
1926	15	9
1927	12	11
1928	12	10
1929	9	7
1930	8	7
1931	13	11
1932	13	9
1933	15	13
1934	11	7
1935	15	14
1936	6	7
1937	11	10
1938	10	11
1939	13	10
1940	10	9
1941	8	8
1942	6	5
1943	9	10
1944	11	12
1945	12	12
1946	14	12
1947	9	8
1948	13	9
1949	10	6
1950	14	11
1951	14	13
1952	12	10
1953	14	10
1954	14	11
1955	16	10
1956	17	13
1957	18	13

Year	Definition of Serial Killer	
	2 or More	3 or More
1958	17	13
1959	12	7
1960	23	17
1961	24	17
1962	19	15
1963	29	23
1964	29	21
1965	28	18
1966	45	35
1967	26	21
1968	34	27
1969	50	39
1970	52	38
1971	59	49
1972	78	59
1973	89	72
1974	109	80
1975	102	74
1976	90	61
1977	117	84
1978	138	94
1979	119	95
1980	125	93
1981	144	105
1982	128	92
1983	118	83
1984	147	103
1985	155	116
1986	163	110
1987	189	128
1988	137	88
1989	148	101
1990	142	99
1991	147	91
1992	153	109
1993	148	96
1994	151	108
1995	127	84
1996	129	84
1997	113	76

Year	Definition of Serial Killer	
	2 or More	3 or More
1998	122	79
1999	102	65
2000	85	55
2001	86	55
2002	83	58
2003	82	54
2004	72	46
2005	80	67
2006	76	58
2007	83	61
2008	66	40
2009	75	44
2010	64	38
2011	61	30
2012	62	28
2013	43	27
2014	40	20
2015	30	15

Yearly Average by Decade

Decade	Definition of Serial Killer	
	2 or More	3 or More
1950-1959	15	11
1960-1969	31	23
1970-1979	95	71
1980-1989	145	102
1990-1999	133	89
2000-2009	79	54
2010-2015	54	29

Updated 9/4/2016

Note: This table only contains U.S. serial killers that have been caught and identified.
     Numbers represent the number of separate serial killers who killed at least one person
        that year.
     The number of kills in the definition represents the total number of kills; not the number
        in a given year.

U.S. Serial Killers
Percentage by Race and Decade

Individual, Team, & Organizational

Decade	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American
			Race		
1900	72.9	25.0	0.0	0.0	2.1
1910	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
1920	78.3	18.3	1.7	0.0	1.7
1930	69.1	30.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
1940	66.7	27.8	1.9	1.9	1.9
1950	69.4	27.8	2.8	0.0	0.0
1960	68.9	28.3	1.4	0.0	1.4
1970	60.9	33.6	4.2	0.3	1.0
1980	53.0	36.8	7.8	0.8	1.7
1990	41.4	47.1	9.0	2.0	0.5
2000	32.3	54.4	11.6	1.1	0.5
2010	30.8	59.8	8.5	0.9	0.0
TOTAL	51.7	39.8	6.7	0.9	1.0

Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database
Updated   9/4/2016

Frequency of Serial Killers
Gender by Decade

U.S. and International

Decade	N		Percent	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1900	45	27	62.5	37.5
1910	49	26	65.3	34.7
1920	68	35	66.0	34.0
1930	71	15	82.6	17.4
1940	85	15	85.0	15.0
1950	94	19	83.2	16.8
1960	267	26	91.1	8.9
1970	723	42	94.5	5.5
1980	915	70	92.9	7.1
1990	922	69	93.0	7.0
2000	599	67	89.9	10.1
2010	214	16	93.0	7.0
TOTAL	4200	541	88.6	11.4

Note: Total includes decades not listed on this chart

Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database

September 4, 2016

Frequency of Serial Killers
Gender by Decade

United States Only

Decade	N		Percent	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1900	36	13	73.5	26.5
1910	36	16	69.2	30.8
1920	43	19	69.4	30.6
1930	48	7	87.3	12.7
1940	48	7	87.3	12.7
1950	65	7	90.3	9.7
1960	197	20	90.8	9.2
1970	572	33	94.5	5.5
1980	719	49	93.6	6.4
1990	633	36	94.6	5.4
2000	339	32	91.4	8.6
2010	110	7	94.0	6.0
TOTAL	2910	294	90.8	9.2

Note: Total includes decades not listed on this chart

Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database

September 4, 2016

Frequency of Serial Killers
Gender by Decade

International Only

Decade	N		Percent	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1900	9	14	39.1	60.9
1910	13	10	56.5	43.5
1920	25	16	61.0	39.0
1930	23	8	74.2	25.8
1940	37	8	82.2	17.8
1950	29	12	70.7	29.3
1960	70	6	92.1	7.9
1970	151	9	94.4	5.6
1980	196	21	90.3	9.7
1990	289	33	89.8	10.2
2000	260	35	88.1	11.9
2010	104	9	92.0	8.0
TOTAL	1290	247	83.9	16.1

Note: Total includes decades not listed on this chart

Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database

September 4, 2016

A Problem With The Typical Profile

As can be seen in this table, the commonly cited profile of a serial killer in the U.S. being a white, male, in his mid to late twenties is not accurate.

Characteristic	All Decades	1990-2016
Male	90.8%	93.5%
White	52.5%	37.4%
Mid-to-late twenties	26.7%	24.1%
White, male	45.1%	32.8%
White, male, mid-to-late twenties	12.2%	7.7%

Note: Only U.S. serial killers included in this chart

Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database

September 4, 2016

Motive	N	US	Int	% All	% US
Enjoyment (thrill, lust, power)	1573	958	615	36.86%	31.76%
Financial Gain	1263	909	354	29.59%	30.14%
Anger	699	545	154	16.38%	18.07%
Multiple Motives	344	296	48	8.06%	9.81%
Gang Activity/Criminal Enterprise	206	190	16	4.83%	6.30%
Avoid Arrest	49	42	7	1.15%	1.39%
Cult	40	22	18	0.94%	0.73%
Convenience	48	19	29	1.12%	0.63%
Hallucinations	25	20	5	0.59%	0.66%
Attention	21	15	6	0.49%	0.50%
TOTAL	4268	3016	1252	100.00%	100.00%

Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database
September 4, 2016

Serial Killer IQ

Basic Statistics

N	271
Average IQ	94.5
Median IQ	86.0
Lowest	54
Highest	186

Killing Method	**N**	**Average**
Bomb	3	140.3
Strangle/Bludgeon	8	108.8
Strangle/Shoot	6	105.8
Poison	1	100.0
Strangle	41	96.7
Stab/Shoot	26	95.0
Stab	25	92.3
Shoot	61	90.7
Strangle/Stab	14	90.2
Bludgeon/Shoot	11	87.1
Bludgeon/Stab	11	85.5
Bludgeon	10	79.1

Raped Victims		
No	143	94.3
Yes	127	93.9

Type		
Organized	128	99.3
Disorganized	71	91.3
Mixed	11	102.3

Number of Kills		
Two	72	89.1
Three	60	94.3
Four	29	92.6
Five	21	98.6
More than five	89	98.6

Necrophillia		
No	245	94.1
Yes	26	98.2

Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database
Updated   September 4, 2016

	U.S.			U.S. & International		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Overall N	1,460	254	1,714	1,854	838	2,692
No Military	79.2%	100.0%	82.3%	79.0%	99.8%	83.1%
Military	20.8%	0.0%	17.7%	21.0%	0.2%	16.9%
Army	51.0%			57.7%		
Navy	20.6%			18.1%		
Air Force	9.4%			9.3%		
Marines	18.5%			14.6%		
Coast Guard	0.3%			0.3%		

Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database
September 4, 2016

Serial Killers Active While in Military	Country
Armstrong, John Eric	US
Bunday, Thomas Richard	US
Christopher, Joseph G.	US
Copeland, Michael	England
Cummins, Gordon Frederick	England
Elton, Dwayne W.	US
Fowler, George William	US
Grant, Gary Gene	US
Gray, Ronald Adrian	US
Grimson, Allan	England
Hance, William Henry	US
Joubert, John	US
Korn, Donald	US
Latham, James Douglas	US
Leonski, Edward Joseph	Australia
McKnight, Anthony	US
McManus, Fred Eugene	US
Percy, Derek Ernst	Australia
Shrader, Marcus III	US
Torrez, Jorge Avila	US
Valenti, Richard Raymond	US
Williams, David Russell	Canada
Yershov, Vadim	Russia
York, George R.	US

Serial Killers by Country

Country	Number of Serial Killers	% of Serial Killers	Country's Share of World Population	Ratio
United States	3,204	67.58	4.35%	15.53
England	166	3.50	0.71%	4.92
S. Africa	117	2.47	0.74%	3.34
Canada	106	2.24	0.49%	4.59
Italy	97	2.05	0.80%	2.55
Japan	96	2.02	1.70%	1.19
Germany	85	1.79	1.08%	1.66
Australia	81	1.71	0.33%	5.23
India	80	1.69	17.81%	0.09
Russia	73	1.54	1.93%	0.80
France	71	1.50	0.87%	1.72
China	57	1.20	18.56%	0.06
Mexico	37	0.78	1.73%	0.45
Brazil	27	0.57	2.81%	0.20
Austria	22	0.46	0.12%	4.03
Hungary	20	0.42	0.13%	3.20
Spain	17	0.36	0.62%	0.58
Poland	15	0.32	0.52%	0.61
Scotland	15	0.32	0.07%	4.45
Netherlands	12	0.25	0.23%	1.11
Sweden	12	0.25	0.13%	1.91

Caution should be taken in reviewing this table as the number of serial killers by country is a function of the number of actual killers, the number caught, and the number reported by police or the media

Note: Serial killers operating in multiple countries are not included

Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database

September 4, 2016

Characteristics of U.S. Serial Killer Victims

	N	%
Sex		
Female	5,796	51.41%
Male	5,478	48.59%
Race		
White	6,678	67.41%
Black	2,345	24.94%
Hispanic	670	7.22%
Asian	166	1.80%
Native American	48	0.52%
Sex & Race		
White Female	3,646	37.14%
White Male	3,004	30.60%
Black Female	1,172	11.94%
Black Male	1,160	11.82%
Hispanic Male	421	4.29%
Hispanic Female	249	2.54%
Asian Male	97	0.99%
Asian Female	69	0.70%
Age		
Average	33.78	
Median	29.00	
Mode	22.00	

Actual Age	N	%	Cumulative %
<1	147	1.35%	1.35%
1	50	0.46%	1.81%
2	55	0.51%	2.32%
3	56	0.52%	2.84%
4	54	0.50%	3.33%
5	51	0.47%	3.80%
6	52	0.48%	4.28%
7	55	0.51%	4.79%
8	62	0.57%	5.36%
9	90	0.83%	6.19%
10	68	0.63%	6.82%
11	72	0.66%	7.48%
12	103	0.95%	8.43%
13	121	1.11%	9.54%
14	157	1.45%	10.99%
15	214	1.97%	12.96%
16	245	2.26%	15.22%
17	280	2.58%	17.80%
18	343	3.16%	20.96%
19	363	3.34%	24.30%
20	321	2.96%	27.26%
21	335	3.09%	30.34%
22	363	3.34%	33.69%
23	289	2.66%	36.35%
24	302	2.78%	39.13%
25	282	2.60%	41.73%

Characteristics of U.S. Serial Killer Victims

Actual Age	N	%	Cumulative %
26	286	2.63%	44.36%
27	278	2.56%	46.92%
28	216	1.99%	48.91%
29	262	2.41%	51.33%
30	255	2.35%	53.68%
31	199	1.83%	55.51%
32	199	1.83%	57.34%
33	180	1.66%	59.00%
34	189	1.74%	60.74%
35	211	1.94%	62.68%
36	192	1.77%	64.45%
37	171	1.58%	66.03%
38	178	1.64%	67.67%
39	149	1.37%	69.04%
40	156	1.44%	70.48%
41	129	1.19%	71.67%
42	139	1.28%	72.95%
43	122	1.12%	74.07%
44	119	1.10%	75.17%
45	130	1.20%	76.36%
46	123	1.13%	77.50%
47	109	1.00%	78.50%
48	99	0.91%	79.41%
49	82	0.76%	80.17%
50	112	1.03%	81.20%
51	85	0.78%	81.98%
52	100	0.92%	82.90%
53	93	0.86%	83.76%
54	76	0.70%	84.46%
55	75	0.69%	85.15%
56	69	0.64%	85.79%
57	69	0.64%	86.42%
58	66	0.61%	87.03%
59	70	0.64%	87.68%
60	79	0.73%	88.40%
61	57	0.53%	88.93%
62	63	0.58%	89.51%
63	60	0.55%	90.06%
64	59	0.54%	90.60%
65	76	0.70%	91.30%
66	43	0.40%	91.70%
67	57	0.53%	92.23%
68	53	0.49%	92.71%
69	56	0.52%	93.23%
70	33	0.30%	93.53%
71	36	0.33%	93.87%
72	62	0.57%	94.44%
73	42	0.39%	94.82%
74	39	0.36%	95.18%
75	44	0.41%	95.59%

Actual Age	N	%	Cumulative %
76	37	0.34%	95.93%
77	29	0.27%	96.20%
78	38	0.35%	96.55%
79	42	0.39%	96.93%
80	37	0.34%	97.27%
81	46	0.42%	97.70%
82	37	0.34%	98.04%
83	34	0.31%	98.35%
84	21	0.19%	98.54%
85	33	0.30%	98.85%
86	24	0.22%	99.07%
87	23	0.21%	99.28%
88	13	0.12%	99.40%
89	17	0.16%	99.56%
90	15	0.14%	99.70%
91	12	0.11%	99.81%
92	5	0.05%	99.85%
93	2	0.02%	99.87%
94	4	0.04%	99.91%
95	4	0.04%	99.94%
96	0	0.00%	99.94%
97	3	0.03%	99.97%
98	1	0.01%	99.98%
99	1	0.01%	99.99%
100	1	0.01%	100.00%
TOTAL	10,856		

September 4, 2016
Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database

Characteristics of U.S. Serial Killer Victims

Victims By State	N	Victim Rank	2010 Population Rank	Difference
California	1,628	1	1	0
Texas	893	2	2	0
Florida	845	3	4	1
Illinois	629	4	5	1
New York	628	5	3	-2
Ohio	433	6	7	1
Pennsylvania	420	7	6	-1
Washington	390	8	13	5
Michigan	381	9	8	-1
Georgia	365	10	9	-1
Indiana	341	11	15	4
Missouri	311	12	18	6
Louisiana	300	13	25	12
North Carolina	266	14	10	-4
Virginia	238	15	12	-3
New Jersey	207	16	11	-5
Massachusetts	195	17	14	-3
Oklahoma	195	18	28	10
Maryland	185	19	19	0
Tennessee	179	20	17	-3
District of Columbia	170	21	50	29
Oregon	170	21	27	6
Alabama	164	23	23	0
South Carolina	162	24	24	0
Arizona	156	25	16	-9
Colorado	155	26	22	-4
Kansas	153	27	33	6
Kentucky	134	28	26	-2
Connecticut	122	29	29	0
Wisconsin	118	30	20	-10
Nevada	105	31	35	4
Arkansas	103	32	32	0
Utah	77	33	34	1
Nebraska	76	34	38	4
Mississippi	75	35	31	-4
Minnesota	68	36	21	-15
New Mexico	64	37	36	-1
Iowa	53	38	30	-8
Alaska	51	39	47	8
Montana	41	40	44	4

Victims By State	N	Victim Rank	2010 Population Rank	Difference
Idaho	37	41	39	-2
West Virginia	37	41	37	-4
Maine	30	43	41	-2
Wyoming	27	44	51	7
Rhode Island	25	45	43	-2
Delaware	14	46	45	-1
North Dakota	11	47	48	1
Vermont	11	47	49	2
New Hampshire	10	49	42	-7
Hawaii	10	49	40	-9
South Dakota	7	51	46	-5
TOTAL	11,465			

Method by Which Victim Was Killed

Method of Death	N	Percent
Shot	4,259	42.96%
Strangled	2,153	21.71%
Stabbed	1,471	14.84%
Bludgeoned	910	9.18%
Poisoned	714	7.20%
Axed	145	1.46%
Drowned	94	0.95%
Burned	63	0.64%
Smothered	61	0.62%
Run over	19	0.19%
Drug overdose	16	0.16%
Neglect & Abuse	10	0.10%
TOTAL	9,915	

Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database
September 4, 2016

Number of Serial Killer Victims by Year

1900-1939			1940-1979			1980 - present		
Year	U.S.	Canada	Year	U.S.	Canada	Year	U.S.	Canada
1900	24	0	1940	12	0	1980	306	3
1901	17	1	1941	16	0	1981	274	17
1902	20	0	1942	9	0	1982	242	6
1903	20	0	1943	13	0	1983	252	4
1904	15	0	1944	18	1	1984	293	7
1905	18	0	1945	21	2	1985	270	9
1906	30	0	1946	24	5	1986	316	3
1907	19	0	1947	14	0	1987	**389**	8
1908	17	0	1948	19	0	1988	241	4
1909	24	1	1949	13	0	1989	258	13
1910	16	0	1950	16	0	1990	244	7
1911	66	0	1951	25	0	1991	267	10
1912	61	0	1952	13	0	1992	264	12
1913	17	0	1953	29	0	1993	261	3
1914	20	0	1954	23	0	1994	251	5
1915	8	0	1955	20	0	1995	242	16
1916	12	0	1956	28	2	1996	207	7
1917	16	0	1957	28	1	1997	216	14
1918	17	0	1958	31	0	1998	185	11
1919	20	0	1959	20	0	1999	187	13
1920	29	0	1960	41	0	2000	152	9
1921	49	1	1961	39	0	2001	133	9
1922	19	0	1962	34	3	2002	183	4
1923	42	0	1963	45	4	2003	148	7
1924	11	0	1964	49	0	2004	153	6
1925	22	0	1965	50	2	2005	144	5
1926	43	0	1966	88	1	2006	139	7
1927	16	2	1967	41	1	2007	149	9
1928	20	0	1968	59	0	2008	117	6
1929	13	0	1969	91	4	2009	133	8
1930	13	0	1970	92	5	2010	129	13
1931	19	0	1971	135	3	2011	91	5
1932	19	0	1972	145	2	2012	101	12
1933	21	0	1973	210	7	2013	70	6
1934	19	0	1974	252	10	2014	71	3
1935	24	0	1975	172	10	2015	57	8
1936	14	0	1976	165	1	2016	25	0
1937	20	0	1977	220	5	2017	0	0
1938	18	0	1978	259	6	2018	0	0
1939	20	0	1979	234	5	2019	0	0

Source: Radford/FGCU Serial Killer Database
Updated: 9/4/2016

Note: The numbers for 2014-2016 should be interpreted with caution as there is normally a lag
           between a murder and the identification of the serial killer.