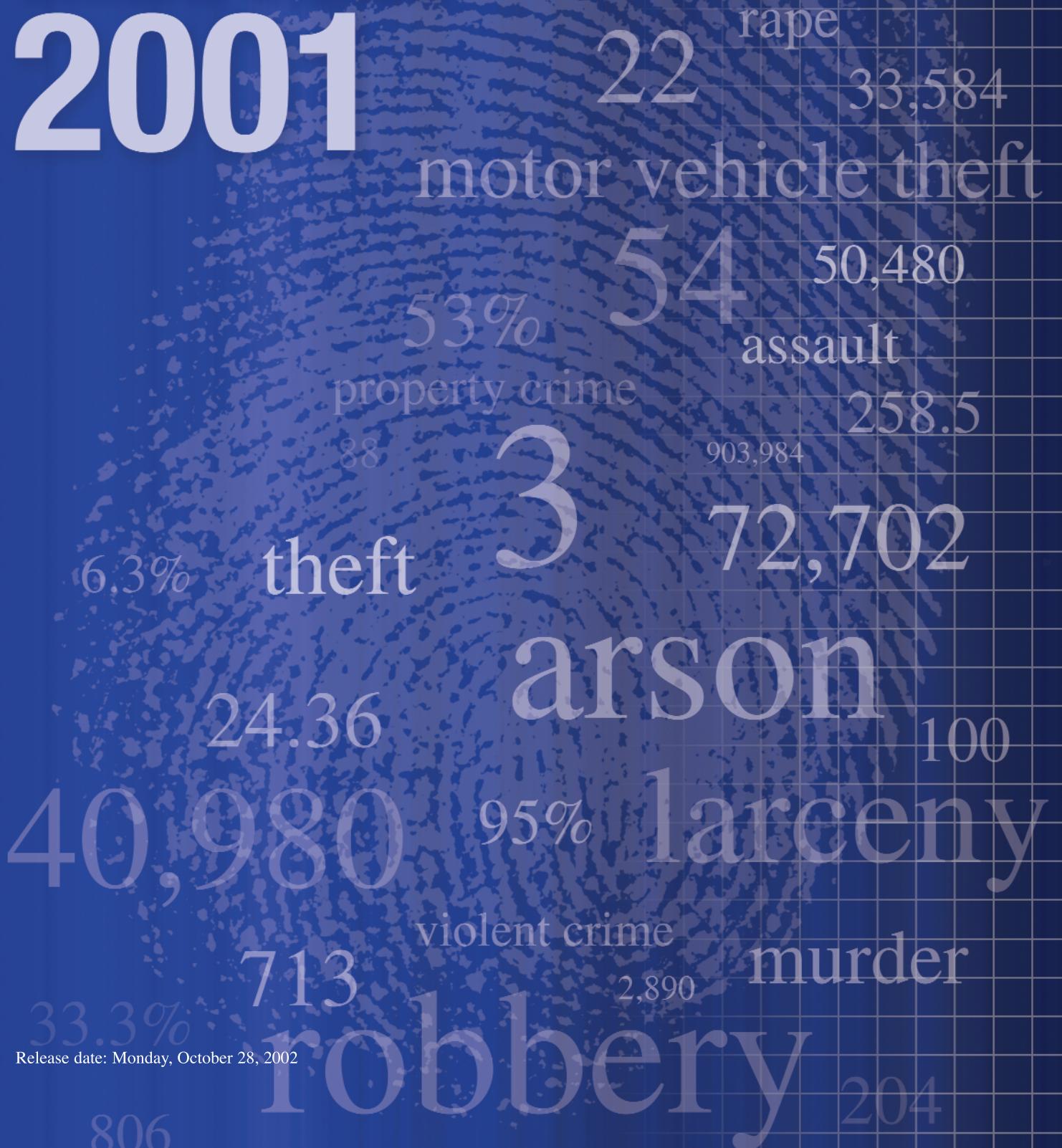




Crime in the United States 2001



Crime in the United States

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Uniform Crime Reports



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Foreword

Like every other organization and individual in the United States, the FBI has struggled to comprehend the events of September 11, 2001. Apart from investigating the crime scenes in New York City; Somerset County, Pennsylvania; and Arlington County, Virginia (the Pentagon); following leads, and addressing a myriad of concerns resulting from these attacks, the FBI through its Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program has struggled with how to report the data to the public. Begun in 1929, the UCR Program captures criminal offenses, which include murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft, reported to local or state law enforcement agencies. In its original design, the creators of the Program probably could not conceive of heinous attacks of domestic or international terrorism being committed within the confines of this Nation. There was a national crime data collection system based on the cooperation of city, county, and state law enforcement agencies voluntarily reporting crimes that were a product of the society of the time. However, that society has evolved into a more complex, global society of the twenty-first century that is faced with fighting crimes that previously had been unimaginable. The FBI recognizes that the UCR Program must evolve to be able to capture the crimes of this modern era. As it currently exists, the UCR Program is limited in its ability to report the offenses committed at the World Trade Center, in the airways above Pennsylvania, and at the Pentagon. Recognizing the limitations of the Program, yet also recognizing that many agencies and researchers will have a specific, nontraditional application for the statistical data associated with these offenses, the FBI has compiled a special report, which can be found in Section V of this publication. For the most part, the data associated with the events of September 11, 2001, are not included in the standard tables found in *Crime in the United States*. The number of deaths is so great that combining it with the traditional crime statistics will have an outlier effect that falsely skews all types of measurements in the Program's analyses.

September 11 will always be remembered as a tragic day in the history of this Nation. However, the attacks did serve as a wake-up call to law enforcement and the American public with regard to the shortcomings in the measures we take to protect our country from harm. It has reminded us that we must transform these measures to meet new realities. The UCR Program recognizes that it, too, must transform and equip itself to contend with ever-changing realities. In the coming years, the Program will address these issues and recommit itself to the task of serving, in the best way possible, this Nation and its law enforcement agencies.

Crime Factors

Each year when *Crime in the United States* is published, many entities—news media, tourism agencies, and other groups with an interest in crime in our Nation—use reported Crime Index figures to compile rankings of cities and counties. These rankings, however, are merely a quick choice made by the data user, and they provide no insight into the many variables that mold the crime in a particular town, city, county, state, or region. Consequently, these rankings lead to simplistic and/or incomplete analyses which often create misleading perceptions adversely affecting cities and counties, along with their residents. To assess criminality and law enforcement's response from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, one must consider many variables, some of which, while having significant impact on crime, are not readily measurable nor applicable pervasively among all locales. Geographic and demographic factors specific to each jurisdiction must be considered and applied if one is going to make an accurate and complete assessment of crime in that jurisdiction. Several sources of information are available that may assist the responsible researcher in exploring the many variables that affect crime in a particular locale. The U.S. Bureau of the Census data, for example, can be utilized to better understand the makeup of a locale's population. The transience of the population, its racial and ethnic makeup, its composition by age and gender, education levels, and prevalent family structures are all key factors in assessing and comprehending the crime issue.

Local chambers of commerce, planning offices, or similar entities provide information regarding the economic and cultural makeup of cities and counties. Understanding a jurisdiction's industrial/economic base, its dependence upon neighboring jurisdictions, its transportation system, its economic dependence on nonresidents (such as tourists and convention attendees), its proximity to military installations, correctional facilities, state penitentiaries, prisons, jails, etc., all contribute to accurately gauging and interpreting the crime known to and reported by law enforcement.

The strength (personnel and other resources) and the aggressiveness of a jurisdiction's law enforcement agency are also key factors. Although information pertaining to the number of sworn and civilian law enforcement employees can be found in this publication, it cannot alone be used as an assessment of the emphasis that a community places on enforcing the law. For example, one city may report more crime than a comparable one, not because there is more crime, but rather because its law enforcement agency through proactive efforts identifies more offenses. Attitudes of the citizens toward crime and their crime reporting practices, especially concerning more minor offenses, have an impact on the volume of crimes known to police.

It is incumbent upon all data users to become as well educated as possible about how to understand and quantify the nature and extent of crime in the United States and in any of the nearly 17,000 jurisdictions represented by law enforcement contributors to this Program. Valid assessments are possible only with careful study and analysis of the various unique conditions affecting each local law enforcement jurisdiction.

Historically, the causes and origins of crime have been the subjects of investigation by many disciplines. Some factors that are known to affect the volume and type of crime occurring from place to place are:

- Population density and degree of urbanization.
- Variations in composition of the population, particularly youth concentration.
- Stability of population with respect to residents' mobility, commuting patterns, and transient factors.
- Modes of transportation and highway system.
- Economic conditions, including median income, poverty level, and job availability.

Cultural factors and educational, recreational, and religious characteristics.
Family conditions with respect to divorce and family cohesiveness.
Climate.
Effective strength of law enforcement agencies.
Administrative and investigative emphases of law enforcement.
Policies of other components of the criminal justice system (i.e., prosecutorial, judicial, correctional, and probational).
Citizens' attitudes toward crime.
Crime reporting practices of the citizenry.

The Uniform Crime Reports give a nationwide view of crime based on statistics contributed by state and local law enforcement agencies. Population size is the only correlate of crime utilized in this publication. Although many of the listed factors equally affect the crime of a particular area, the UCR Program makes no attempt to relate them to the data presented. *The reader is, therefore, cautioned against comparing statistical data of individual reporting units from cities, counties, metropolitan areas, states, or colleges and universities solely on the basis of their population coverage or student enrollment.* Until data users examine all the variables that affect crime in a town, city, county, state, region, or college or university, they can make no meaningful comparisons.

Data users are cautioned against comparing crime trends presented in this report and those estimated by the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Because of differences in methodology and crime coverage, the two programs examine the Nation's crime problem from somewhat different perspectives, and their results are not strictly comparable. The definitional and procedural differences can account for many of the apparent discrepancies in results from the two programs.

The national Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program would like to hear from you.

The staff at the national UCR Program are continually striving to improve their publications. We would appreciate it if the primary user of this publication would complete the evaluation form at the end of this book and either mail it to us at the indicated address or fax it: 304-625-5394.

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