

**Rochester SACSI Research
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Follow-up to Grand Homicide Review, March 7, 2001

The grand review of all homicides in Rochester for the year 2000 took place on Wednesday March 7th at Rochester Institute of Technology. Approximately 90 people attended the review. A complete list is attached. The list includes approximately 60 members of the Rochester Police Department and 30 other from across a wide range of agencies. These included Monroe County District Attorney's Office, Monroe County Probation, New York State Parole, Monroe County Department of Social Services, Monroe County Sheriff, City of Rochester, County of Monroe, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, United States Attorney's Office. Erin Dalton of the National Institute of Justice also attended the review.

This document will seek to organize the information gained in the grand review of year 2000 homicides. It should be seen as a supplement to the review material and the Year 2000 Homicide Report completed by the Rochester Police Department. It will also tentatively address questions regarding a research agenda and an intervention agenda.

A. General Conclusions

The case review was successful in that we achieved a high degree of involvement in discussion covering all 40 cases. Specifically, the following benefits were achieved:

- a. The review did increase information available on patterns across the homicide cases. For example, it highlighted common motives, common weapons and even individuals common across cases.
- b. The review did provide new information regarding individuals and groups linked to the homicides. For example, individuals were identified as known across several agencies and as involved in a variety of criminal acts and thus as appropriate for targeted interventions.
- c. The review increased information available on how the local criminal justice system works including information about what individuals and agencies maintain specific kinds of records. For example, parole officers indicated their willingness to share prison visitation lists and other information with police and others.
- d. The review did contribute to improved communication across participants and has the potential to have a sustained effect in that area. For example, probation, parole, Assistant U.S. Attorneys and others all contributed important information and in some cases have scheduled separate meetings to discuss approaches to particular cases.

B. General Information

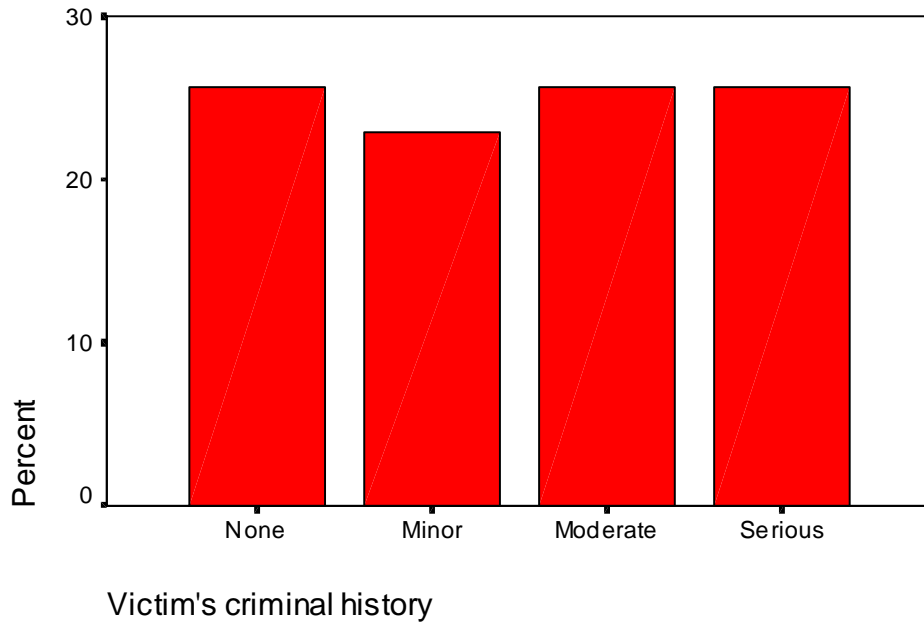
Below is a listing of major points that arose or were affirmed in the review of cases. Included are brief notes on the implications for intervention.

1. **Geographic Concentration of Homicide.** This continues to be a critically important point. It is probably related to many factors including the high proportion of homicides that appear to be linked to drugs. Any intervention should be consistent with the geographic concentration of violence.
2. **Guns.** Hand guns account for 57% (n=23) of homicide and long guns account for an additional 14 % (n= 6) for a total of 71%. Interventions that focus on gun deterrence, enhanced penalties for guns, and removal of guns before crimes may be effective. The origin of crime guns seems quite varied without any obvious implications for targeting programs.
3. **Drugs.** Drugs are at the center of a large amount of Rochester violence. Drug-Related robberies (16 cases or 40% of the total) appear to be a particularly significant problem. That is also consistent with the geographic concentration of violence. The overwhelming majority of drug related murders involved “street-level” dealers.
4. **FIFs.** Nineteen of 40 victims (47.5%) had a record of FIFs. Of 22 cases where suspects were identified, 10 (45.4%) had a record of FIFs. The files show that the number of field interview forms completed varies with suspect and victim age. Men who are 16 or 17 or 18 years old are much more likely to have FIF's in their files than older victims and suspects.
5. **Group Related Violence.** Eight out of 20 (40%) of the homicides where circumstances are known are believed to have been connected with more than one assailant. The consensus seemed to be that these were not necessarily highly organized gangs but rather small groups of friends. They may however, be appropriate for interventions that focus on the peer group.
6. **Level of Planning.** A total of 33 of the 40 cases (excluding all domestic violence cases) could be classified as either opportunistic, spontaneous or planned. Seven cases or 21% of those classified were classified as opportunistic. The robbery and murder of two young men eating pizza is an example. Ten cases or 30% of those classified were seen as spontaneous. Those include sudden arguments or road rage. Sixteen or 48% were classified as planned. Those include such cases as drug house robberies.
7. **Criminal Histories.** In many cases victims and suspects had significant criminal histories.

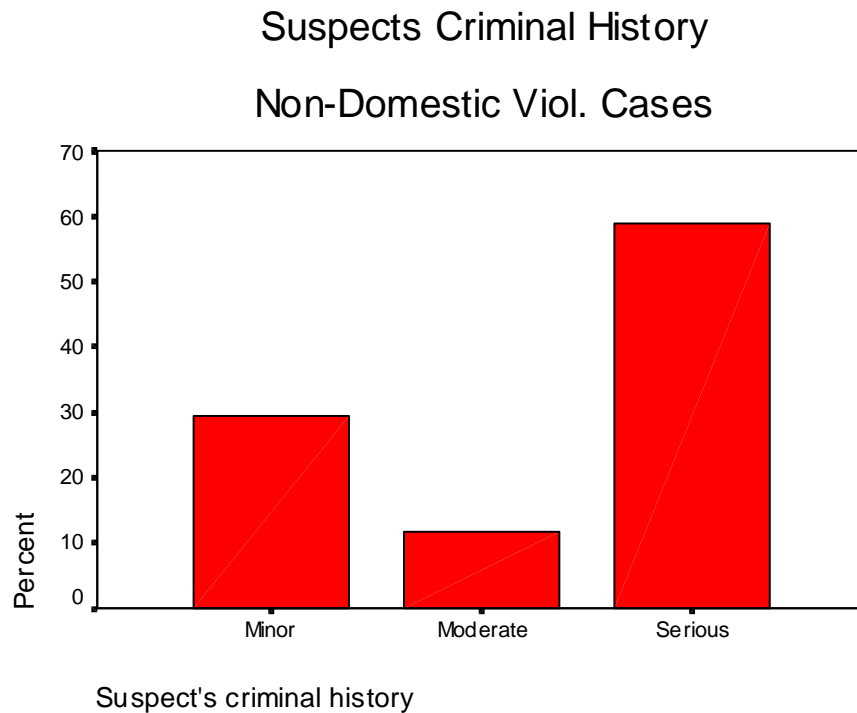
**Victim and Suspect Criminal Histories
in Year 2000 Homicides (non-Domestic violence)**

	Victim (n=35)	Suspect (n=18)
Percent with FIFs	54.3%	47.1%
Percent with Criminal Record	74.3	100
Prior Violent Crime Arrest	42.9	82.4
Prior Weapon Arrest	28.6	41.2
Prior Drug Arrest	54.3	58.8

**Victim's Criminal History in
Non-Domestic Viol. Cases**



The above chart shows that in non-domestic violence cases victims criminal records varied significantly but that about 25% of victims had serious criminal records.



The above chart shows that in non-domestic violence cases suspect often had serious criminal histories.

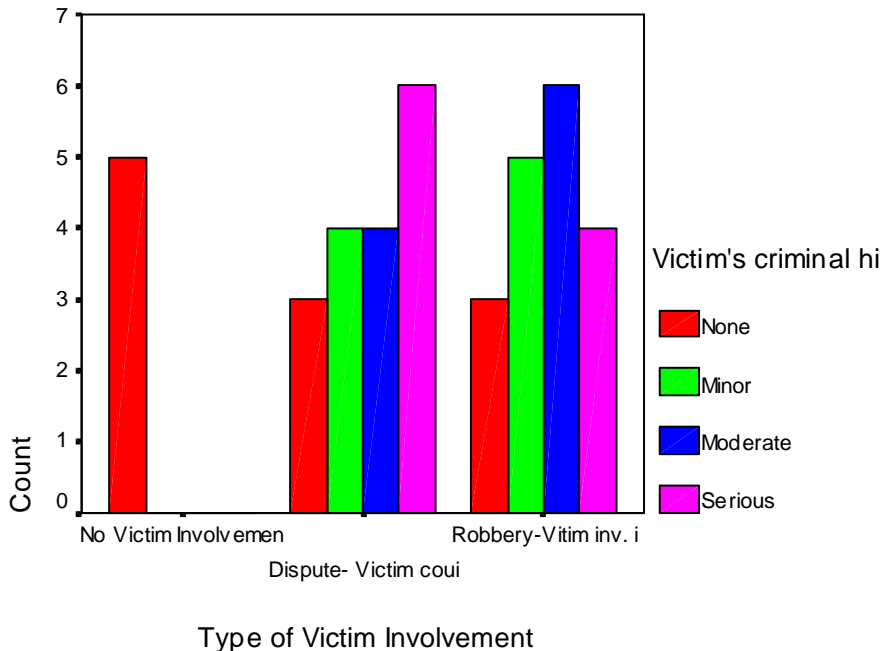
8. Anticipated or Should have been Anticipated Violence. A significant number of the homicides would seem to have been either anticipated or should have been anticipated by the victims. That is, victims, either did, or should have recognized the high likelihood of their victimization.

This last point suggests a way of typing the cases based on degree of victim involvement. In that typology the cases would break down as follows.

Typology based on victim Involvement

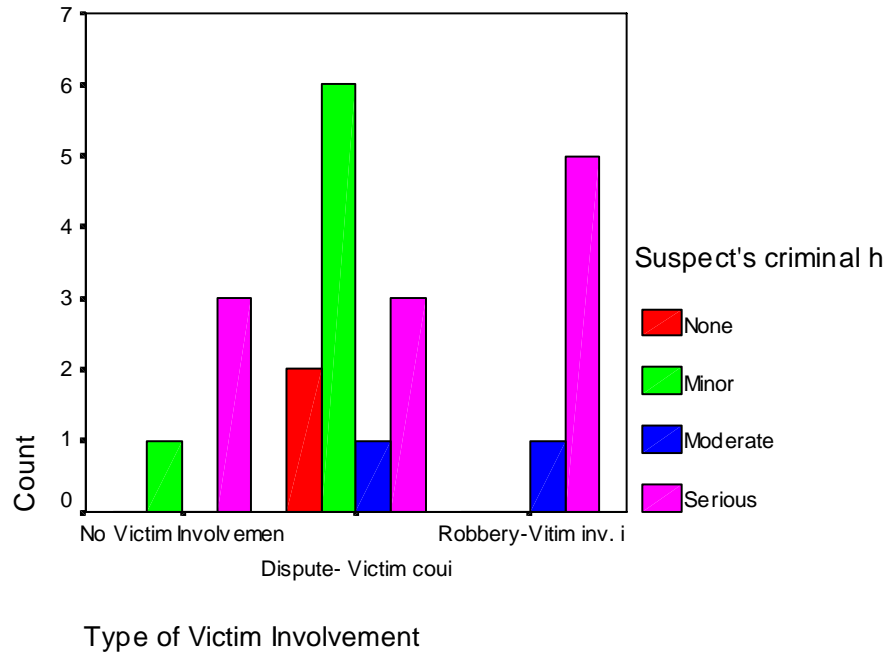
- A. No Victim Involvement N= 5 (12.5% of total)
 - 1. Child victim (1 case)
 - 2. Wrong place at wrong time (1 case)
 - 3. Robbery victim (3 cases)
- B. Dispute, Victim could have anticipated problem N= 17 (42.5% of total)
 - 1. Short term dispute (5 cases)
 - 2. Domestic violence (4 cases)
 - 3. Long running dispute (6 cases)
 - 4. Past ripoff/bad debt (2 cases)
- C. Robbery, Victim involved in illegal behavior N= 18 (45% of total)
 - 1. Drug-related street robbery (3 cases)
 - 2. Other robbery of illegal gains (2 cases)
 - 3. Drug house robbery/assassination (13 cases)

Victims Criminal History by Type of Case



The chart above shows that victims had no criminal history in cases where they had no involvement in the crime. Victims had the most serious criminal histories in disputes in which the victim could have anticipated violence. And, in cases of robbery where the victim was involved in illegal acts, victims had moderate criminal histories.

Suspect's Criminal History by Type of Case



The chart above shows that in cases where the victim was not involved in crime, suspect 3 of 5 suspects had major criminal histories. In cases of dispute in which the victim could have anticipated violence, suspects tended to have relatively minor criminal histories. In cases of robbery where the victim was involved in illegal acts, suspects tended to have major criminal histories.

Together these charts indicate that 1) the vast majority of cases involve victims who are not entirely innocent with regard to the cause of the homicide, 2) When victims are involved in disputes they trend also to have serious criminal records, and they have less serious records when robbed of illegal drugs or profits.

Suspects in robberies of illegal drugs or profits have the most serious records and those in disputes have minor or moderate records.

All of those support 2 ideas: 1) In many cases victims are not innocent and 2) in many cases victims and suspect appear to have trouble resolving problems without violence.

Recommendations regarding Interventions

These data suggest the following areas be considered in developing interventions focused on reducing homicide.

- a. Interventions should be developed to address the problem of drug house robberies.
- b. Interventions should be developed to encourage alternative ways of solving disputes.

Research Recommendations

1. In the wake of the successful day-long review we should seek ways to continue to improve communication across the criminal justice system as well as with some other relevant organizations. One way to accomplish that would be to develop the web page and email approach to providing review team participants with close to real-time information on incidents as they occur. This would initiate a continuous process of information exchange.
2. The grand review also demonstrated the potential value of an ongoing review process. The group should design an ongoing process which is smaller in scale but which provides regular reviews of major violent crime in Rochester. The web/email information exchange system discussed above would supplement this effort.
3. Everything we look at supports continued focus on the geographic concentration of violence in Rochester. The work done in preparation for the review and the annual homicide report provide a foundation for public engagement in the topic. A structure to support that engagement also exist in the form of the sector planning groups developed by the City of Rochester. The group should consider abridged version of the presentation of cases and the homicide report to be presented to key neighborhood groups. The presentation could form the foundation of focus groups to engage neighborhood associations in problem analysis and solution.