

**Neighbors, Friends and Family:
Women Arrested for Burglary
in Rochester, NY 2009-2010**

**Working Paper #2012-15
October 2012**



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INTRODUCTION

This research is part of a series of studies completed on issues related to property crime in Rochester including analyses of larceny, metal theft, auto theft and pawn shop transactions. All the research is available on our web page under the “our work” section of www.rit.edu/cpsi . This is the second paper in our series of studies related to burglary in Rochester. The first provides an analysis of all people arrested for burglary in Rochester during a two year period (<http://www.rit.edu/cla/cpsi/WorkingPapers/2012/2012-06.pdf>). This paper provides additional analyses of the females among those arrests.

Little research on residential burglary and burglary as a whole focuses on females and their participation in the crime. Burglary is a crime dominated by males and many have found that women tend to not be as involved. This paper is based on the data collected from the Monroe Crime Analysis Center on females arrested between the years 2009 and 2010 in Rochester, New York. By focusing on numerous aspects of female burglars’ such as motive and relationships with victims, this paper’s goal is to better understand the low level of female involvement in burglary and to compare their involvement to that of males.

BACKGROUND

Burglary has been known to be a crime dominated by males. Thus, research has primarily focused on males and their involvement in the crime, raising questions then about female involvement in burglary. In 2009, 24,024 women were arrested nationally for burglary while 118,120 men were arrested, with females accounting for about 17% of those arrested while men accounted for 83% (Pasko & Chesney-Lind, 2012). In 2000 women made up about 13% of those

arrested for burglary. As a result of the disproportionate numbers, the research about how and why females become involved in burglary has been limited.

Our examination of all people arrested for burglary in Rochester for 2009 and 2010 found that the list included a total of 26 females. This paper is based on data collected on all those arrested female burglars and a small random sample of 26 arrested males. The analysis focuses mainly on the burglary offense associated with the arrest. This information is useful for the understanding of women and crime as a whole. With research primarily emphasizing males and their involvement in crime, understanding crimes by women becomes a difficult task. This research can contribute to further understanding of the females involved in criminal behavior.

METHOD

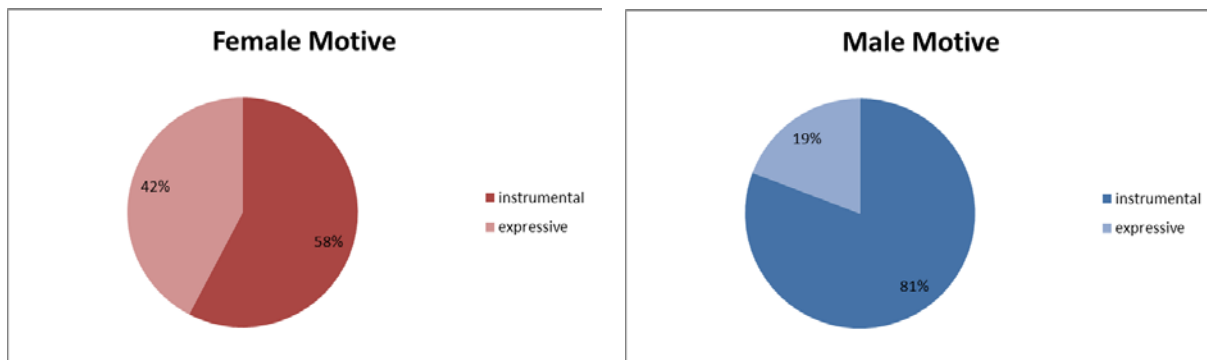
The research presented in this paper uses the data made available through the Rochester Police Department and the Monroe Crime Analysis Center. The study is based on arrest reports for burglars arrested during the years 2009 and 2010. Over the two year period, 399 burglars were arrested; 26 (6.5%) of the 399 were females, while the remaining 373 were males.

The research conducted in this paper focuses on the following factors: motive, number of co-offenders, co-offender gender, victim-offender relationship, how they were apprehended, value of stolen goods, distance to crime, and criminal history. The Crime Reports as well as the reports of the investigations for the identified burglaries were used to gather the data for the analysis. With the analysis of female burglars, further research went into focusing on the same factors to outline the typology of the male burglars. A small random sample of 26 male burglars was selected with the initial goal of providing a comparison with a group that we expected would

reflect the common conception of burglars and their crimes. To our surprise, comparison between the genders showed greater similarity than expected.

MOTIVE

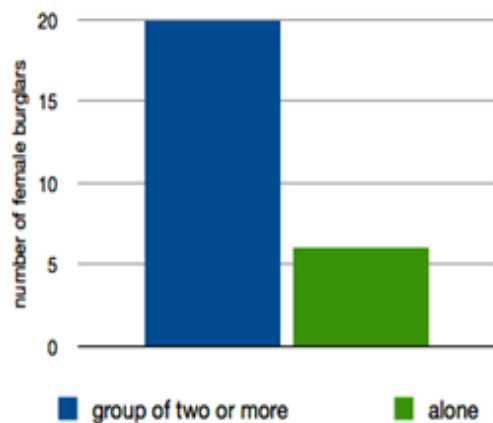
We used a common shorthand to summarize aspects of our cases. If an offender’s motive is classified as “expressive,” it can be said that their crime was driven by an element of emotion. Conversely, an “instrumental” motive is one that is more consistent with a goal of monetary gain. In our research, it was found that 58% of the 26 arrested females were instrumental in their motives. Therefore, the remaining 42% of these females had an expressive motive that drove them to commit burglary. Examples of these motives were included harassment, child custody concerns and revenge. The analysis of male burglary suspects revealed that a majority of these burglars were motivated by monetary gain, as it was found that 81% of the males were driven by instrumental motives. But 19% of these males were found to have had expressive motives for committing burglary. Both males and females were more likely to commit the crime for instrumental motives but both also showed an unexpectedly high level of motivation grounded in emotional issues. Again, as was seen with the females, for the males, these expressive motives included custody issues and revenge.



NUMBER OF CO-OFFENDERS

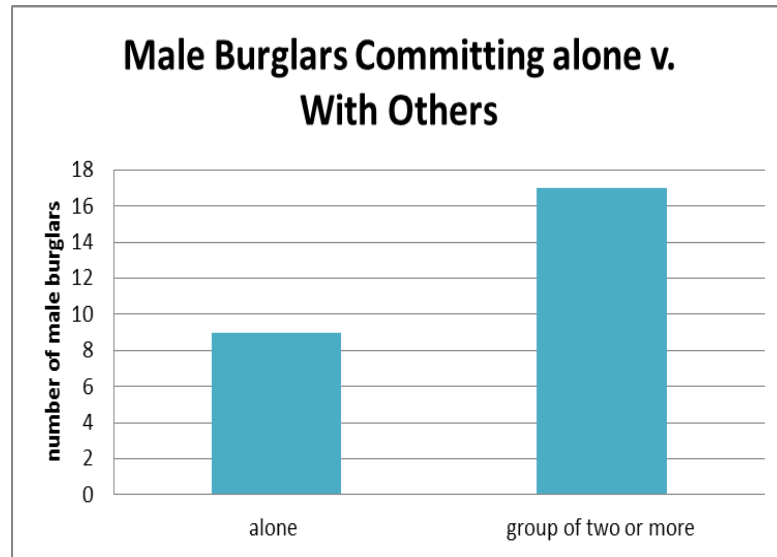
Past research has found that females who commit burglary tended to act within a group and that few females commit the crime alone. In an analysis (Decker, Wright, Redfern, and Smith's (1993) research showed that none of 18 active female burglars acted alone. In the data collected on the 26 arrested females in Rochester, six females committed burglary alone. Of the remaining 20, nineteen acted within a group of two or more offenders. One female's number of co-offenders was unknown. Very similar findings were made when the males were analyzed. Seventeen of the arrested male burglars worked in a group. Nine males acted alone. We found these results surprising as research on male burglars shows that they often commit the crime of burglary alone. Existing research had shown that females are more likely to co-offend than are males (Van Manstrigt and Farrington, 2009). While reading this research it is important to understand that unlike the Decker et al. study, the analysis in this paper is based only on arrested burglars. We recognize that results may be different when studying active burglars who have not been arrested.

Female Burglars Committing Alone v. With Others



*data includes 26 arrested female burglars in Rochester, NY 2009-2010

Source: Monroe County Crime Analysis Center

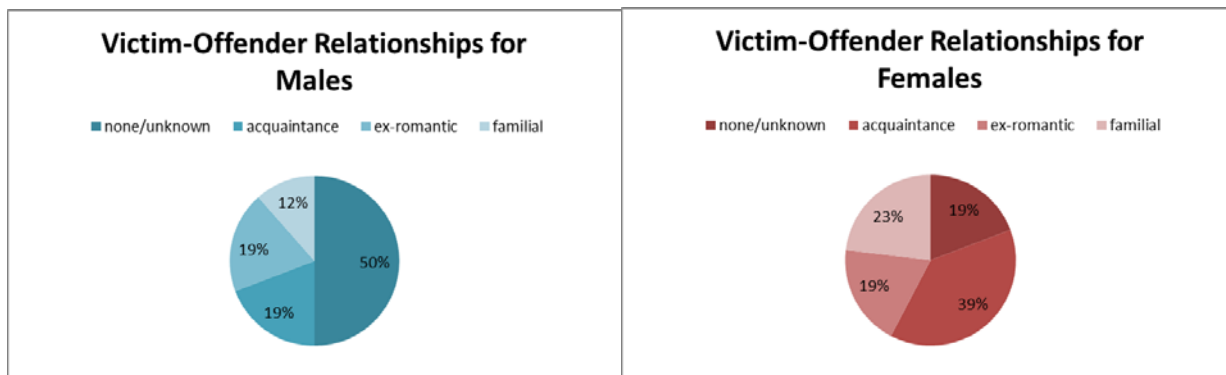


CO-OFFENDER GENDER

Research suggests that females often commit burglary within a group that includes a male counterpart (Mullins & Wright, 2002). Of the 19 females burglary suspects linked with a group of two or more offenders, 15 females acted with only males. Three females committed the crime only with other females. The one remaining female committed the crime with co-offenders of both genders. These findings support the past research referenced above. Research has also found that males tend to have male co-offenders, if any co-offender is present. This is explained by assumptions around females lacking the physical and emotional strength of males (Mullins, 2003). In the sample of 26 arrested male burglars, 9 males worked alone. The co-offender(s) gender of the remaining 17 males was analyzed and showed that 13 males worked with one or more persons who is of the same gender, two of the male burglars offended with female counterparts, and one of the arrested male burglars worked in a group composed of both genders. The remaining male burglar committed burglary with one other person of unknown gender. Thus, males also predominantly worked with males when co-offenders were present.

VICTIM-SUSPECT RELATIONSHIP

The relationships between the 26 arrested females in our study and their victims varied. For 5 females, there was either an unknown or nonexistent relationship present between them and their victim. The 21 remaining females, however, did have some type of relationship with their victim. The most common relationship was that of an acquaintance. In this study the term “acquaintance” is used for neighbors, co-workers, and friends. Ten females were acquainted with their victims. The second most common relationship was that of a family member or ex-family member. That accounted for six of the females’ victims. Five females burgled from someone identified as an ex-partner. Although the romantic partner relationship with victims does appear in the data, the most common relationship presented is that of a neighbor relationship. When looking at the random sample of 26 arrested male burglars, it was found that half of the victim-offender relationships were unknown. The most common known relationship the males had with their victims was that of an ex-partner. That is, 5 of the reported burglaries claimed that the arrested burglar was an ex-boyfriend of his victim. The next most common relationship was that of a family member. Three of the arrested males burgled a family member. One burglar is his victim’s cousin, one is a nephew to his victim, and the third is a nephew-in-law. The next most common relationship was that of an acquaintance. Five of the male burglars were reported to have some form of casual acquaintance with their victim. The charts below illustrate the findings.



HOW THE SUSPECTS WERE APPREHENDED

The data on Rochester's arrested female burglars shows that 23 out of the 26 were identified during the commission of the crime. Twelve females were caught by the victim, who was in the residence at the time of the burglary. Eleven of the 26 were caught by witnesses. These witnesses were usually neighbors who saw the crime occur. Of the remaining, one female confessed to the police, one was caught on a security camera, and another was caught based on police suspicion. For the female burglars, the presence of witnesses or victims had a major influence on whether or not the offenders are apprehended. In the analysis of the male burglars, a similar pattern was found. Ten offenders were apprehended as a result of the victim calling in the burglary while it was taking place, or directly thereafter. Six males were apprehended after the victim learned their identity and informed the police. Five of the male burglars were apprehended because a neighbor who witnessed the crime assisted the police. Three males were apprehended when police arrived on the scene of a burglary in process. Lastly, one male was apprehended after the police received an anonymous tip, and one male was apprehended after a person with knowledge assisted the police.

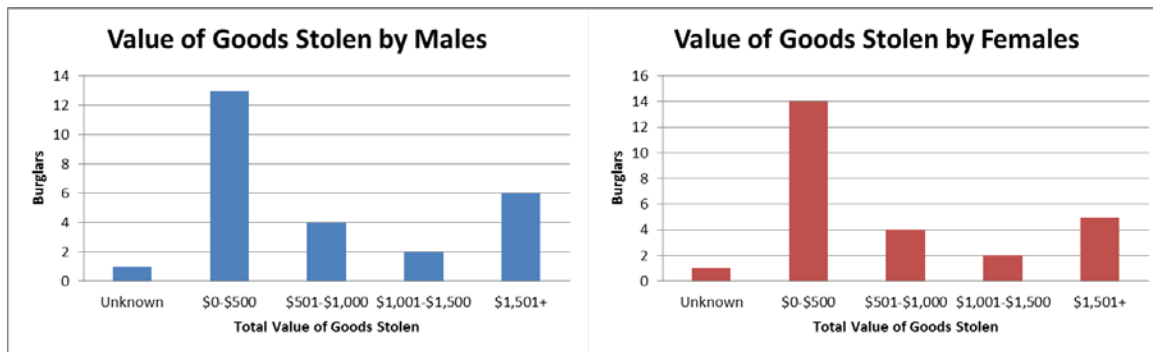
VALUE OF STOLEN GOODS

The breakdown of the value of goods stolen by females was almost identical to that of the goods stolen by males. The goods stolen by arrested female burglars included electronics, jewelry, clothing, money, decor, furniture, and even appliances. The value of the stolen goods ranged from \$0 to over \$5,000. For the most part, females tended to steal items valued between \$0 and \$500. Twelve females stole items valued within that range. Goods exceeding \$1,000 tended to be appliances and furniture or numerous electronics and expensive jewelry items.

Two females did not steal anything, but rather entered a home in a child custody dispute and were arrested for burglary. In New York State, a person is guilty of burglary when he or she knowingly enters or remains unlawfully in a building with the intent to commit a crime. These females entered a home, were asked to leave and refused to do so. As a result, their conduct was labeled as burglary.

Four of the 26 random males were also arrested for burglary after entering a property unlawfully. These were all cases of family trouble. In these situations, no items were stolen. However, there was property damage in some cases. In the cases in which property was stolen, the most common items stolen were electronics.

The total value of goods stolen by each offender was difficult to calculate due to reporting errors and discrepancies. However, it can be concluded that the lowest reported value of damaged or stolen property was \$0, and the highest value was \$14,000. Most commonly, the value of stolen goods ranged between \$0 and \$500. When compared in the tables below, the value of goods stolen by males and females are strikingly similar.



DISTANCE TO CRIME

Females tended to travel less than males to commit burglary, only averaging about 1.4 miles as opposed to males traveling 1.8 miles. Past research proposes that for those committing the crime of burglary, long distances are not common as most burglaries are committed within a distance under 3 miles from their residence. Perhaps females commit burglaries within a shorter geographical distance due to their motive or relationship with the victim.

RECORDS OF PREVIOUS ARRESTS

Criminal records of the females arrested for burglary were reviewed, for both before and after the years 2009 and 2010. All had arrest records and the majority had been arrested numerous times. Of the 26 females, only three females were previously arrested only once. The remaining 23 females were arrested two or more times over a number of years for various reasons. All of the arrested females had prior arrests for burglary.

The female with the largest number of arrests had been arrested eighteen times between the years of 2005 and 2010. The 23 females who were arrested more than once were arrested for a range of other crimes including petit larceny, criminal mischief, criminal intent, driving while

intoxicated, disorderly conduct, harassment, conspiracy, assault, and many other crimes. The most common cause of arrest among the 23 females was petit larceny.

In our sample of males, the majority of the arrested burglars also had extensive arrest records with 23 of the 26 previously arrested two or more times. One of the males was arrested 13 times between the years of 2005 and 2010 and four others had 11 total prior arrests. The 23 who were arrested more than once were arrested for a variety of crimes. Five had been arrested more than one time for burglary. Other included: robbery, petit larceny, disorderly conduct, possession of a controlled substance, stolen property, criminal mischief, simple assault, among others. The most common cause of arrest among the 23 males (after discounting the burglary arrest that allowed for their inclusion in this analysis) was for petit larceny, and then burglary, followed by simple assault. Again, these findings are very similar to that of the females.

Summary

1. Women make up a small percentage -6.5%- of arrested burglars in Rochester.
2. Arrested female burglars are most likely to burglarize someone they know and often appear to select their victim as part of some emotional turmoil. Fewer but still a surprising number of males had similar motives.
3. For arrested males and females many of the burglaries involved more than one participant. Both tended to have male co-offenders.
4. Female and male burglary suspects were most likely to have been arrested as a result of being identified during the crime by the victim or another witness. This clearly supports the view that the crimes of arrested burglars may differ significantly from those where no suspect is arrested.
5. Arrested male and female burglars tended to have substantial arrest records which included prior arrests for burglary.

CONCLUSION

Looking at the data on arrested male and female burglars has proved surprising in the vast number of overlap amongst the two genders in commissioning this crime. It is important, however, to appreciate the study's limitations due to the focus exclusively on people arrested for burglary. Nationally only about 12% of burglaries result in an arrest, and as this research shows those arrests often come about because of the relationship between suspect and victim. There is thus little reason to assume that non-arrested burglars share the characteristics of our arrested burglars. That also seems supported by the studies of active burglars. This research shows that the expected differences between males and females as presented in that research are not reflected amongst arrested burglars. In fact it may be the relationship to the victim that is the most important factor in understanding arrested burglars

FUTURE RESEARCH

With the above analysis complete, we have several questions which we would like to investigate further. These questions include:

1. How does the data on arrested burglars differ from that of active burglars?
2. What are the similarities between active male and female burglars?
3. How do the remaining 373 male arrested male burglars compare to this analysis?
4. How common is repeat burglary and what are the characteristics of people and residences that are subjected to repeated victimization?
5. How do relationships and conflict play a role in the commission of burglary?
6. What are some effective methods for law enforcement to prevent burglary from occurring?

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