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WASHINGTON (AP) Junior high students are more likely than high schoolers to be involved in weapons offenses at big city schools, but drug and alcohol abuse is more common among the older teens, urban educators reported today.

Two percent of teachers in the cities' public schools feel unsafe during the day, twice as many as in the suburbs, the Council of Great City Schools said. After school hours, the figure jumps to 15 percent in the cities and 5 percent in the suburbs.

In a 1992-93 report card on the state of urban education, the council said more than half the school systems it represents have gang and crime prevention programs; all the districts have programs to address drug and alcohol abuse.

The council asked school superintendents to assess their progress toward meeting a set of eight education goals. Based on that survey, the council said that although some improvement has been made in such areas as parent involvement, big-city school systems still have a long way to go to meet goals on student achievement, teacher recruitment and building repair.

``Nowhere does the national resolve to strengthen our children's education face a tougher test than in our inner cities,''' said the council's executive director, Michael Casserly. ``In the nation's largest urban areas, every problem is more pronounced, every solution harder to implement. From teacher shortages to drug abuse, from dilapidated buildings to dropouts, urban schools, their leaders and teachers face challenges each day that would overwhelm any organization, public or private.'''

The council said drug use among high school seniors has dropped; 73 percent of the seniors in 1992-1993 said they had not used drugs, compared with 67 percent of the seniors in 1990-1991.

It reported 4.4 drug or alcohol abuse-related incidents for each 1,000 big-city high school students, and 2.9 per 1,000 in grades six to eight.

Weapons incidents were nearly twice as common among middle and junior high students; 7.3 per 1,000, compared with 3.8 per 1,000 high school students.

The report also found that middle school students had unusually high suspension and expulsion rates when compared to the other grades.

APNP-09-27-94 0836EDT

Gunshots Killing More Teen-Agers

By PHILIP J. HILTS
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 9 — Gunshot wounds are the second-leading cause of death among all high-school-age children in the United States, and they are increasing faster than any other cause in that age group among both whites and blacks, according to Federal statistics published today.

The statistics were part of a battery of more than 70 studies and editorials published today by the 10 scientific journals of the American Medical Association. Deaths and injuries from gunshots have become a public health crisis, said the journals' editors, along with Surgeon General Antonia Novello and her predecessor, Dr. C. Everett Koop. Dr. Koop and Dr. George Lundberg, editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, announced the findings at a news conference here today.

They said that the kind of public education efforts and licensing requirements that reduced automobile fatalities should be applied to guns.

"Defining motor vehicle casualties as a public health issue and initiating intervention succeeded in reversing the upward trend of such fatalities without banning or confiscating automobiles," said Dr. Lundberg. "We believe that comparable results can be anticipated by similarly treating gunshot wound casualties."

Many Acquired, Many Fired

Among other things, the studies reported these findings:

One third of high school students say they have easy access to handguns, and six percent of them say they bring handguns to school. About six percent of high school students say they actually own handguns, and among those about one third have fired them at someone.

General owners of handguns give as their chief reason for owning one "protection from crime," but gun owners kill themselves and family members 43 times as often as they shoot down a criminal at home.

In domestic fights, firearms were 12 times more likely to result in death than use of other weapons.

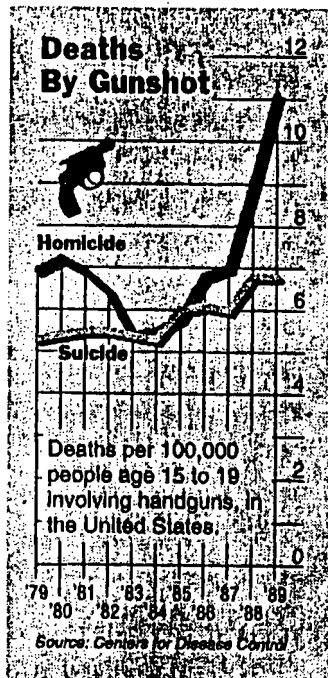
Firearm homicides, which had declined from 1979 to 1984, began to rise in the mid-1980's and at the end of that decade took a steep jump up. At the same time, homicide from other weapons declined.

The greatest increases in death from gunshot were among white men and women in large and small cities, and among black men in small cities.

Compared to Matches

James Baker, chief Washington lobbyist for the National Rifle Association, took issue with the statistics in the journals, as well as the fact that doctors were commenting on gun issues.

"Statistics show that 93,000 accidental deaths are caused by the medical profession annually," he said. "It



would make more sense for these doctors to look at their own house first."

He said loaded guns were as dangerous as "anything else in the household — matches on the stove or Drano under the sink." He said gun owners had a responsibility to use them properly, "and we find it difficult to accept that you can legislate responsibility."

But Dr. Lundberg and Dr. Koop said the efforts to reduce automobile death rates showed that Mr. Baker was wrong. While such deaths far exceed deaths by gun wounds, they have de-

Defining gun deaths as a public health issue is seen as a crucial.

clined sharply. In 1979, deaths in automobile accidents were 44 per 100,000 people age 15 to 19, dropping to 34 per 100,000 in 1989. But homicide and suicide deaths by gunshot rose from 12 per 100,000 in 1979 to 18 per 100,000 in 1989.

Shooting and Driving

Dr. Lundberg said owners and operators of guns should meet criteria similar to those met by drivers, by qualifying for licenses, testing for certain skills and assuring that they do not have certain physical and mental disabilities.

One of the central articles in the journals was from the National Center

for Health Statistics releasing the newest data on "firearm and nonfirearm homicide" among young people from official death counts across the United States.

The data show that homicide due to gunshot is the second-leading cause of death in high school age children and is rising rapidly, said Lois Fingerhut, a statistician with the agency and the author of the report.

"Firearm homicides have reached the suburbs," she said. Rates of death from guns in the inner city are at record highs and still rising, she said, and steady, large increases in death by guns were seen for the first time in the suburban and smaller urban areas.

Whites and Blacks Dying

The rates of homicide among young people in suburban areas declined from 1979 to 1984. Then, between 1984 and 1987, they rose seven percent, and between 1987 and the latest data released today for 1989, the deaths rose 23 percent in suburban areas, to 5 per 100,000.

In the inner city, still the hardest hit by the growing violence, rates of gun homicide among young people declined between 1979 and 1984, rose 10 percent over the next three years, and in the most recent data, from 1987 to 1989, rose 28 percent, to 28 per 100,000.

Similar increases were measured in small and medium-sized cities, but in rural areas the increase between 1987 and 1989 was less, about 8 percent.

When viewed racially, there were large increases in gunshot deaths among both white and black young people. Among white men and women in inner cities gunshot deaths rose about 30 percent, slightly higher than the rise among blacks.

A study among more than 900 11th graders in the Seattle public schools showed that half of all male students and 34 percent of all students said they could easily obtain a handgun. Most said they could get them from a friend, on the street or at home, said the study, carried out by Dr. Charles M. Callahan and Dr. Frederick Rivara of the University of Washington.

Looking just at males, the study showed that 47 percent had easy access to handguns, 11 percent owned a handgun, and half of those who owned handguns brought them to school.

The studies overall, said Dr. Lundberg, "paint a grotesque picture of a society steeped in violence, especially by firearms, with such ubiquity and prevalence as to be seemingly accepted as inevitable." It is not inevitable, he said, adding, "Violence in America is a public health emergency."



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SUBJECT: BRIEFING PAPER ON VIOLENCE

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In the wake of riots and disturbances in Los Angeles and Chicago, violence — its causes and prevention — is garnering huge amounts of attention from the media, community groups, and the general public. As you are well aware, violence is taking on new dimensions; the scope and the breadth of problems seem to be widening.

Public health officials warn that if current trends continue, violence is likely to surpass drugs as a major public health problem. The American Medical Association's journal devoted two entire issues to the problems of escalating violence in the U.S., and the Centers for Disease Control have made violence prevention a "highest priority."

You might find the enclosed briefs useful as background material, information for your newsletter, or handouts for constituents. (The briefs can quickly be tailored and reprinted in a questionnaire format or as a mailing with a legislator's name and photo in the masthead.)

PHOTO

Emerging Issues

CONGRESSIONAL
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EARLY
SIGNALS
OF
CHANGE

Issue:
ADOLESCENCE
Date:
JULY 1992

Adolescent Violence: Long Term Personal and Public Costs

During the 30 year period between 1950 and 1980, there was a 300 percent increase in the number of teenage homicides in the U.S.

Violence has replaced communicable diseases as the primary cause of death for American teens. Appalling statistics confirm an epidemic of violence that has no parallel in any other industrialized nation of the world. Nearly 80 percent of all teenage deaths are the result of violence — from homicides, suicides, motor vehicle crashes, and other unintentional injuries. And firearm death rates for both white and Black male teenagers exceed the total from all natural causes.

Aside from the obviously tragic personal consequences for victims, violence costs billions of dollars annually in medical care, confinement of offenders, and lost opportunities. Escalating violence by and against the nation's youth is creating a new urgency and pushing policymakers, business leaders, public health officials, law enforcement officials, educators, and concerned parents to act.

The extent of this escalating national problem is evident from statistics:

- Homicides: During the 30 year period between 1950 and 1980, there was a 300 percent increase in the number of teenage homicides in the U.S. Among all adolescents, homicide is the second leading cause of death, and among Black males, it is the leading cause of death.
- Suicides: Over the past 30 years, the suicide rate has doubled. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among adolescents.
- Accidents: Accidents remain the highest cause of violent death for American teens. Almost half of the deaths among people between the ages of 15 and 24 have been attributed to unintentional injuries, and studies show a number of familial, social, and cultural factors predispose a teen to injury.

While violence cuts across racial, ethnic, and gender lines, some differences are pronounced. Black male teens aged 15 to 19, are 11 times more likely to die from firearms than are white males. In contrast, the firearm suicide rate is nearly twice as high for white males as for Black male teenagers. Females are involved in fighting behaviors yet have lower rates of homicide. Experts argue that females avoid serious injury because they, unlike their male counterparts, often do not carry weapons.

Social scientists suggest an array of causes for risk-taking behaviors including availability of guns, discrimination, drugs, alcohol, gangs, child abuse, high population density, and reduced adherence to traditional values. An additional suspected cause is a wider cultural acceptance of violence as a way of resolving conflicts. Critics of the media charge that movies and television programs often portray violence as exciting and adventurous — especially to impressionable young people — while failing to attach a negative social stigma to the use of violence or to provide alternatives to violence.

TRENDS

Teens are increasingly at risk. Victims of violent crimes are three times as likely to be adolescents or young adults as older adults. Department of Justice figures show 67 out of every 1000 teens are victims of violent crime. The rate of victimization for adults is 26 per 1,000 adults age 20 and older.

Firearm deaths, both homicide and suicide, are increasing. Between 1984 and 1988, the firearm death rate for teenagers aged 15 to 19 increased 43 percent — up 20 percent in 1988. The firearm homicide rate for Black males aged 15 to 19 increased 71 percent between 1987 and 1989. Non-firearm murders have

Close to 1.2 million violent crimes against teenagers were not reported to the police.

In the past 30 years, the suicide rate for 15- to 19-year-olds has tripled to 10 per 100,000.

not increased significantly. For Black females aged 10 to 14, the firearm death rate more than doubled between 1987 and 1988.

Violent criminal behavior, murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, among America's youth is increasing. According to the Department of Justice, in 1984, 64,344 people under the age of 18 were arrested and charged with violent crime offenses. In 1989, this number had increased by more than 20,000 to 84,732. Others estimate violent crime is much higher than arrest records show.

Suicide rates for teenagers are increasing dramatically. Since 1950, the suicide rate among teenagers quadrupled and continues to climb. In 1987, suicide became the third leading cause of teenage mortality. In 1990, a reported 6,000 teenagers committed suicide; however, experts believe the number to be much higher.

Death from automobile accidents continues to be the primary cause of adolescent death. Two thirds of the violent deaths among 15- to 24 year-olds in the U.S. in 1987 are the result of motor vehicle accidents, and more than half of all fatal motor vehicle accidents involve alcohol.

An increasing number of schools are acting to curb firearm-related school violence. Over 25 percent of the nation's urban school districts use metal detectors to screen for weapons.

IMPLICATIONS

If present trends continue, violence by and against adolescents could continue to increase. The Index of Social Health for Children and Youth assesses how stressful life has become for young people by charting poverty, drug-abuse, and high-school dropout rates in the U.S. In 1987, the Index fell to its lowest point in two decades; most alarming to analysts was the number of teenagers living at poverty levels. Poverty level and availability of guns are increasingly linked to violence-related injuries.

As violence in American schools escalates, increasing numbers of students are at risk of losing education and training opportunities. One third of the assaults against younger adolescents occur in school. Consequently, for some adolescents, school is an unsafe, dangerous place.

The U.S. — the most violent nation in the industrialized world — may continue to squander its valuable human resources. Homicide rates are well above those of other industrialized nations, ranging from 4 to 5 times higher than in Western Europe. And 75 percent of the deaths of young males are firearm-related compared with under 25 percent in other countries.

Concerns about the changing demographics of the country, including the changing nature of the workforce and implications of these changes for the nation's future, could spur a national effort to reduce violence by adolescents. Analysts are warning businesses that economic vitality may hinge on America's ability to harness the energy and commitment of all future workers.

POLICY OPTIONS

Among the general public, experts, and legislators, there are sharp differences of opinion as to appropriate policy approaches to curbing violence by and against adolescents. An increasing number of experts advocate treating adolescent violence as a public health problem which would open the way to new approaches. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has made violence prevention one of its highest priorities, calling violence near epidemic. Experts warn that existing programs for adolescents, primarily delivered through schools, do not reach all at-risk youth and another approximately nine million out-of-school youth, ages 14 to 21, are mostly beyond the reach of prevention services.

Promising prevention strategies include the following:

- teach skills for conflict-resolution,
- present positive media messages that spotlight alternatives to violence,
- improve problem-solving, decision-making, and social competencies of adolescents with programs that provide life-skills training,
- increase the number of automatic forms of protection that prevent injuries such as safety belts and air bags,
- increase research to understand linkages among adolescent problem behaviors so that prevention addresses multiple behaviors, and
- decrease adolescents' access to firearms.

The CDC is developing guidelines for community programs to prevent youth violence. For information, contact the Division of Injury Control, National Center for Environmental Health and Injury Control, CDC, Public Health Service, Atlanta, GA 30333.

PHOTO

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Issue:
CRIME

VIOLENT CRIME: RISING COSTS AND DANGEROUS TRENDS

Nearly 1 in every 4 households will be affected by crime; for some minority households, the figure approaches 1 in every 3.

Violent crimes — murder, assault, robbery, and rape — affect the lives of over 6 million Americans each year. Aside from the obviously tragic personal consequences for victims, violence costs billions of dollars annually and lowers the quality of life for all citizens. Police report a 23 percent increase in violent crime over the past decade, and if present trends continue, violence could surpass drugs as a major public health problem.

Demographic trends and economic indicators suggest a huge rise in the personal and public costs of violence. At a time when federal and state governments are trying to cut spending, the costs of violent crime are skyrocketing. In 1990, federal, state and local governments spent over \$60 billion on police, prisons and courts. Approximately \$100 million is spent on medical bills resulting from domestic violence, and an estimated \$3 to \$5 billion is lost because of abuse-related absenteeism. No statistics on financial loss from violence reflect the human cost of day-to-day inconveniences, fear, and personal tragedy.

The U.S. has the highest rate of violent crime in the developed world. Homicide rates are four to five times higher in the U.S. than in Western Europe; rape rates are seven times higher; robbery rates are four to ten times higher. Millions of Americans sacrifice personal freedoms because of real or perceived risks of violence. According to some public opinion polls, two Americans in five are afraid to go out alone at night, and in large cities, that number is one out of two.

Close to 1.2 million violent crimes against teenagers are not reported.

Research into the causes of violence has produced inconclusive results. Social scientists suggest an array of causes including discrimination, unemployment, drugs, gangs, child abuse, and cultural acceptance of violence as a way of resolving conflicts. Critics of the media charge that movies and television programs often portray violence as exciting and adventurous while failing to attach a negative social stigma to the use of violence. Others claim that easy availability of guns, not "a culture of violence," is the primary cause of violent crime.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has made violence prevention one of its highest priorities, calling violence near epidemic.

TRENDS

Murders in the U.S. are increasing. In 1990, the U.S. murder rate hit an all-time high of 23,440 slayings. Again in 1991 the rates jumped — over 2.5 percent — to set another new record. Aggravated assaults rose by more than 6 percent. (And one survey suggests that less than half of all violent crimes are ever reported to the police.)

The risk of being killed is increasingly correlated with age, sex, and race. The most frequent victims of crime are young blacks, Hispanics, and young males in general. Blacks constitute 49 percent of all murder victims. In 1988, 75 percent of reported murder victims were males. It is estimated that a black male has a 3 to 5 times greater chance of being murdered than a white male.

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Gangs of criminal youth are increasing in both major population centers and cities of less than one-half million. Today's gang members are more likely than other young criminals to engage in violent crime. In 1989, 554 murders in Los Angeles were attributed to gangs, up 18 percent from 1988 and 30 percent from 1987. Police report gang problems in Minneapolis, Des Moines, Kansas City, Wichita, Phoenix, and Salt Lake City. The gangs, Bloods and Crips, have members in 49 cities in 48 states.

The murder rate in many areas is rising, and that increase is widely attributed to the prevalence of drugs. Between 1967 and 1991, violent crimes jumped 60 percent in Detroit. In 1989, 52 percent of Washington D.C.'s record number of homicides were drug-related, and in 1988, 61 percent of the murders were linked to drugs.

Reported cases of abuse against children are increasing. Each year more than 1 million children are abused and neglected in the U.S. Some experts estimate that only one third of all child abuse cases are reported to authorities.

Reported abuse against females is growing. According to recent studies, over 20 percent of adult women, 15 percent of college women, and 12 percent of adolescent girls have been sexually abused and assaulted. These figures do not include assaults and the many rapes which go unreported. Reports of wife abuse are increasing as well. Conservative estimates indicate that at least 1.8 million women are battered each year and that approximately 2,000 to 4,000 die as a result of these beatings. Nearly 50 percent of all female murder victims are killed by boyfriends or husbands.

... 1.8 million women are battered each year.

Violence against young people increasingly involves firearms. The jump over the last decade in the homicide rate for 15- to 19-year-olds is due solely to increases in firearm homicide. Firearm homicide is the second leading cause of death for all 15- to 19-year-olds.

Violence among strangers appears to be increasing. Since 1960, the rate of violence between people unknown to one another has risen nearly twice as fast as murder by family or acquaintances. In 1989, nearly 60 percent of all reported murder victims did not know their assailant, up from 13.3 percent in 1980. In addition, the number of innocent bystanders murdered in Washington D.C., New York, Los Angeles, and Boston has tripled over the past three years.

IMPLICATIONS

Although experts disagree about statistics, causes, and solutions, many agree about some basic forecasts and implications.

Fear of crime is likely to create further restrictions on individual freedoms and lower the quality of life for many. A recent survey found that approximately 86 percent of people polled believe crime is increasing. Americans spend over \$20 billion annually for private security guard protection alone. Billions more are spent to retreat behind grillwork, high-intensity lighting, electronic surveillance, and alarm systems.

Without significant change, violent crime is likely to increase in areas where large numbers of unemployed youth are concentrated. Over half the street crime in Manhattan is committed by jobless young men. The total number of crimes committed by young offenders aged 20 to 24 is expected to shrink because the size of that age group is decreasing. Yet some experts expect a growing number of offenders will be chronically violent.

If present trends continue, gun-related violence is likely to escalate. In 1989, about 62 percent of murders were committed by people wielding guns. Assaults involving guns are five times more likely to kill than attacks with knives.

The personal and public costs of current domestic violence may escalate in the future as patterns of abuse stretch out across decades and generations. Domestic violence often becomes part of a continuing cycle, with abused children becoming abusive spouses or parents. Battered women are more likely to need assistance for problems of alcoholism, drug abuse, severe depression, suicide attempts, and child abuse.

Increased use of crack, ice, or cheap, potent derivatives of cocaine and heroin are bringing even greater levels of street violence. Drug dealers are less likely to be governed by "street codes" that limit violence. Many dealers come from countries where intimidation through violence and murder is commonplace.

Violence is becoming a national health problem. "The level of violence is so high that by any traditional measure of public health importance, fatal and nonfatal injuries resulting from interpersonal violence have become one of the most important public health problems facing our country," according to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

POLICY OPTIONS

Despite widespread disagreement on causes and solutions to violent crime, most experts and policymakers agree that prevention of violence must involve at least these components: (1) incarceration of hard-core criminals, (2) community involvement, and (3) efforts to reduce the size of the underclass.

Proposals along these lines include suggestions to:

- Increase penalties for the use of firearms in connection with crimes of violence.
- Cut supplies of drugs to the U.S. and step up programs to halt drug trafficking and abuse.
- Guarantee chronic offenders serve longer sentences and face certainty of incarceration. Career criminals are responsible for a huge percentage of offenses.
- Restrict access to handguns and semiautomatic rifles through a national firearms policy.
- Establish programs to identify high-risk youth, to provide jobs and educational opportunities, and to teach alternatives to violence.
- Encourage community responsibility for crime prevention through cooperation with law enforcement agencies and local campaigns.

The CDC, based on the recommendations of an expert panel, is developing guidelines for community programs to prevent youth violence. For information, contact the Division of Injury Control, National Center for Environmental Health and Injury Control, CDC, Public Health Service, Atlanta, GA 30333.

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ADDRESS



PROGRESS REPORT FOR: Adolescents and Young Adults

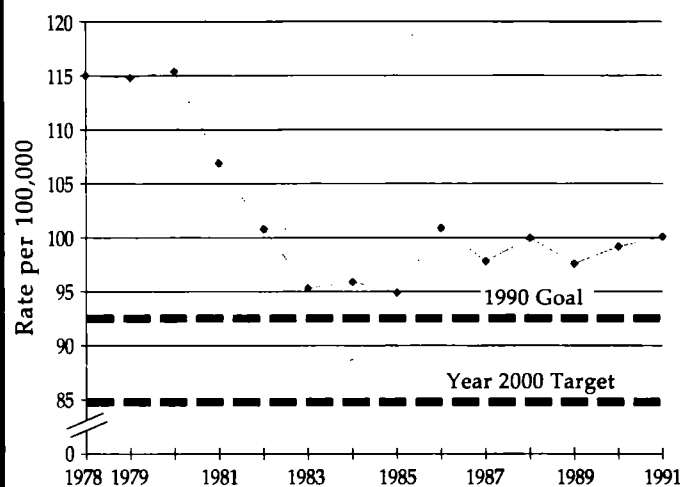
ON DECEMBER 17, 1993, the Public Health Service (PHS) conducted a crosscutting review of progress on HEALTHY PEOPLE 2000 objectives related to adolescents and young adults. The PHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control and National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) provided an overview of critical health problems of adolescents and reviewed strategies toward achieving the year 2000 targets. A highlight of progress on HEALTHY PEOPLE 2000 objectives was presented by the Director of CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. The U.S. Department of Education's (DEd) Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education co-chaired the review. Staff of the Health Care Financing Administration and the Administration for Children and Families attended along with representatives from the American Medical Association, Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, Office of Technology Assessment, and Maternal and Child Health Policy Research Center. Other PHS participants included the Office of Population Affairs, President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, CDC's Office on Smoking and Health, and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, as well as HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau and Bureau of Primary Health Care.

The progress review began with Joycelyn Elders, M.D., U.S. Surgeon General, expressing concern about the health status of young people. She called for more comprehensive programs targeting the needs of youth and noted that the purpose of this progress review was to reflect on current status, as well as to discuss what can be done to improve the health of the Nation's young people. Dr. Elders stressed her desire that "the Nation make an 'A' in adolescent health." The Assistant Secretary for Education emphasized the important relationship between health and education and expressed support for collaborative efforts at the Federal and community levels.

Sixty HEALTHY PEOPLE 2000 objectives target adolescents and young adults. One general health status indicator (see first chart) shows that the death rate for adolescents and young adults was 100.1 per 100,000 in 1991. This rate, which declined from 1980-1983 and then leveled off, has increased over the past several years; the rate now is above the 1990 goal and is moving away from the year 2000 target of 85 deaths per 100,000.

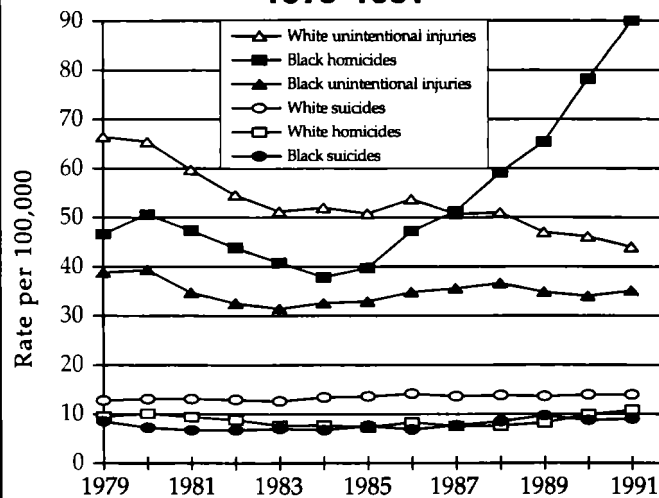
The three leading causes of death for 15- to 24-year-olds are unintentional injuries, suicide, and homicide (see second chart). Homicide increasingly is affecting young people, both as perpetrators and victims, and has

Death Rates for Adolescents and Young Adults 15-24 Years of Age, 1978-1991



Source: CDC/NCHS, NVSS, 1978-91.

Leading Causes of Death for Adolescents and Young Adults 15-24 Years of Age 1979-1991



Source: CDC/NCHS, NVSS, 1979-91.

13790162 DIALOG File 647: MAGAZINE ASAP *This is the FULL TEXT*

Children who kill. (includes related article with four examples)

Maker, Jocelyn; Brittain, James; Piraino, Giancarlo; Somtow, S.P.

World Press Review v40 p21(3) June, 1993

SOURCE FILE: MI File 47

ISSN: 0195-8895

illustration; photograph

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ABSTRACT: Children are committing more violent crimes worldwide. Experts are uncertain what the reasons for the increase are, but some feel that the increasing depiction of death and brutality on television and in other media contributes to the amorality of the culture and children.

DESCRIPTORS: Children--Crime; Violence in mass media--Analysis

When children, the symbol of innocence, commit the severest of crimes, then something must be going wrong with society. Children who kill are not a curiosity found only in England with gruesome acts such as the recent Liverpool child murder. They also do it in the U.S., France, Sweden, Italy, and Germany. Children kill and rob; they rape and torture. While only one in seven criminal suspects in Germany in 1991 was younger than 18, the numbers are not conclusive. Among psychologists and criminologists, horror is aroused by an increasing inclination toward violence. What sort of children are they? Why do they do it? Are they sick, do they have asocial parents, or are they just spoiled brats? Are "real-life" shows on TV really the cause of growing child violence, or, as a perplexed talk-show host recently asked, does heavy-metal music produce violence?

Killing is, of course, the extreme form of violence. With this horrible act comes a powerful release of aggression. Whereas undisputed norms of behavior once tamed destructive impulses, today violence is given vent. Our aggressive society, with its eroded standards, has made violence acceptable. But young culprits are also victims. They are the mirror images of the adult world in which they grow up.

The latest generation must cope with a confusion of values, the extent of which can hardly be estimated. Clear measure of right and wrong, good and evil, as they were still imparted in the 1950s and 1960s by parents, schools, churches, and often even by politicians, are hardly recognizable anymore. In an information age, news and fiction, reality and possibility, truth and manipulated opinion all are entangled, making for children an impenetrable jungle where orientation is sometimes impossible.

Every child who behaves violently has observed and internalized unbelievable quantities of violence. Not only structural violence that is inevitable in any community, not only the beatings in the schoolyard, but also the violence of the entire planet: Via TV, three-year-olds hear about and see torture victims from Turkey, the war in Angola, executions in the U.S., death on the highways, and murder in the suburbs. Gradually, parents and the schools have lost the monopoly on education. The three-generation extended family has become the three-television household.

Investigations into what "family" means today bring forth gloomy concepts such as "deinstitutionalization," "monster children," and

"narcissistic disturbance." Among 80 million Germans, the classic nuclear family of father, mother, and two children occurs in only about 2.5 million instances.

Divorce dramas gain the force of tragedy as children are taken as emotional hostages to the disappointed love between marriage partners. The consequence: Divorce victims become divorce "perpetrators" who, by trying to make everything better for themselves through their relationships with the children, usually just make everything worse. What arises in many families are the "monster children," as they are called by the authors of advice books. Children are pushed to the center of the parental conflict, which causes them to lose all orientation. If they cannot find what they need in the schools, they take to the streets--sometimes with violence.

The code of conduct no longer comes only from Mom and Dad but also from pop culture. The American heavy-metal group Gwar has decapitated life-size puppets of Pope John Paul II and George Bush on stage and shown videos depicting their fantasies of massacre. The Swedish group Dismember sings texts such as, "I butchered the whore / Flayed her alive/Did it for the thrill/I would never have dreamed that it's so much fun to kill someone." Do songs such as these beget violence, as conservative politicians claim, or do they reflect violent experiences? Are children brutalized because they are rewarded in computer games with bonus points when they "extinguish" an enemy? Is the development of ethical foundations inhibited by the daily news?

Twenty percent of elementary-school children see more than 40 hours of television a week. On an average weekend, there are about 800 acts of violence--among them 150 murders--to see on television. For more than two decades, the debate over murder and manslaughter depicted in the media has grown, with no consequence. In fact, the fronts have hardened: conservative moralists, who have interlarded TV with politics and who would most like to bring back the supposed good old days, against liberal defenders of the arts, who in a proposed ban on violent broadcasting see the first step toward rigid censorship. To be sure, direct connections between screen violence and violent behavior by children have still not been explained down to the last scientific detail: Cases such as that of the 15-year-old from Bavaria, who, dressed in camouflage like his model, Rambo, cut a young man's throat with a camping knife, are rare. Nevertheless, a wide-reaching agreement has arisen: Teachers and psychologists notice a dulling and desensitization toward violence in the daily behavior of the young.

Some aggression and violence are part of normal child development. The apparently brutal behavior of children toward animals and the rebellion against parents are part of this process. But in the realm of video games, to which many children flee more and more often--or here they are shoved to give their parents a rest--there are no limits. No dog bites back; a person shot shows no direct effect. The experience that violence causes pain is almost totally lacking in the young.

In a survey of high-school students in the German state of Schleswig-Holstein, 14 percent of those questioned had seen brutal beatings among students "often to very often." About 7 percent reported that clubs, brass knuckles, or stones were used in those beatings. Compassion is

"frowned upon as uncool," observed Stuttgart policeman Willi Pietsch. Thus it happens that bystanders not only do not help the victim but even encourage the culprit--the dark side of a world view that places success above almost everything.

In a Darwinian society, hand-to-hand combat with one's neighbor triumphs in every arena over selflessness, solicitude, sensitivity. Whoever wants to become a hero had better have the killer instinct--whether in the job search, on the tennis court, or in front of an immigrant shelter is broke or lacking political power has to look after his interests with ice-cold harshness. Children learn that quickly. "We have become an inhuman society," says Hamburg psychology professor Stefan Schmidtchen, "and our children are developing that way, too."

"Less understanding and more sentencing," recommends England's Prime Minister John Major. In England, where the age of criminal responsibility is reached at 10 years, there are already more children behind bar than in Germany. The U.S. has been trying to rehabilitate violent minors in quasi-military re-education camps. But success eludes them. The U.S. has the highest ratio of criminality among teenagers and children of all the industrialized countries. In some German states, children can be stuck in detention homes if necessary, but the Hamburg Justice Department no longer lets children be locked up. The consequence: Auto thieves, hardly tall enough to look over the steering wheel, race to their deaths, even though police have already arrested them a dozen times for the same offense. But most experts believe that prisons put youth on the wrong track. They come out as "perfect criminals," fears German researcher Klaus Hurrelmann.

An example of how helpless the authorities are in handling young culprits is the case of 13-year-old Marco, who killed 10-year-old Denny Dahl and eight-year-old Manuel Kunze in Leipzig. Marco was an irascible child and a slow learner. His parents, fearing for their son, sent him to a home for children. There, older children abused him sexually. Back at home, he did to other boys and girls what had been done to him. Most of his victims held still, and he let them live. Manuel died, said Marco, because he wanted to "back out." At the trial, the psychological expert witness stated that Marco has an anti-social and emotionally impoverished personality. His stay in the home had robbed him of his development. The judgment: seven years and six months for the murder and sexual abuse, as well as treatment in a psychiatric hospital.

In recent months, the Leipzig Department of Public Prosecution has decreed that no "present accommodations suitable" for Marco exist in therapeutic institutions. Court reporter Gerhard Mauz, who closely followed the case and the trial, fears that "this could be deadly for the kid. It is probable that such a highly aggressive youth in jail will get involved in dangerous fights." Marco sees it this way: "There are a lot of people who would rather see me dead."

Treating Teen-Agers as Adults in Court: A Trend Born of Revulsion

By LAURA MANSNERUS

In Denver, a child visiting the zoo last summer was hit by a bullet intended by one teen-ager for another. In Salt Lake City, a 17-year-old was kicked, then shot to death by a knot of high-school students. Along a Florida interstate highway, a British tourist was killed after pulling into a rest stop; among the suspects, a 13-year-old.

As if the gunshots summoned them, legislators in Colorado, Utah and Florida met in special sessions this fall and enacted measures making it easier to prosecute teen-agers as young as 14 as adults. A half-dozen other states took similar steps earlier this year, and many more are considering them.

"Juveniles have become more violent and deadly, and kill at much younger ages," said Chuck Quackenbush, a Republican in the California State Assembly who has introduced a bill to lower the age at which one can be tried in adult court from 16 to 14 in murder cases. He cited the latest State Attorney General's report, showing that 18.7 percent of homicides in California were committed by juveniles, up from 9.8 percent in 1986.

Mr. Quackenbush said he was moved to act by the case of a youth in San Jose, Calif., who, one month shy of his 16th birthday, hacked a child to death with a meat cleaver for no apparent reason. Not subject to prosecution as an adult, the teen-ager must be released by state youth authorities at age 25.

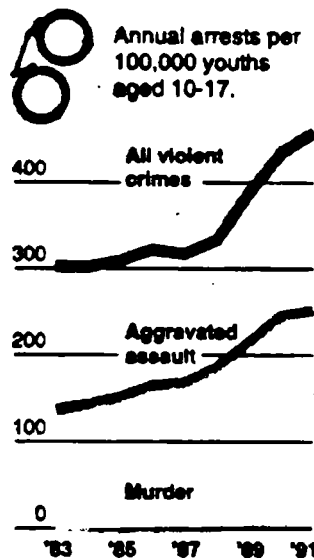
It was the kind of crime that made many people wonder whether some adolescents are beyond redemption, just as the murder in England of a 2-

year-old by a pair of 10-year-olds raised questions about the innocence of fifth graders.

The mission of juvenile courts, which ordinarily handle defendants under age 18, is not to punish offenders but to help them become law-abiding members of society. A consensus among legislators nationwide, however, holds that some crimes are horrific enough that no matter how old the criminal, the courts should focus on the nature of the offense rather than the nature of the offender.

"What the law has told juveniles is, 'Go ahead, commit the crime, you don't have to do the time,'" said Florida State Representative Carlos Manrique, a Miami area Republican. "Now we're saying, 'Do the crime; do the time.'"

Youths and Violence



Source: National Center for Juvenile Justice

Mark Soler, executive director of the Youth Law Center of San Francisco, says California and Florida are "just following a trend." He said he does not object to giving certain brutal young offenders long sentences. But he worries that public fury over a few isolated cases will push larger categories of youths, most of them neither evil nor unreachable, into a system where they have no chance of rehabilitation.

"I don't think a blunderbuss approach is going to do it," he said. "We need intensive follow-up; we need after-care, otherwise what's the point of putting kids in the adult system? The recidivism rate is astronomical."

Homicide Defendants

Even a majority of homicide defendants should probably be treated as juveniles, said Charles Patrick Ewing, a professor of law and psychology at the State University of New York at Buffalo and the author of "Kids Who Kill" (Lexington Books, 1990). He estimates that 10 to 20 percent have killed a family member.

"Unfortunately, these provisions apply across the board," Professor Ewing said. "An abused kid kills his abusive father and he's going to be charged as an adult? You're going to put him in with the most vicious kid, the one who walks into the 7-Eleven and blows the clerk away for \$15?"

At the heart of the debate is the notion of criminal responsibility: questions of whether a person should be punished for his or her actions. The question, said Barry C. Feld, a criminologist and a law professor at the University of Minnesota, is, "Does the person know the nature and consequences of his act and that it is wrong?" The same question is asked in the common law insanity defense, he said.

Knowing Right From Wrong

Professor Feld says setting 14 as the age of criminal responsibility is a return to 400-year-old common law standards and an idea that is supported by modern psychological research.

But Stanton E. Samenow, a psychologist who has written several books on criminal behavior, sees little

difference between the thinking of a 12-year-old criminal and a 30-year-old one. "I'd say 14 or 16, 13 or 12, these kids know right from wrong," Dr. Samenow said. "But at the time they're committing an act, they're able to shut off such considerations to do what they want to do. That's the chilling thing."

"Kids develop conscience in the Oedipal years. That's 3 to 5 years of age."

Marvin Wolfgang, the University of Pennsylvania criminologist who has studied juvenile delinquents over generations, said "a child at 14 does have a sense of right and wrong similar to an adult's" but has fewer defenses against violence all around him. "He's in a subculture in which violence is expected, tolerated and in some cases required," Professor Wolfgang said. "The 25-year-old may be in the same situation but has been exposed to more environmental chances of disrupting that connection."

Handling Young Offenders

In sentencing, however, the experts believe in drawing distinctions between juveniles and adults. Professor Feld, for example, favors "a youth discount," because teen-agers experience time differently from adults and "because we recognize that to some degree young people are different in their judgment, in their ability to appreciate the future consequences of their behavior."

Legislators care more about their constituents than about issues of criminology. "I don't care where he goes, as long as he's off the streets of

my town," Mr. Quackenbush said of the youngster who wielded the meat cleaver.

In pushing down the age of criminal responsibility, New York was a leader. In 1978 the state, already one of only a handful with adult court jurisdiction beginning at age 16 rather than 18, extended it to 14- and 15-year-olds charged with serious felonies; for murder cases the age was lowered to 13.

Since then, most other states have either allowed juvenile court judges to transfer certain cases to adult court or given the criminal courts original jurisdiction, usually permitting the transfer of a younger defendant to the juvenile system upon a showing that he is amenable to treatment there.

Many states have steadily brought more juveniles into the adult courts. Utah, for example, has long provided that any felony defendant 14 or older could be sent to adult court by a juvenile court judge. In 1981 prosecutors were given the option of initiating cases in adult court for serious offenses by those 16 years old or older. Under the new legislation, primarily a gun control package, a 16-year-old felony defendant can be charged in adult court if he has previously committed an offense involving a dangerous weapon.

When the Utah Legislature reconvenes next month, it will take up more proposals involving teen-age crime, said Reed M. Richards, chief deputy to the state Attorney General.

"It's become such a hot issue in Salt Lake — Salt Lake's not used to gang violence — I think anything you can imagine is going to be on the drawing board," he said, "particularly involving locking up juveniles."

One incident that shocked Utah residents was the killing of a 17-year-old who was dragged from his car after a rock concert on Sept. 1. Another 17-year-old, Asi Mohi, who police said was a gang member, has been charged with murder in the case in an adult court.

Rise in Violent Crime

Politicians are responding to a real increase in violent crime, especially homicide, by adolescents. The murder arrest rate among those ages 10 to 17 more than doubled from 1983 to 1991, from 5.4 arrests per 100,000 youths to 12.7 arrests, according to the National Center for Juvenile Justice, a research organization in Pittsburgh. By contrast, the center's data show fairly stable juvenile arrest rates for nonviolent crimes.

Most experts say that for offenses short of murder, sentencing juveniles as adults is at best useless. "No one ever believes that the adult court is going to do better than juvenile

court," said Howard N. Snyder, director of systems research at the National Center for Juvenile Justice. "That's never the argument. The legislators just want to make sure that the kids get put away for a long time."

That approach does not work, either, said Mr. Soler. He cited the example of Florida, which for 10 years has allowed the prosecution of many juveniles in adult court and, unlike many states, sends everyone convicted there to adult prisons. "If that's so effective, then why are we so worried about crime in Florida?" he asked.

Edward J. Loughran, who directs juvenile justice programs for the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial foundation, and who, until July, was commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, said small-scale programs for juveniles do show results, in the form of lower recidivism rates.

A Political Decision

Moreover, he said, "I think a juvenile court judge ought to be the person making the decision about amenability to treatment."

But Professor Feld, for one, says judges are no better than anyone else at predicting dangerousness. Determining the age of criminal responsibility is "a political decision about public safety," he said, and a legitimate exercise of the democratic process.

Professor Feld serves on a commission that is drafting legislative proposals in Minnesota, under which youths 16, 17 and 18 years old who are charged with serious, violent crimes would be presumed subject to criminal court jurisdiction; the burden of proof would be on the defendant to show that he should remain in juvenile court. By Professor Feld's estimate, such legislation would double or triple the number of older minors in adult court.

More such measures are in the making. Mark D. Stewart, director of the Division of Youth Services in Missouri, said that since the arrest of a 13-year-old in the recent kidnapping and killing of a female college basketball star, the issue had brought his office "more calls than we've had in years."

As he spoke, Mr. Stewart had just returned from a meeting of judges, prosecutors and legislators. They discussed lowering the age of certification, he said, to 13 and possibly to 12.

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COVERING VIOLENCE



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN SHAMES/MATRIX

U.S. News & WORLD REPORT

APRIL 8, 1991

\$2.50

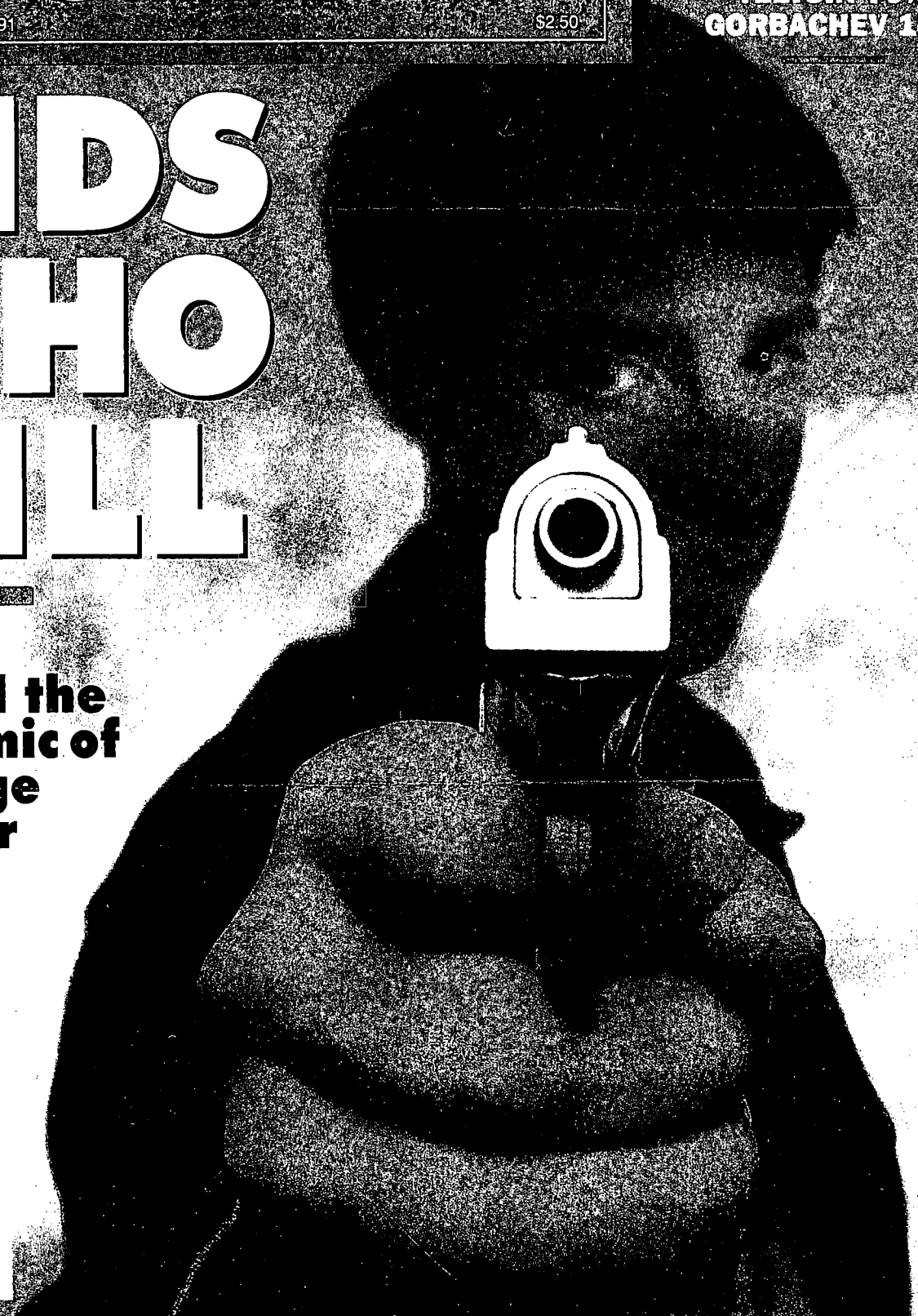
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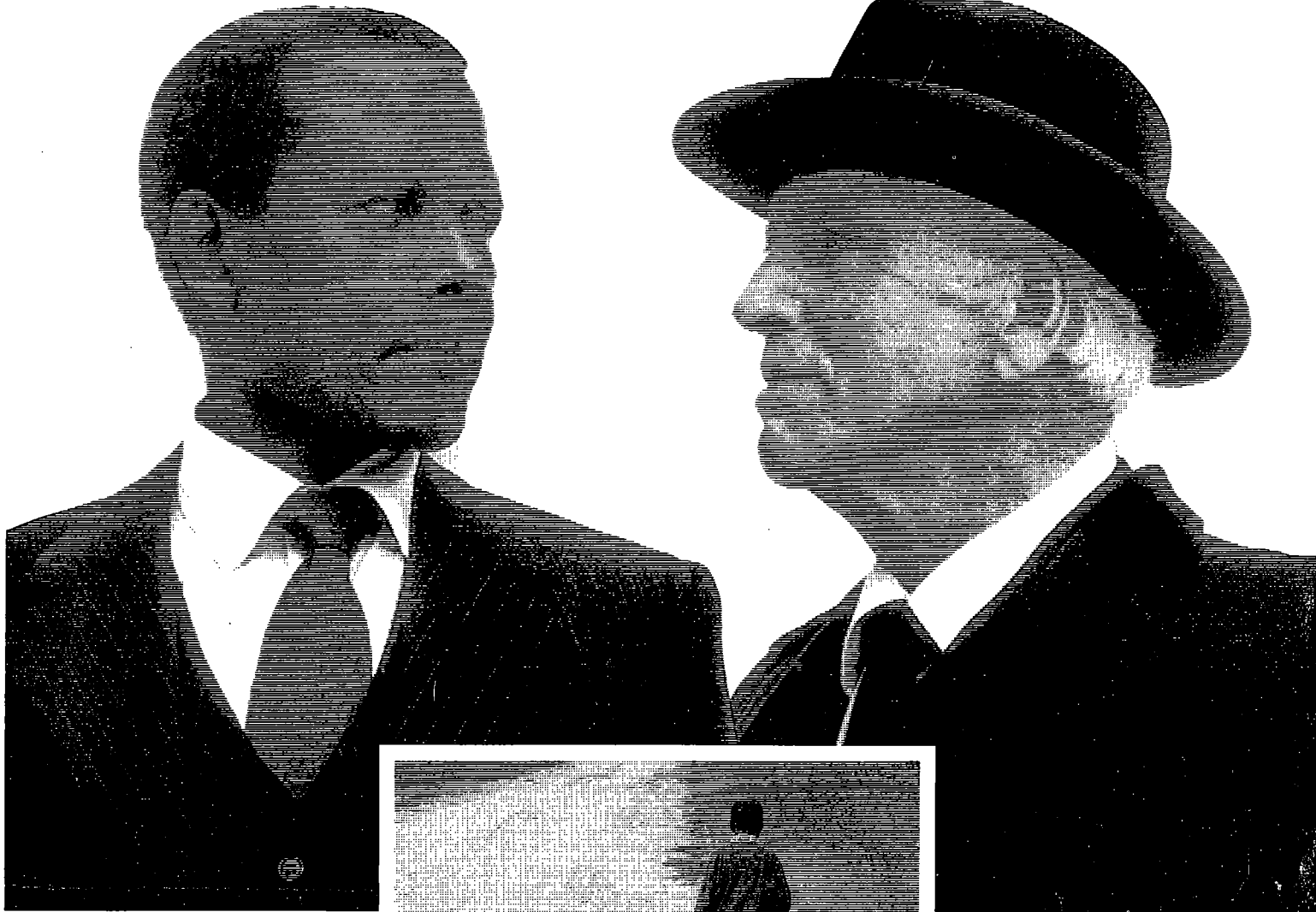
**YELTSIN 70%
GORBACHEV 14%**

KIDS WHO KILL

**What's
behind the
epidemic of
teenage
murder**



Separate But Equal



One had already run for President. One would someday sit on the Supreme Court. They fought in the highest court in the land, pitted against one another over the education of a single black schoolboy. And the result is still being felt today.



Sunday and Monday
April 7th and 8th
9:00 pm EDT on ABC

*Starring **Sidney Poitier** as Thurgood Marshall, **Burt Lancaster** as John W. Davis. With Richard Kiley and Cleavon Little. A George Stevens Jr. Production.*

A General Motors Mark of Excellence Presentation



Our misguided speech police

Reformers have just unfurled a sweeping plan to eliminate all expressions of prejudice among California's 128,000 lawyers: a ban on words or conduct reflecting any bias in race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status.

Does this sound familiar?

It should. It is an off-campus version of the now notorious college speech codes. Muzzlers are on the march. Just when we thought we had the speech police pinned down on the college campuses, they have broken out into the real world, moving down into the high schools and up into the professions.

We are living in the golden age of censorship. The right wants to censor pornography, rap and rock singers, military news, J. D. Salinger's "Catcher in the Rye," photos showing Robert Mapplethorpe's idea of a good time and the burning of the American flag. The left wants to censor tobacco ads, girlie calendars and sex jokes in the workplace, Saturday morning TV, Eurocentric schoolbooks, Andy Rooney, many college newspapers, all sorts of speech and the waving of the Confederate flag. (Sometimes the American flag too. During the gulf war, the sensitivity-prone University of Maryland briefly ruled that students would not be permitted to hang American flags from dorm windows because they might offend antiwar people. Though the flag is always burnable, it is not always waveable.)

Modern methods. The itch to censor will always be with us, but has the urge to control the speech of ordinary Americans ever been so popular? By examining the college codes, we can see the modern method for achieving this control. First, skip over any attempt to appeal to decency, leadership or nonpunitive community standards that might moderate conflict or bring touchy groups together. Instead, adopt the victimization model, portraying the client groups as amazingly weak, resourceless and fragile students in a sea of permanently hostile bigots. This will justify very serious penalties, including expulsion. (It will also enrage those depicted as permanently hostile bigots.) Combine these harsh and very specific penalties with a list of offenses kept as generic and misty as possible. The vagueness of the offenses and the possibility of ominous, complicated proceedings will create the desired air of uncertainty and intimidation, even in private conversation with another student who might report to the speech police.

Note how the California plan follows the campus ones. Penalties are very clear, ranging from public reprimand to disbarment. Offenses are vague. No one knows which remarks are trouble or whether the program covers private as well as professional speech. Would a lawyer's over-

heard comment in a restaurant count? Perhaps "He's too old for her" (age bias) or "The rich are too greedy" (socioeconomic bias)? How about an off-color joke, or criticism of a church for its abortion policy? The California code piously exempts "legitimate advocacy" from its new surveillance; but then, what is "legitimate"?

The state bar association should look at what the codes have done to colleges where authorities monitor dormitory posters, wisecracks, comments on physical appearance and such forbidden classroom opinions as "I think men are better than women in this field." To its credit, the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, which had waffled on college codes, came out instantly against this speech-control plan. But it is still alive, and doubtless we will see many more like it before the fever of censorship passes.

Why does the left behave this way? Because it has only one model for coping with prejudice and group conflict: Emphasize victimization, cite a "hostile environment" and follow with litigation and punishment. This approach clearly doesn't work. It seems spectacularly counterproductive, increasing antagonism, splitting campuses apart and crippling academic freedom. Now similar ruin will apparently be sought in the non-academic world.

In a different but related context (feminist antipornography laws), political scientist Jean Bethke Elshtain of Vanderbilt University argued that

liberalism is locked into this losing strategy. Lacking any language of public morality, she says, and equipped only with a pinched view of society as a set of rights-bearing individuals, liberals must use overinflated rhetoric, unrelenting victimization and a parade of aggrieved litigants having to prove damages to make anything happen.

Of all the campus speech-code incidents, the only one in which I thought a fairly strong case could have been made for the college's restrictive policy was the recent one at Brown. The university expelled a student accused of shouting antiblack, antigay and antisemitic slurs during a drunken late-night stroll across campus. The case could have been made that as a repeat offender on probation, the student had failed to observe minimum community standards of decency at a private university. But the university president, Vartan Gregorian, chose not to go that route. Instead he argued that although the student was entitled to free speech, his epithets had constituted harmful action. This was universally known to be preposterous. The bigoted midnight musings of a largely unheard drunk had harmed no one at all. But locked into the language of victimization, what else could Gregorian have done? ■



BONNIE TIMMONS FOR US&WR

Kids who kill

Disputes once settled with fists are now settled with guns. Every 100 hours, more youths die on the streets than were killed in the Persian Gulf

Kevin's mother was a drug addict, his father a dope dealer. After being taken from them by social workers in his native Massachusetts, Kevin* went to live with his grandparents in Texas. His grandfather, a security guard, let him shoot a .22, and "firing it made me feel like I was on top." By his early teens, he was firing a gun out windows at a nearby day-care center to show off and he had joined a gang. He began carrying a .38-caliber revolver at 14 and obtained guns by burglarizing nearby homes. "I wanted to carry a weapon because I wasn't going to tolerate anything. I was scared and I was mad." At 15, Kevin began working for a Jamaican drug trafficking posse and eventually became an enforcer who did his work by shooting people in the arm.

One day, \$2,000 of the Jamaicans' money was lost, and though Kevin says he was innocent, the blame fell on him. Panicking, he confronted an acquaintance whom he suspected of the theft. "I figured if I shot him, the Jamaicans wouldn't think I'd taken the money," he says. "He begged for his life five times. I shot him in the face at point-blank range and killed him instantly. Blood was everywhere, and some parts of his head were laying in the doorway. I didn't have to kill

him. If I'd just pulled the gun, I could have gotten my money. But still I shot him. The man lost his life over nothing."

This is the stone-hearted ethos of an astonishingly large segment of the teenage population. It saturates not only the gang-ridden environment of the cities but the supposedly more benign suburban world as well. Everyday quarrels that used to result in flailing fists and bloody noses—over a bump on the shoulder, a misinterpreted glance, romantic complications or flashy clothes—now end, with epidemic frequency, in gunshots. The reasons why are clear.

Today's kids are desensitized to violence as never before, surrounded by gunfire and stuffed with media images of Rambo who kill at will. For many inner-city youngsters, poverty and hopelessness yield a "what the hell" attitude that provides the backdrop for gunplay. Family breakdowns further fuel the crisis; a survey of Baltimore public-school students showed that 59 percent of the males who came from one-parent or no-parent homes have carried a handgun. But by far the biggest difference in today's at-

FIREARM MURDERS COMMITTED BY OFFENDERS UNDER AGE 18

952
1989

615
1987

444
1984

U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE —
Bureau of the Census
National Crime
Analysis Program
at Washington University

*Names with an asterisk are pseudonyms; required in some cases by legal restrictions.

Los Angeles. The credo of the streets, for too

mosphere is that the no-problem availability of guns in every nook of the nation has turned record numbers of everyday encounters into deadly ones.

The datelines change daily, but the stories are chillingly similar. In Washington, D.C., 15-year-old Jermaine Daniel is shot to death by his best friend. In New Haven, Conn., Markiest Alexander, 14, is killed in a drive-by shooting. In St. Louis, Leo Wilson, 16, is robbed of his tennis shoes and Raiders jacket and then shot dead. In New York, a 14-year-old boy opens up with a semiautomatic pistol in a



many kids, is "kill or be killed." Among black teens, the firearm death rate is especially high, in part because of the growth of gangs.

Bronx schoolyard, wounding one youngster and narrowly missing another, apparently in a dispute over a girl.

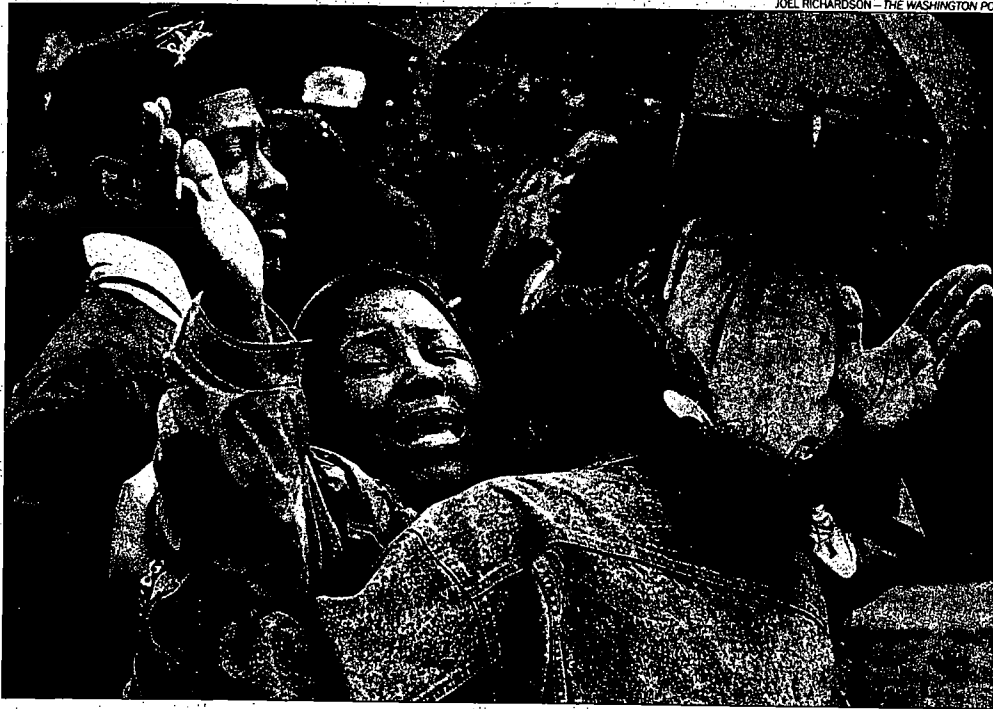
Those outside the city are no less vulnerable. Within the past fortnight, in an exclusive neighborhood of Pasadena, Calif., police say two teenage boys passed a shotgun between them to shoot three young women to death at close range. Asked why, the suspects reportedly told police they'd had angry words with the victims but couldn't remember what the fight was about. In middle-class Lumberton, N.J., outside

Philadelphia, a 14-year-old boy took a revolver from his father's gun cabinet in late February and fatally shot a basketball teammate in the back of the head.

These tales from the streets were punctuated last month by some knee-weakening numbers from the government's National Center for Health Statistics, which analyzed youth firearm death rates from 1979 to 1988. The study showed that gun homicides felled 1,022 teens ages 15 to 19 in 1984; the number spiked to 1,641 in 1988. The picture was especially bleak for young black males 15

to 19, for whom firearm homicides climbed from 418 in 1984 to 955 in 1988. Their homicide rate in 1988 was more than 11 times the rate for their white counterparts. And research by James Alan Fox of Northeastern University shows that the number of black teenage gunmen who have killed has risen sharply, from 181 in 1984 to a record 555 in 1989.

"During every 100 hours on our streets we lose more young men than were killed in 100 hours of ground war in the Persian Gulf," lamented Louis Sullivan, secretary of the Department of Health and



▲ **Miami.** Honor student Michelle Cabrera, 15, was shot to death last December 21, apparently in a Russian roulette incident. A 14-year-old boy was indicted.

◀ **Washington, D.C.** Teresa Thomas, the aunt of two teenage shooting victims, Terita Lucas, 18, and Teresa Thomas, 17, collapses in relatives' arms while one of the bodies is taken away.

Human Services. "Where are the yellow ribbons of hope and remembrance for our youth dying in the streets?"

Amid the carnage, much of the political discussion seems sterile and off the point. Last week, when Ronald Reagan endorsed the Brady bill, a modest measure that would require a seven-day waiting period to buy a gun, it was heralded by gun-control advocates. In fact, almost all teens who kill with guns *already* get them illegally, and nothing in the bill or George Bush's get-tough crime law will address the existing system that places more and more guns with greater and greater firepower in the hands of kids.

Some communities are taking small steps to halt the tragic cycle of teenage gun violence. But psychologist Charles Patrick Ewing, author of "When Children Kill," argues that the confluence of several trends is foreboding. Among them: the continuing proliferation of guns, increases in numbers of abused and neglected children, hefty juvenile poverty rates and a projected 7.7 percent increase in the population of 5-to-17-year-olds. Ewing predicts this will be "the bloodiest decade of juvenile violence we've ever seen."

The explosion of guns

John* had two requirements for the homes he burglarized

around Winston-Salem, N.C.: first, that they belonged to gun owners and, second, that the owners weren't home. For more than a year and a half, at the rate of a house a day, he batted nearly 1,000. John, now 15, traded many of the guns for marijuana and cocaine. Sometimes he sold the guns at school. Either way, they moved. "If somebody knows you have a gun—nobody is going to mess with you," he says.

John's days as a gun burglar ended when the police were tipped off to his activities. He was charged with 15 counts of breaking and entering and two counts of burglary. He spent 14 months at a camp for problem kids, must serve 660 hours of community service and must pay \$2,212 in restitution. His court-appointed counselor says John's only remaining problem is truancy, but for John, temptation abounds. "You can get drugs and guns here real easy," he says of school.

It's the presence of so many guns that makes the current atmosphere so volatile. Arrests of kids under 18 for weapons violations jumped from 19,649 in 1976 to 31,577 in 1989. Firearm murders committed by youngsters in that same age bracket leaped from 444 in 1984 to 952 in 1989, according to the National Crime Analy-

sis Program at Northeastern University.

Ask a streetwise kid how tough it is to get a gun, and a smile is often the response—"no problem." The best available estimates indicate that between 150 million and 200 million guns nationwide are in civilian hands. A 1989 poll reported that nearly 3 out of 5 Americans own guns. Domestic firearm production, after dipping in the early 1980s, grew steadily from 3.1 million in 1986 to 4.4 million in 1989.

A 20-state survey of 11,000 adolescents found that 41 percent of the boys could obtain a handgun if they wanted to. An extrapolation of surveys by the National School Safety Center suggested that 135,000 students carried guns to school daily in 1987. Officials at the center think that figure is higher today.

In cities with strong gun-control laws, like Boston, New York and Washington, weapons are imported and resold at a profit by traffickers who purchase them in states that until recently have had few gun-buying restrictions: Florida, Texas, Virginia, Georgia and Ohio. In Los Angeles, two men operating out of a van in a park east of downtown are thought to have sold more than 1,000 handguns over an eight-month period last year, largely to street-gang members, before being arrested. In suburban Chicago last fall, police say, a 16-year-old boy rented a gun from a fellow student for \$100, then used it to kill his parents.

There is no mystery about how kids get guns. A survey of Baltimore public-


**IN 1984-88, THE
FIREARM DEATH
RATE FOR TEENS
15 TO 19 ROSE
A RECORD 43
PERCENT.**

**A 1989 CHICAGO
SCHOOL SURVEY
SHOWED THAT
39 PERCENT OF
THE CHILDREN
HAD SEEN A
SHOOTING.**



▲ **Pasadena, Calif.** Danae Palermo, 17 (left), and Katherine Macaulay, 18, were two of three teenage girls shot to death in March, after an argument, at a house in an exclusive neighborhood. The suspects, a pair of teen boys, who told police they couldn't remember what the quarrel was about.

► **Boston.** Julia Ivery, mother of shooting victim Charles Ivery, 16, applies rubbing alcohol to his wounds. He was shot in the chest for his coat while walking home one night. "I thought if I gave them the coat, they'd leave me alone," he says. He spent two weeks in the hospital. "Since the shooting, I don't go out much," adds Charles.



school students showed the four most prevalent sources to be street corners, friends, drug dealers and thefts. Residential burglaries are lucrative pipelines, and mom and dad are often unknowingly a ready supply. A Florida school study found that 86 percent of the guns taken from students were from their homes.

And the trend is toward more powerful guns with higher-capacity magazines, like 9-mm semiautomatic pistols. "You ask a young kid what a '9' is, he knows what you're talking about," says Art Boissiere, 19, who grew up in a tough Oakland, Calif., neighborhood and considered carrying a gun himself. A popular 9-mm gun like a Tec-9 might sell for \$300 to \$700 on the street. Other, cheaper guns might go for as little as \$50.

The gang connection

It began as a typical adolescent dispute—two Texas teenagers talking trash over broken car windows. "And then I pulled out the gun," says Victor, 15, whose 1984 Cutlass had been damaged. "And he said, 'You ain't going to shoot me,' and I just started shooting, because he didn't think I would. It would have looked stupid if I pulled the gun and then didn't shoot him. I would have looked dumb."

That's the last thing Victor wanted. He joined a gang at 13 "because I thought I'd be accepted better, and they seemed like family." Guns were everywhere. Soon, Victor was participating in drive-by shootings. "My friends would call me their 'little gangster,'" he says. "With the gun, I

felt like I couldn't be stopped." Victor and his friends broke into homes and pawnshops to steal guns, sometimes running pickup trucks right through the front window of a store. Then he'd sell the guns—some 100 in all—to drug dealers and other unsavory acquaintances. In three months, Victor made about \$6,000.

Then, in retaliation for a drive-by shooting Victor had taken part in, rival gang members broke the windows in that 1984 Cutlass. After he hunted down the supposed culprits, he fired nine shots, wounding two members. "I just got in the car and sped away," he says. "And then right after that, it started raining, right after I shot them. And it didn't seem like a day where it was going to rain."

Much of the fuel for the growth in youth violence flows from gangs and drugs. Not nearly as many teens would have guns if they hadn't raised the money by dealing drugs, nor would the streets be so violent these days in the absence of drug trade. While there has been progress in the war against casual drug use, some 1.7 million to 2.4 million Americans are still weekly cocaine users. But some authorities think the drug trade today is more deadly than ever precisely because traffickers are tussling over a shrinking pie.

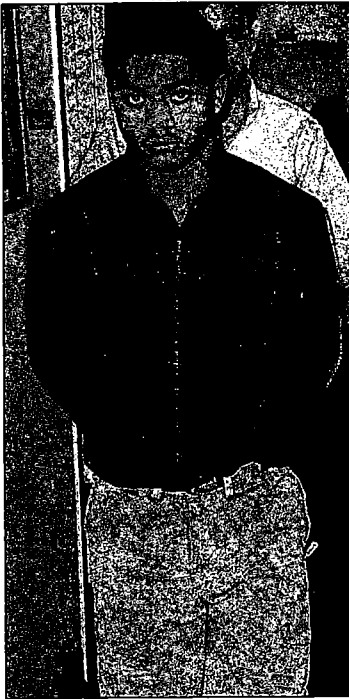
Gangs are growing like a cancer. The Crips and the Bloods began in Southern California about 20 years ago but now have loose affiliations in 32 states and 113 cities. Not only have they absorbed the talents of local toughs, but they've given a twisted kind of haven to confused inner-city kids for whom gangs provide the security, acceptance and protection that are often missing in fragmented homes. The price of that kind of security is horrific. In the Los Angeles area, gangs doubled from 400 with 45,000 members in 1985 to 800 with 90,000 members in 1990. Gang-related killings last year accounted for 690 deaths, 35 percent of the county's homicides.

In this atmosphere, carrying a gun is just keeping up with the Joneses. "The gun is your best friend," says a 15-year-old gang member in south central L.A. One popular local saying: "I'd rather be judged by 12 than carried by six."

Using a gun is often a rite of passage for joining a gang or enhancing a reputation. Recently, a 14-year-old rode by an East L.A. schoolyard on his bike, randomly firing a semiautomatic at the nearly 2,000 children on the playground. "He just wanted to prove to his gang he was worthy," says Capt. Ray Gott of the L.A. County Sheriff's Department. Los Angeles gang experts


**THE FIREARM
DEATH RATE
FOR BLACK TEEN
MALES WAS 2.8
TIMES THE RATE
FOR NATURAL
CAUSES IN 1988.

YOUNG BLACKS
WERE FIVE
TIMES AS LIKELY
AS WHITES TO
BE HOMICIDE
VICTIMS.**



▲ **Phoenix.** Garrett Frank Denton, 14 (left), was "messing around" with a handgun and shot his Glendale, Ariz., buddy Jeffrey Alan Coonan, 15 (right), to death in March 1990. Denton pleaded guilty to negligent homicide.

◀ **Houston.** Demetrick James Walker, 16, was convicted as an adult in the slaying of Johnny Bates Jr. He is serving a life sentence in a Texas state prison. Bates, also 16, had refused to give Walker his expensive leather shoes. Killings over material goods like tennis shoes and jackets are growing increasingly common nationwide.



have identified three levels of gun-packing gang involvement. "The wannabes are starting to do target practice and get used to holding a gun. They may shoot, but in a lot of cases they won't aim," says Steve Valdivia, director of an outreach program called Community Youth Gang Services. "The next level is a gang-involved youth who wants to make his stripes. He's going to kill somebody. But he's not yet seen by his peers as a hard-core crazy person. If they get to that final level, they don't care about themselves or the victim—very random violence, very cold-blooded. These are the guys who will open a casket and shoot a dead body with a semiautomatic until it turns to ketchup. I know that has happened."

The spread of gangs basically followed the interstate highway system. They moved into Minneapolis from Chicago almost 10 years ago and have been building ever since. "The word got out that Minneapolis was easy pickings," says one gang member. "Moneyapolis." The police can identify more than 3,000 gang members, though no one knows for sure. And with the gangs came the guns. Hundreds of them. "They're coming up from Chicago every day," says Ramone,* a member of the Bloods. "My

gang holds them until we need them. I say I'm in trouble and they give me a gun." In Hennepin County, the number of juveniles tried as adults for carrying dangerous weapons—mostly guns—jumped from 14 in 1986-87 to 63 in 1990.

In cities like Austin, Texas, gang growth has come from both home-grown groups and infiltration by outsiders. Gang membership there has climbed from just 200 five years ago to some 2,800 today. Last September, after rival gang members taunted each other at a crowded downtown bus stop, a 16-year-old fired a 9-mm pistol, wounding two other teens and a 61-year-old man.

Fear of the criminal-justice system is largely absent in these teens because they realize the system is jammed and know that juvenile penalties lack real bite. In Austin, older gang members call their younger compadres "minutemen" because they'll only be in jail for a minute. Partly for that reason, the high-stakes hurly-burly of drug trafficking has also drawn scores of youths into gun ownership. Adults hire youngsters to run the drugs because the penalties are so much weaker if they're caught. The danger level, though, is no different. Clarence,* a big-city Texas teen who was clearing \$1,200 weekly dealing dope at 15, needed a

gun "because people on the corner where I was selling were getting robbed, and you never knew who was coming for you." In February 1989, he saw his best friend get killed for dealing bad dope.

As many as 20 to 25 percent of the kids who shoot people are high themselves—on alcohol or drugs like crack or PCP, all of which are "disinhibitors" that may spur violent behavior. "One time I burst right into this guy's house and shot him," says Shooter, 17, of Los Angeles. "Man, was he surprised. But I wasn't thinking about anything bad happening, because I was doing PCP, and I was all kicked up. It was like he could have shot me, and it wouldn't have mattered."

Lowering the killing threshold

Arthur* is busted now, spending a year at the Hennepin County Home School in Minnetonka, just outside Minneapolis. But he can still wax nostalgic about the small, profitable empire he ran with his younger brother and four others, none older than 16. Drugs gave them money; guns gave them power. "Everybody knew we had them," he says. "Everybody knew not to mess with us." Arthur's gang had some real firepower. "There were just so many coming in," he says. "We had six automatics. We had a .25; a .38; two 9-mm semiautomatic pistols, one of which was a Beretta; a .32 automatic; a 20-gauge shotgun. Some we got out of the newspapers. My brother Dennis* went way out in some suburbs and picked them up. He bought an AK-47 [assault rifle] for \$500. It



ANALYST JAMES ALAN FOX SAYS THE NUMBER OF BLACK TEEN GUN KILLERS ROSE FROM 181 IN 1984 TO 555 IN 1989. THE NUMBER OF WHITE TEEN GUN KILLERS WENT FROM 257 TO 380 IN THAT PERIOD.



◀ **Washington, D.C.** *Jermaine Daniel (left) was befriended by former Washington, D.C., Police Chief Maurice Turner, who hoped to keep the youth away from trouble. But in January, Daniel, 15, was killed by his best friend in an argument over a girl. Daniel, known as "Fats," had dared his friend to shoot. "You better kill me," he said.*

▶ **Miami.** *Carlton Bailey, 13, is one of the youngest persons in U.S. history charged with murder. He is accused of shooting a 13-year-old playmate. He was charged as an adult, in part because of his juvenile court record of auto theft and breaking and entering.*



seemed like we were the only ones who were out there with real artillery. You'd hear all that gunfire, and it was all us."

For some kids, drugs, gangs and guns are simply vehicles through which to satisfy more basic yearnings. Teens have always wanted power, attention, respect and a tough-guy reputation. But the prevailing gang ethos has lowered the threshold of violence and sanctioned the replacement of fists with firearms as the way to achieve those goals.

Often, the fast route to attention is through money or material goods. Sneakers, coats or cash—kids want it now, and the gun can get it. For Clarence, at 15, the motivation for dealing dope and carrying guns was this: "I wanted to get paid. I thought money was the world. I'd spend it on my girlfriend, or I'd take all my homeboys out. If you made money that day, you'd pay, and that made me feel like I was the big daddy, the big man with the master plan."

But Clarence also discovered that the gun provided a power and an image all its own. "If you had a gun, and you were with a girl, she'd be thinking, 'He's bad,'" says Clarence. "It made me feel macho, like nobody could touch me, like no one's going to mess with me."

Nothing inflames the extreme narcissism and hypersensitivity of teens more than disrespect—"dissin'" in the language of the streets. Teen killers cite it perhaps most often as the justification for their lethal acts. "If someone disre-

spects you or your homeboys, you've got to do something about it," says one Los Angeles teen. "You just can't have them doing that and hold your head up."

One byproduct of this arms race is that many basically good kids now carry guns simply because they're terrified or fed up—or both. "I had it for protection," says Derek of Washington, D.C., who bought a gun at age 17 after a friend was shot to death and Derek himself was robbed. "You lose your sense of dignity after a while, and I wasn't going to let that happen again. I figured the gun would prevent it." In a Boston program for kids caught with weapons, a teacher recently asked, "Is there any way to exist without a weapon?" "Yeah," snapped one teen. "Stay in the house."

The schools crack down

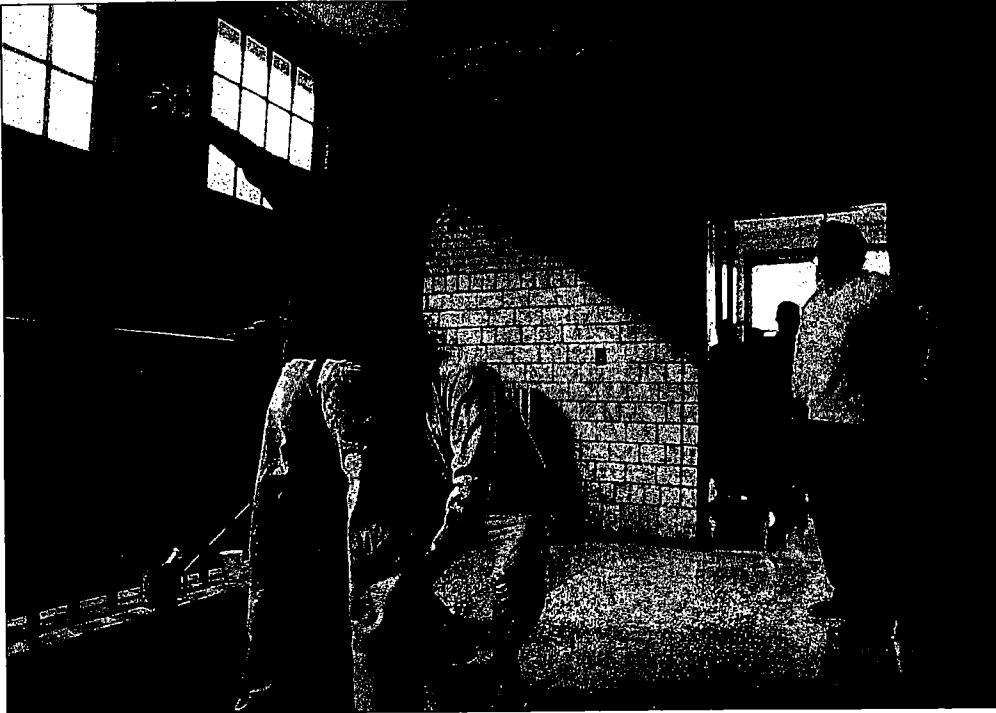
Damon got angry in his Milwaukee school on Valentine's Day. Some friends were teasing him, slapping him in the face. So Damon, 12, decided to get even. "Wait until I get back," he said as he ran off the playground. "I'm going to cap all of you guys." When Damon returned, he stepped through the opening of the fenced-in playground and pulled from his jacket a silver .25 semiautomatic pistol. He fired it, again and again and again. In an instant, a mass of bluejeans and pony-*

tails was screaming and running toward the school's metal doors. The boy Damon says was slapping him cowered behind a teacher. Damon pointed the gun at him. "I'm going to blow your head off," the teachers quoted Damon as saying. Damon fired five shots, hit nobody and then ran from the schoolyard. Why, he is asked, did he do it? "He slapped me in my face," says Damon, tears rolling down his cheeks. What was Damon thinking? "I don't remember thinking anything," he says. "I just did it."

A Seattle high school uses a breathalyzer to test students suspected of drinking; hundreds of Detroit students pass through metal detectors before entering school, and teachers at Fairfax Elementary School in Mentor, Ohio, signal students to duck from gunfire by yelling "earthquake drill." Welcome to the campus of '91, where "bullies," "deathtraps" and "hole diggers"—commonly known as guns—are often as much the rage as faddish haircuts, team jackets and Air Jordans.

School systems across the country are borrowing heavily from correctional institutions with dress codes, metal detectors and security forces patrolling the hallways. Not surprisingly, more and more schools, especially in America's trou-

**IN THE PAST
FOUR ACADEMIC
YEARS, AT LEAST
65 STUDENTS
AND SIX ADULTS
WERE KILLED
WITH GUNS
AT SCHOOL,
201 PERSONS
WERE BADLY
WOUNDED AND
242 PERSONS
WERE HELD AT
GUNPOINT.**



Boston. Teenagers caught with weapons in school are sent to the Barron Assessment Center.

bled inner cities, now resemble prisons, with bars across windows, camera monitors and bolted doors. Some school systems are even requiring students to wear identification badges.

At Belvedere Junior High in Los Angeles, where campus aides patrol the hall to maintain order, visitors register name, time and destination with security personnel and are escorted by aides with two-way walkie-talkies. Signs, barely legible through the graffiti, warn against vandalism and trespassing. Seven students, some members of notorious local gangs, have been killed in the past year; two died in one weekend last month. Last fall, a 13-year-old gang member was shot just blocks from the school and died on a sidewalk as his friends gathered around. "This is my fifth year as principal," says Victoria Castro. "The first four years, I lost maybe two children to gang violence. Now we have drive-by shootings onto campus. The only thing I keep hoping is that I have no actual incident on campus."

Even suburban schools are coming face to face with guns and crime. A recent study of Illinois high-school students found that 5.3 percent of them said they had brought a gun to school, and 1 in 12 students confessed to sometimes staying away out of fear.

Communities respond

Exasperated by the ever growing teenage body count, a variety of educators, psychologists, pediatricians and just plain folks are experimenting with ways of stopping the carnage. Among them:

■ **Violence prevention.** Several programs attempt to teach children how to prevent violence; most prominent among them is a curriculum for adolescents used in Boston high schools and several other cities, developed by Deborah Prothrow-Stith of the Harvard School of Public Health. The 10-session curriculum tries to reduce the allure of violence, make clear its consequences and show kids alternative avenues for dealing with anger.

Most experts are encouraged but think the jury's still out on the curriculum's effectiveness.

■ **Gun awareness.** Alarmed by a rise in gun deaths, schools in Dade County, Fla., inaugurated their own gun-safety program in the 1988-89 school year, in cooperation with the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence. The effort employs books, role-playing and videos to "deglamorize and deglorify the possession and use of guns," says coordinator Bill Harris. Early results are promising, but such programs are only a small piece of the puzzle. The National Rifle Association also runs several gun-safety programs tailored to

different age groups; one emphasis is the need to secure guns at home.

■ **Offender diversion.** For the past four years, every Boston public-school student caught with a weapon has been sent to the Barron Assessment & Counseling Center for a five-to-10-day stay. Students there undergo a detailed psychological and educational assessment, and a plan is developed for working with them once they are either back in school or in some alternative setting. BACC students also participate in counseling, regular academic work, violence-prevention classes and trips to local detention facilities. The center has serviced more than 1,000 students, and the recidivism rate is about 5 percent. Director Franklin Tucker admits it would be helpful to have the kids for a longer time. But, adds staffer Richard Puckerin, BACC does

provide its kids "a timeout, a chance to think and reflect."

■ **Peers.** Teens on Target, an Oakland, Calif., program, is based on the idea that young people are better equipped than adults to attack their violence problem. Student volunteers are trained as violence-prevention "advocates," learning about guns, drugs and family violence, and then sent to schools to teach ways of preventing violence. Officials are enthusiastic; they are scraping up more money for the program.

Many believe getting the guns off the streets is the only answer. But the existing gun-control debate misses the mark. Gun-control measures that might help—like personalized combination locks on the gun's safety, allowing only the original owner to use the gun—are not even part of the current political debate.

Some argue that focusing solely on the weapons obscures the underlying causes of teen gun violence—especially the sense of hopelessness that pervades many inner cities. Yet the national inclination not even to tackle systematically the immediate issue of violence and gun availability suggests there's even less hope that the larger issues will be addressed. And that means the uniquely American tragedy of teens killing teens is likely to continue its record run. ■

BY GORDON WITKIN WITH STEPHEN J. HEDGES,
CONSTANCE JOHNSON, MONIKA GUTTMAN IN LOS ANGELES,
LAURA THOMAS IN SAN FRANCISCO AND ANNE MONCREIFF
ARRARTE IN MIAMI

**GUN PRICES
ON THE STREET
VARY. THE HOT-
TEST WEAPON, A
TEC-9, RETAILS
FOR \$150-\$200
AND GOES FOR
UP TO \$700
ON THE STREET.
THE SMALLER
RAVEN P-25s
NET UP TO \$250
ON THE BLACK
MARKET.**

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Carnegie Quarterly

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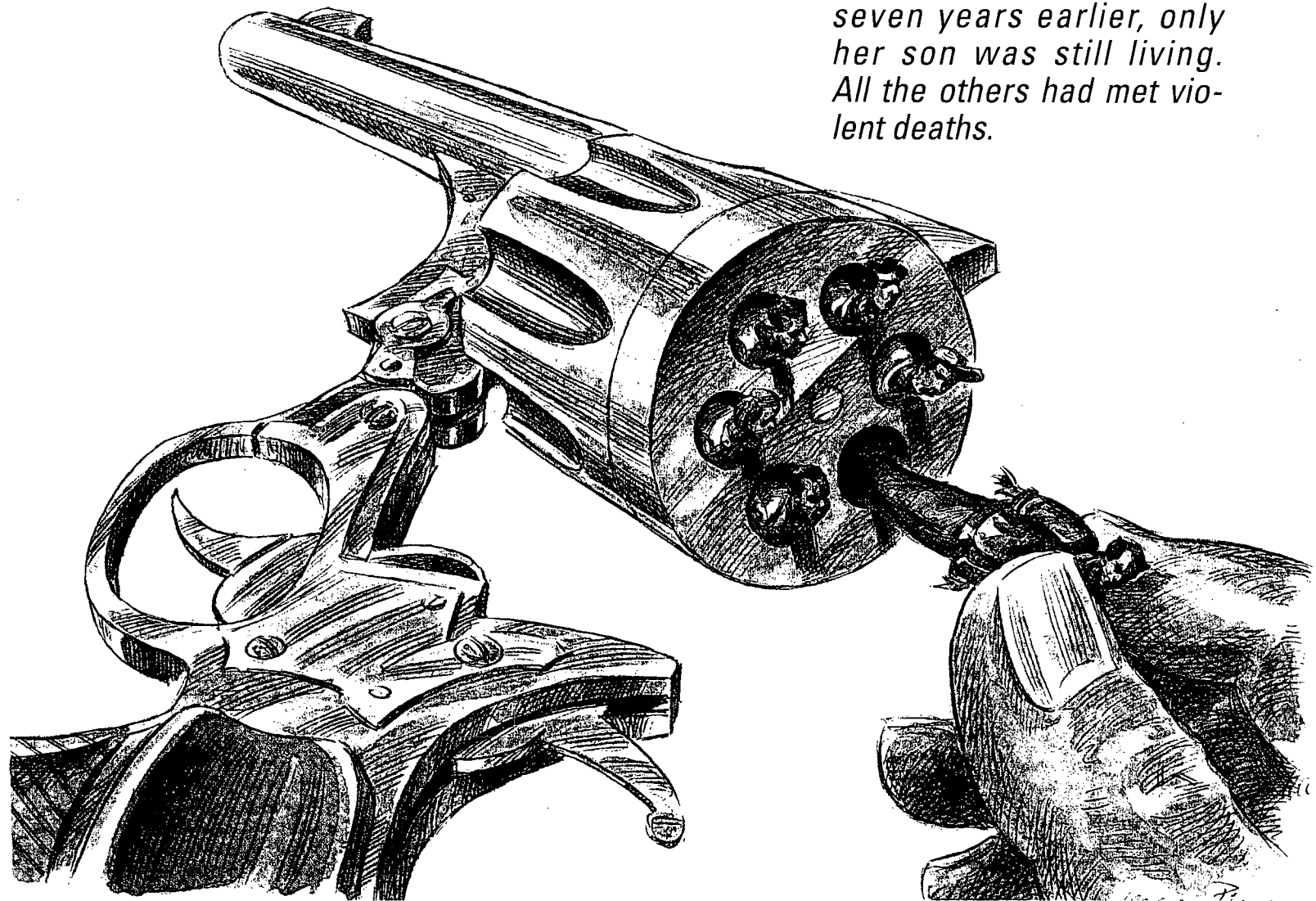
VOLUME XXXIX/NUMBER 1

WINTER 1994

SAVING YOUTH FROM VIOLENCE

"Mom, can I tell you something? I'm worried. All of the boys I grew up with are dead. I lie awake at night and think about it. What am I supposed to do?"

The question was from a thirteen-year-old boy in New Orleans. His mother suddenly realized that, of a group of six-year-olds who had started school together seven years earlier, only her son was still living. All the others had met violent deaths.



LEVEL 1 - 1 OF 1 STORY

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SECTION: Section A; Page 10; Column 1; National Desk

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HEADLINE: Hope Seen for Curbing Youth Violence

BYLINE: By DANIEL GOLEMAN

BODY:

Although statistics show that violence is rising among American youths, a panel of psychologists released a report yesterday offering an optimistic view of what might be done to reverse the bloody tide.

The escalation in violence among young people is captured in statistics like these: a 61 percent increase in the 1980's in shootings committed by Americans 15 to 19 years old, and a 1,740 percent rise in the number of children and teen-agers treated for knife and gunshot wounds since 1986 at the Children's National Medical Center in Washington.

But the American Psychological Association's Commission on Violence and Youth said in the report that other data found in its survey of earlier studies showed that a variety of efforts could help reverse the trend.

"Psychology has a message of hope: violence is preventable," said Dr. Ronald G. Slaby, a psychologist at Harvard University who is one of the commission's 12 members. "Violence is learned, and we can teach children alternatives."

Early Intervention Encouraged

Intervening at an early age, especially from 4 to 8, before children's habits of aggression are fixed, was among the commission's main recommendations. Violence "is learned very early in life, and learned well," said the commission's chairman, Dr. Leonard Eron, a psychologist at the University of Michigan. "Interventions work best if they are started early. The longer you wait, the harder it is to change."

The commission recommended efforts aimed at the family, the classroom, the community and the media. The report described as particularly effective programs in the schools that teach social and emotional skills like managing anger, negotiating, adopting another child's perspective and thinking of alternative solutions to disagreements. Children who are already aggressive can benefit from special tutoring along these lines.

The report saw television as one vehicle for teaching children positive alternatives to violence. It called on the Federal Communications Commission to make license renewal for broadcasters depend in part on their providing programs that counter violence, and it asked that violence be sharply curtailed in the hours that children watch television most.

The New York Times, August 11, 1993

"Television has great teaching potential," Dr. Eron said. "It's just been teaching the wrong things."

Another recommendation is that laws be changed to require anyone who purchases a gun to be of voting age and pass a background check and a test on firearm safety. "It should be at least as hard to get a gun as to get a driver's license," Dr. Slaby said.

'Not an Insoluble Problem'

The report concluded that many of the factors that lead to violence in youth were "within our powers to change."

Dr. Eron said, "Youth violence is not an insoluble problem."

In tracing the many factors that could help produce a violent youth, the commission noted certain kinds of behavior by parents, especially rejection of the child, a lack of supervision and violent fights between mother and father.

The report singled out parents who harshly and regularly punished children physically, saying that they are only feeding a cycle of violence. While such punishment might make children obedient in the short run, the report said, it led children to become aggressive themselves.

"You first learn violence within the family," Dr. Eron said.

In a 22-year study of 875 boys and girls first observed at age 8, Dr. Eron found that those whose parents used the harshest discipline were most likely to be most violent with their playmates, starting fights and shoving for no good reason. As 30-year-olds, the more aggressive children had grown into violent adults with criminal records, and as parents they were also most likely to use harsh physical punishment with their children, he said.

No Single Cause Is Found

But no single factor could be blamed for a child's turning to violence, the commission concluded. "Youth violence is like heart disease, where many factors build to create the problem," said Dr. Alan Kazdin, a psychologist at Yale University who was also a member of the commission. "All the factors matter, but none means a child will necessarily become violent. Many different paths can lead to trouble."

Among the other factors that contribute to children's becoming violent, the report said, were learning to handle frustration by lashing out, or doing poorly in school and then feeling stigmatized as "dumb," or having trouble learning social cues, leading some children to become social outcasts because they failed to pick up signals that could allow them to interact smoothly with playmates.

Violence on television came in for its share of criticism. "Viewing violence increases violence," and leads to emotional desensitization toward violence, the report said.

In Dr. Eron's study, for example, 8-year-old boys who watched the most violent television programs but were not particularly aggressive themselves at school still grew up to be as violence-prone as other 8-year-olds who had been

The New York Times, August 11, 1993

the most aggressive schoolyard bullies.

Growing up in impoverished neighborhoods with a sense that opportunities are closed because of discrimination against one's group can also lead to violence. The report said discrimination damaged children's self-confidence and laid "a foundation for anger, discontent and violence."

Copies of the report may be obtained by writing Violence and Youth Report, American Psychological Association, 750 First St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-4242.

SUBJECT: CRIME AND CRIMINALS; RESEARCH; CHILDREN AND YOUTH; VIOLENCE; FAMILIES AND FAMILY LIFE; EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS; NEWS AND NEWS MEDIA

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ORG: AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION;

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FORTUNE



ABOVE: An L.A. student provides a graphic commentary on the May riots. Photo by Alon Reininger (Contact).

COVER: FORTUNE went to the source on growing up today. Photo by David Strick (Onyx).

CHILDREN IN CRISIS/SPECIAL REPORT

STRUGGLING TO SAVE OUR KIDS

34

A good public education, safe streets, and family dinners seem like quaint memories of the distant past. Playground fights that used to end in bloody noses now end in death. The welfare of our children is at such risk that FORTUNE decided to devote this issue to how we can come to grips with the hazards of growing up in the Nineties. Corporate America's stake is clear: The well-being of kids is a competitiveness issue—and their future is ours as well.

by Louis S. Richman

THE FAMILY

THE AMERICAN FAMILY, 1992

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Everyone knows how vastly it has been transformed, but we are just learning how profoundly disturbing the implications are for kids—and for American society. The epidemic of divorce, remarriage, redi-orce, illegitimacy, plus new strains within intact families has precipitated a revolution in the inner lives of our children. It affects companies through their workers, and some employers are wisely responding. Here's what we can do.

by Myron Magnet



"I don't make decisions on the golf course. Golf involves 100% concentration."

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"My generation gives things rather than time to kids. Time is one of the most important things you can give a kid."

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"I was mugged when I was 8. I was going to the store to buy bread. I was so scared."

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"What we need to do is gun-proof children rather than child-proof guns."

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"You lose your conscience in a gang. The gang is like a body, and you're just one of the organs."

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Violence

KIDS ARE KILLING, DYING, BLEEDING

America is in the midst of a raging epidemic of juvenile homicide, suicide, and abuse. To cure it, we need to focus on prevention, not just punishment. ■ by Ronald Henkoff

THE CHILDREN who killed 12-year-old Amanda Simpson seared a hole in the American Dream. Just after midnight on April 28, 1991, while Amanda and her mother were sleeping, a group of youngsters broke into their Dayton home and stole a microwave oven. A short while later, some of the juveniles reentered the house, this time with a can of gasoline. They doused the kitchen floor and set the fuel alight. "Fuck 'em, let 'em burn!" the ringleader, a 15-year-old boy, exclaimed. Smoke and flames raced through the tiny structure.

Amanda died five days later. Her mother, Judith, was seriously injured, but survived.

Amanda Simpson was only one recent victim in a raging epidemic of violence against children. You have heard and read a great deal about guns and gangs and ghettos. But this onslaught of childhood violence knows no boundaries of race, geography, or class. Amanda Simpson, a white parochial school student in a medium-size Midwestern city, was killed by a spontaneously organized throng of white children—a bunch of kids loose on the street, unrestrained by their parents, their peers, or their community.

Six boys and two girls, ages 12 to 16 at the time of the crime, were convicted or pled guilty in connection with Amanda's death. The child they killed was an animal lover, a saxophone player, a computer buff, and a volunteer at a local nursing home. One year she sold more than 1,000 boxes of Girl Scout cookies, enough to win a week at the summer camp to which her mother, a single parent, could not afford to send her.

An ever-increasing number of youngsters are caught up in violence—as victims, as witnesses, as perpetrators. The number of children under the age of 18 arrested each year

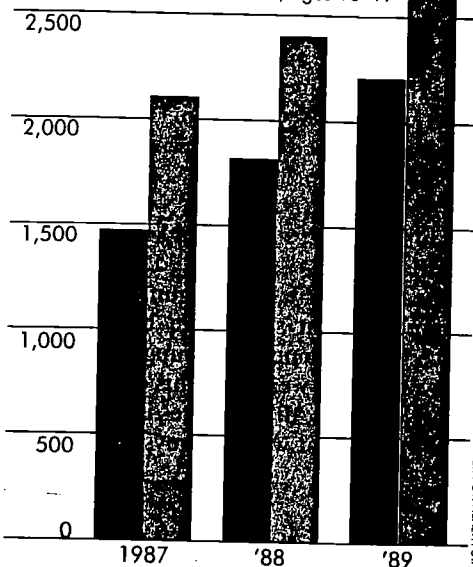
Moises Contreras, 9, plays with handguns as his mother looks on. His brother is a gang member; the guns are two of many in their home in California.



PAUL KIMCOIA—JB PICTURES

LETHAL WEAPON

3,000 ■ Number of homicide victims killed by guns, ages 10-19
■ Total number of U.S. homicide victims, ages 10-19



FORTUNE CHART / SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

for murder has jumped 55% in the past decade, to 2,674 in 1990. Juvenile arrests for aggravated assault and forcible rape are rising dramatically. Says Colonel Leonard Supenski of the Baltimore County police department: "There are a whole lot of disaffected, alienated youth out there who use violence, and use it with no remorse."

For too many children, there are no safe havens. They are victimized at home, at school, on the street. An astonishing number of youngsters are beaten, maimed, molested, and murdered by parents, relatives, or baby sitters. The National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPA), using reports filed by all 50 states, calculates that 2.7 million kids—some 4% of American children—suffered from abuse or neglect last year; that's an increase of 40% just since 1985. An estimated 1,383 children (half of them under the age of 1 year) died from maltreatment in 1991, the worst year on record. If anything, says Deborah Daro, the NCPA's research director, these figures understate the problem.

Among older children, the numbers are even bleaker. More adolescents die from violence—especially gun violence—than from any illness. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, homicide by firearms is now the second-leading cause of death (after motor vehicle crashes) for 15- to 19-year-old whites. For African Americans in that age bracket,

homicide is the leading cause of death. Altogether, 2,771 children, ages 10 to 19, died from homicide in 1989, up 48% from 1984. Another 2,245 in that age group died from suicide, now the third-leading cause of death among adolescents.

T EENAGE VIOLENCE mostly affects urban African Americans (except for suicide, a predominantly white problem). But it is beginning to spread. Under pressure from big city police departments, gangs are stashing their guns and dope in the suburbs and recruiting high school students as pushers. Says Captain Richard Kozak, chief of intelligence for the Illinois State Police: "We're seeing gang activities in places where they didn't exist two years ago. The gangs are playing off the fact that law enforcement in the suburbs is not prepared to deal with them."

But is anybody really prepared to deal with this escalation of childhood violence? In a word, no. The grim trends tell us—or ought to—that our entire approach to the problem has been misguided. We are constantly acting after the fact, trying to mend bodies after they have been broken.

When children are burned or stabbed or shot, we bury them, or we deliver them to overstretched hospitals, shelters, and foster homes. When youngsters commit violent crimes, we send them into an antiquated juvenile justice system that rarely punishes them sufficiently and almost never rehabilitates them. When teenagers kill themselves, we have groups to console their bereaved parents, but we have very few

programs to identify and help potentially suicidal kids before they pull the trigger.

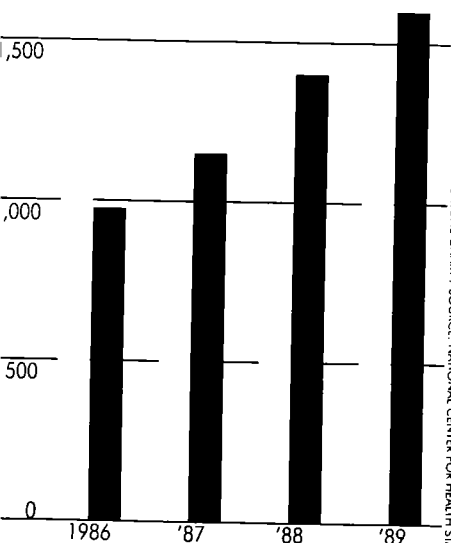
"We believe violence in America to be a public health emergency, largely unresponsive to methods thus far used in its control," declared a recent editorial by two physicians in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The authors, former surgeon general C. Everett Koop and journal editor George Lundberg, are right. We must address violence against youth the way we treat other public health threats like smoking, drunken driving, or drug abuse: We must focus our efforts on prevention.

The most pressing task is to get guns away from children. The widespread availability of firearms makes it far too easy for kids to kill and be killed. Guns figure in more than 75% of adolescent homicides and more than half of adolescent suicides. Should we really be surprised that so many children are infatuated with firearms? There are more than 200 million privately owned guns in America, and half of all households have at least one. Movies, TV programs, and popular songs are saturated with gun-toting heroes and villains. A five-year study by the American Psychological Association found that the average child has witnessed 8,000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence on television by the time he or she has completed sixth grade.

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COUNTING THE VICTIMS...

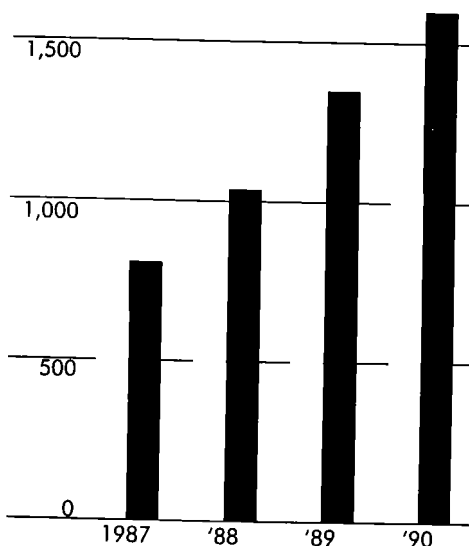
2,000 ■ Number of homicide victims, ages 10-19
□ Whites ■ Blacks



FORTUNE CHART / SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

... AND THE PERPETRATORS

2,000 ■ Number of juveniles (17 and under) arrested for murder
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FORTUNE CHART / SOURCE: FBI

Violence

own a gun or know how to get one. Says Baltimore County's Colonel Supenski, whose suburban jurisdiction surrounds Baltimore but excludes the city itself: "For youth today, I don't care where you live, what class you are, or whether you're white, black, or Hispanic, it's cool to carry a gun. Owing to a lot of things, primarily the entertainment industry, it's a macho thing to do."

The teenage arms race shows no signs of abating. A national survey of high school students in 1990 by the Centers for Disease Control found that 4% had carried a gun at least once in the past month. In a more recent study of 11th-graders in Seattle, 6%

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Guns are surprisingly easy to get. In the Seattle study, 34% of the students said they had easy access to a handgun. In Chicago, where handgun sales have been banned since 1982, an inner-city youngster can take delivery of the weapon of his choice in under two hours. All it requires is a few bucks and a brief chat with the guys hanging out

and you are likely to inflict great damage, as this writer (who had never used a handgun) discovered when he trained the weapon on a human-shaped firing range target.

James Love knows all about 9-millimeter pistols. When he was 15, he used one to murder a 22-year-old. He also wounded the young man's teenage brother. Now 20, Love, who was tried and convicted as an adult, is serving a life sentence in the Maryland Penitentiary in Baltimore—eligible for parole in 14 years. As a teenager in an East Baltimore housing project, Love ran a small-time drug ring that netted big money, as much as \$10,000 a day. Love says his two victims owed him \$15,000. When they didn't pay, he shot them.

"When you shoot someone, you don't think about the consequences," says Love, a muscular young African American man dressed in shorts, a T-shirt, and a Nike Air cap. Love now expresses some regret for what he did: "I wish it never would have happened. It ain't worth taking nobody's life for no money."



Rival Cambodian American gang members in Long Beach, California, demonstrate their hand signals.

of boys said they had actually brought a gun into the school building. And these pieces aren't just for show: One-third of the gun-owning students in Seattle reported that they had fired their weapons at another person.

Given the proliferation of guns, it's not surprising that kids say they need to carry one to protect themselves. But the line between "protection" and "aggression" is often so thin that it disappears. At the Henry Horner Homes, a mostly African American housing project on Chicago's West Side, some teenagers view popping a person as a noble act, a matter of honor and pride. Says

on his front steps. For \$20 he can buy a used .22 caliber pistol. For as little as \$200 he can own a brand-new, semiautomatic 9-millimeter pistol.

And it takes no skill at all to become a juvenile murderer. The increasingly popular 9-millimeter semiautomatic weighs about 2½ pounds. A teenager can conceal the muzzle in the waistband of his pants and cover up the handle with his sweatshirt or warm-up jacket. The gun's magazine can spew out 15 bullets in less than nine seconds. When one magazine is spent, the shooter can quickly snap on another. This is a point-and-shoot weapon. Aim it at another person

THAT MESSAGE is not getting through to the streets. Teenagers are not only shooting one another, they are also killing, wounding, and terrorizing their younger brothers and sisters.

The steady popping of guns can inflict lasting psychological wounds. Children can become withdrawn, mistrustful, fatalistic, defensive, and violent. Says Sharon Brown, a director of programs for children at the Lutheran Social Services center at Cabrini-Green, a housing project on Chicago's North Side: "The kids are all on edge. Brush against them, and they're ready to fight."

Listen to the children of Cabrini-Green describe their world. Says 10-year-old Derrell Ellis: "You can't come outside. You got to duck and dive from the bullets. They be shooting most every day." Eleven-year-old Rachella Thompson used to hurry away from her fifth-floor window when gangs began gunfights in the courtyard of her building. Now, she says, "I don't care. I just sit there and play Nintendo. If they're going to shoot, they're going to shoot. Ain't nobody going to stop them."

Children exposed to a single violent event can suffer anxiety and depression for years. Psychologist James Garbarino, co-author of a new book called *Children in Danger*, has studied children in the war zones of Mozambique, Northern Ireland, Kuwait, and Israel's Occupied Territories, as well as the children of the war zones of

REPORTER ASSOCIATE Wilton Woods

American cities. Says he: "We haven't begun to address the issue of kids who see violence every day."

These kids don't see violence just in the streets. All too often they witness it in their homes—the result of an altercation between people who know each other. Says Dr. Carl Bell, head of Community Mental Health Council, a psychiatric center on Chicago's South Side: "It's not gang related or drug related or crime related. It's just people getting mad at each other and going off on each other."

This kind of violence sends a powerful message to the children who witness it. Says Bell: "Everyone talks about violence on TV. But they forget that a personal endorsement of violence from someone who is loved, trusted, and respected carries the most weight in the world." African American children are not only more likely to witness violence at home, they are also more likely to be victims of it.

Dayton resident Delrine Edwards, a 27-year-old African American woman, knows this only too well. Her second-youngest child, Demetri Green, died last December at the age of 3, strangled by her husband, Lorenzo, who said he was high on drugs at the time. Lorenzo, who was not Demetri's father, pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter and is serving nine to 25 years in prison. Says Del-



Students protest outside Thomas Jefferson High.

rine Edwards, who has three other children: "Demetri was a child, so I know he's in heaven. At least I don't have to worry about him like I do the others."

Children die violently in white suburban homes as well, but there the most critical

problem is suicide. Many factors can prompt adolescents to kill themselves—a broken romance, poor grades, concern about their homosexuality, sexual abuse by a parent, an impending divorce, the death of a friend or relative. Reverend Charles Rubey, a Catholic priest who for 13 years has run Loving Outreach to Survivors of Stress (LOSS), a suicide survivors organization in Chicago, thinks parents expect their children to achieve too much too fast. Says he: "There is this intense drive to succeed. Parents say they want the best for their kids, but this can put a tremendous amount of pressure on them."

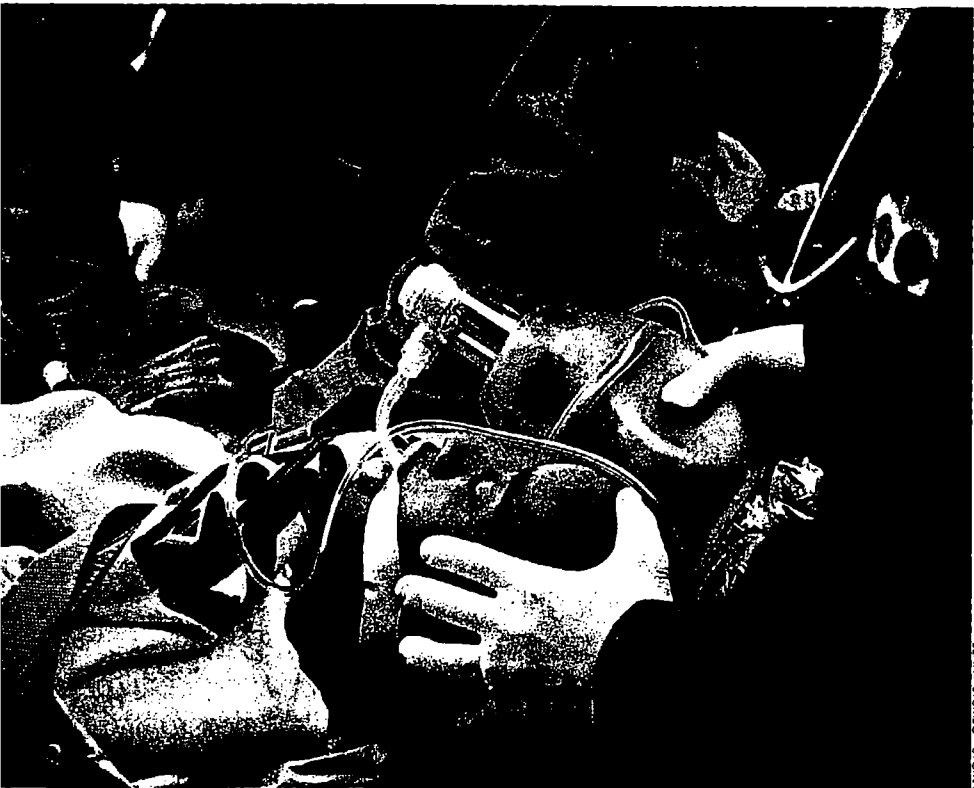
Rubey also thinks children have been conditioned by fast food, microwave ovens, and 30-minute TV sitcoms to expect instant solutions to complex problems. With ready access to firearms, kids even have a quick way to kill themselves.

Therese Gump, program director of LOSS, warns parents not to underestimate the potency of their children's feelings. She speaks with tragic authority. Her second-oldest son, Joey, a normally jovial boy, became depressed at 19 during a severe case of mononucleosis. Later he was jilted by a girlfriend and tried to kill himself by swallowing iodine. He survived. Then at 21, shortly after losing a job, Joey climbed into his parked car in a closed garage, turned on the engine, and suffocated. In his note, he said he knew his family loved him but that he couldn't bear to feel love because it caused too much pain.

THERE ARE NO easy answers to the complex problem of childhood violence. Because a disproportionate number of its victims are poor and African American, the issue overlaps with many other social problems: youth unemployment, welfare, racism, failing schools, sick hospitals, rotten housing, alcoholism, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and single-parent households.

Our current approach is a de facto policy of containment. While middle-class neighborhoods are still relatively safe, violence festers in the homes, schools, and communities of the 18% of American children who live in poverty. Says Garbarino: "You cannot write off one-fifth of your society for free." The price is more jails, more foster homes, more crime, more deaths, more fear.

Nor is there any guarantee that juvenile violence will stay put. Says Commander Robert Dart, a beefy ex-Marine who heads



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Beyond eliminating poverty or shoving crime from one jurisdiction to another, there are several workable and affordable steps we can take to reduce our children's exposure to violence:

-- Help parents be parents. The best place to begin is at the beginning of a child's life. Hawaii's Healthy Start program, funded by the state, intervenes from day one. A case worker interviews new parents in the hospital shortly after their baby is born. The aim is to identify parents at risk of abusing their children: teen mothers, alcoholics, drug users, welfare recipients, or people who have themselves been abused, either by their own parents or their spouses.

Parents who fall into the high-risk category are offered, at no charge, the services of a home visitor. The visitors are paraprofessionals, typically high school graduates who grew up in stable households. A home visitor may counsel a family for as long as five years. Parents are not compelled to enroll in the program, but only a handful refuse the service.

The home visitors, who work for private social service agencies under contract to the state, act as all-purpose advocates for the family. They show parents how to feed and nurture a baby. They ensure that children get regular preventative medical care, including inoculations. In some cases they help parents secure jobs, housing, and, when eligible, welfare and Medicaid.

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Healthy Start shows healthy results. Without intervention, some 20% of high-risk parents can be expected to mistreat their children, a figure borne out by research in other states. Among the 1,204 families served by Healthy Start between 1987 and 1989, there were just three cases of abuse and six of neglect -- less than 2%. Once the program expands to cover all at-risk families in the state, the total annual cost will be about \$16 million. That's substantially less than the \$40 million a year Hawaii spends on post-abuse protective custody and foster care.

Healthy Start is also likely to have a salutary effect on crime later in life. Abused children are walking evidence that violence begets violence. A Denver study of first-time juvenile offenders, for example, concluded that 84% had been abused before the age of 6. Says Gail Breakey, the director of the Hawaii Family Stress Center, the leading provider of Healthy Start services: "Child abuse is actually the root cause of so many social problems."

The National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse, using a \$1 million grant from the Ronald McDonald Children's Charities, is campaigning for the establishment of home visitor programs nationwide. It hopes to have Healthy Start programs in place in 25 states by 1995.

-- Teach children how to manage anger. Although anger is a basic human emotion, beginning with a wailing infant's insistent demand for nourishment, many children never learn how to deal with it nonviolently. At the Roth Middle School in Dayton, which is nearly 90% African American, several hundred students take part in a program called Positive Adolescents Choices Training (PACT). Developed by psychologists at nearby Wright State University and incorporated into the middle school's health education classes, PACT aims to defuse violence by teaching African American students how to talk instead of fight.

PACT participants use role playing to reenact the kinds of real-life disputes that can escalate into violence. For example, an adolescent boy confronts a friend who has been spreading false rumors that his sister is pregnant. Instead of cussing his friend out, the boy asks if they can talk, says something positive about their friendship, states what he is angry about and why, tells his friend what action he'd like him to take, asks if he understands, and thanks him for his time. If they can't reach an agreement on the first boy's terms, they try to negotiate a compromise.

Hard as it is to teach kids surrounded by violence to cool their emotions, preliminary studies show that students trained by PACT are less likely to get suspended from school for fighting and more able to handle themselves peaceably in tough situations.

The PACT students who have shown the most progress are those whose parents have enrolled in Impact, a companion program to help them deal with their anger. Says Willa Cotten, a parent participant: "I used to get into total screaming matches with my daughter. This program helped me understand all the peer pressure these kids are going through." Cotten now tries to make 13-year-old Wilhemina understand that if she breaks the rules, she won't be shouted at or beaten, but that she will lose privileges.

PACT, like Healthy Start, stresses a most important concept that has eroded in many families: parental responsibility. Says Michelle Hassell, coordinator of the program: "These parents yell at their kids, throw things at them, and

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threaten them, but they don't discipline them. If you don't discipline your kids, you set them up to fail, because no one is going to love them the way you do."

There are many school-based violence prevention programs, but no one has attempted to evaluate their long-term effectiveness. Cautions Rodney Hammond, PACT's project director: "These programs are not a panacea. The absence of social skills is not the prime reason for violence. But if our society refuses to deal with the big variables that contribute to violence, like poverty and the easy availability of guns, then we as psychologists need to minimize the casualties as best as we can."

-- Keep guns away from kids. We cannot control juvenile violence without controlling guns. Requiring manufacturers to build child-resistant features into firearms could be a small first step. Trigger restraints and other devices would help prevent very young children from accidentally shooting themselves or someone else. But these mishaps are only part of the problem. Says Stephen Teret, director of the Johns Hopkins University Injury Prevention Center: "What we need to do is gun-proof children rather than child-proof guns."

Three years ago Florida became the first state to make adults partially responsible for the use of guns by children. Any adult who fails to keep a loaded gun safely away from a child under age 16 can be charged with a felony if the child uses the gun to shoot somebody. Laws similar to the Florida act are now on the books in ten states and three cities.

These laws, while helpful, are mere dams erected to stop a tidal wave. Every year about four million new guns are manufactured in the U.S. for civilian use; nearly 1.4 million of those are semiautomatics. Municipalities like Chicago and Washington, D.C., ban the sale of handguns, but the laws are of limited use when firearms can be bought legally just a few steps outside the city limits.

We need action at the federal level, and we need it fast. The public is ahead of politicians on this issue. A Gallup poll last year found that 68% of Americans feel that laws covering the sale of firearms should be "more strict." A resounding 93% favored imposing a mandatory seven-day waiting period on anyone trying to buy a gun, the so-called Brady Bill now languishing in Congress.

But the Brady Bill, if it passes, would primarily stop convicted felons and mentally ill people from buying firearms. With 200 million guns in circulation, we need to do much more to stanch the flow. Says Dr. Katherine Kaufer Christoffel, professor of pediatrics and community health at Northwestern University's medical school: "The solution is to ban the manufacture, sale, and private possession of handguns." We can start by outlawing assault weapons, like the 9-millimeter semiautomatic pistol, that are wreaking so much havoc on our children.

VIOLENCE against children undermines the very foundation of our nation. Opponents of gun control who cite the Second Amendment to the Constitution should pay more heed to the preamble, especially the phrase about insuring "domestic tranquillity." We the People have created a most untranquil society for our children, where the right to bear arms has been used to sanction a buildup of lethal personal weaponry unprecedented in human history. We cannot "secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity" if we continue to allow the slaughter of our offspring.

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Beyond controlling guns, we need to reassert the principles of parental and community responsibility. Our children's future is etched in the wan face of Judy Simpson. Amanda Simpson's mother is a frail woman. She is 34 but looks many years older. When she speaks of Amanda, her entire body convulses. Her pain is so palpable that it fills the room. The arsonists who killed her only child left her too ill to work, forcing her to rely on the limited largess of her retired parents and the caring counseling of the victims advocates at the Montgomery County prosecutor's office.

Imbedded in Judy Simpson's anguish is a seething rage, a mission, a purpose: "They took my lovely child from me. I can't do anything to get Amanda back, but I need to get her story out, for the sake of other parents and other children. For too many juveniles, crime seems to be a game. This has to stop."

We owe at least that much to the memory of Amanda Simpson and Demetri Green and Joey Gump and all the rest. We owe it to the frightened kids of Cabrini-Green. They are all our sons. They are all our daughters. They are all our responsibility.

GRAPHIC: Picture 1, Moises Contreras, 9, plays with handguns as his mother looks on. His brother is a gang member; the guns are two of many in their home in California. descColor: Moises Contreras holding two hand guns with his mother looking on., PAUL KURODA -- JB PICTURES; Picture 2, Rival Cambodian American gang members in Long Beach, California, demonstrate their hand signals. descColor., ALON REININGER -- CONTACT; Picture 3, Students protest outside Thomas Jefferson High. descColor: Two students holding placard which reads "Stop the Violence!", STEPHEN FERRY -- MATRIX; Picture 4, Ian Moore, 17, died after being shot earlier this year at Thomas Jefferson High School in New York City. descColor: Trauma team administering emergency medical aid to Ian Moore., BENNY STUMBO -- SYGMA; Picture 5, Judy Simpson visits the grave of her daughter Amanda, 12, in Dayton. "For too many juveniles, crime seems to be a game," she says. "This has to stop." descColor: Judy Simpson in cemetery holding dog., LYNN JOHNSON -- BLACK STAR

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August 10, 1992, Domestic Edition

SECTION: VIOLENCE; PG. 62

LENGTH: 4074 words

HEADLINE: KIDS ARE KILLING, DYING, BLEEDING

BYLINE: by Ronald Henkoff, REPORTER ASSOCIATE Wilton Woods

BODY:

THE CHILDREN who killed 12-year-old Amanda Simpson seared a hole in the American Dream. Just after midnight on April 28, 1991, while Amanda and her mother were sleeping, a group of youngsters broke into their Dayton home and stole a microwave oven. A short while later, some of the juveniles reentered the house, this time with a can of gasoline. They doused the kitchen floor and set the fuel alight. "Fuck 'em, let 'em burn!" the ringleader, a 15-year-old boy, exclaimed. Smoke and flames raced through the tiny structure. Amanda died five days later. Her mother, Judith, was seriously injured, but survived.

Amanda Simpson was only one recent victim in a raging epidemic of violence against children. You have heard and read a great deal about guns and gangs and ghettos. But this onslaught of childhood violence knows no boundaries of race, geography, or class. Amanda Simpson, a white parochial school student in a medium-size Midwestern city, was killed by a spontaneously organized throng of white children -- a bunch of kids loose on the street, unrestrained by their parents, their peers, or their community.

Six boys and two girls, ages 12 to 16 at the time of the crime, were convicted or pled guilty in connection with Amanda's death. The child they killed was an animal lover, a saxophone player, a computer buff, and a volunteer at a local nursing home. One year she sold more than 1,000 boxes of Girl Scout cookies, enough to win a week at the summer camp to which her mother, a single parent, could not afford to send her.

An ever-increasing number of youngsters are caught up in violence -- as victims, as witnesses, as perpetrators. The number of children under the age of 18 arrested each year for murder has jumped 55% in the past decade, to 2,674 in 1990. Juvenile arrests for aggravated assault and forcible rape are rising dramatically. Says Colonel Leonard Supenski of the Baltimore County police department: "There are a whole lot of disaffected, alienated youth out there who use violence, and use it with no remorse."

For too many children, there are no safe havens. They are victimized at home, at school, on the street. An astonishing number of youngsters are beaten, maimed, molested, and murdered by parents, relatives, or baby sitters. The National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA), using reports filed by all 50 states, calculates that 2.7 million kids -- some 4% of American children -- suffered from abuse or neglect last year; that's an increase of 40% just since 1985. An estimated 1,383 children (half of them under the age of 1 year) died from maltreatment in 1991, the worst year on record. If anything, says Deborah Daro, the NCPCA's research director, these figures understate the

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Among older children, the numbers are even bleaker. More adolescents die from violence -- especially gun violence -- than from any illness. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, homicide by firearms is now the second-leading cause of death (after motor vehicle crashes) for 15- to 19-year-old whites. For African Americans in that age bracket, homicide is the leading cause of death. Altogether, 2,771 children, ages 10 to 19, died from homicide in 1989, up 48% from 1984. Another 2,245 in that age group died from suicide, now the third-leading cause of death among adolescents.

TEENAGE VIOLENCE mostly affects urban African Americans (except for suicide, a predominantly white problem). But it is beginning to spread. Under pressure from big city police departments, gangs are stashing their guns and dope in the suburbs and recruiting high school students as pushers. Says Captain Richard Kozak, chief of intelligence for the Illinois State Police: "We're seeing gang activities in places where they didn't exist two years ago. The gangs are playing off the fact that law enforcement in the suburbs is not prepared to deal with them."

But is anybody really prepared to deal with this escalation of childhood violence? In a word, no. The grim trends tell us -- or ought to -- that our entire approach to the problem has been misguided. We are constantly acting after the fact, trying to mend bodies after they have been broken.

When children are burned or stabbed or shot, we bury them, or we deliver them to overstretched hospitals, shelters, and foster homes. When youngsters commit violent crimes, we send them into an antiquated juvenile justice system that rarely punishes them sufficiently and almost never rehabilitates them. When teenagers kill themselves, we have groups to console their bereaved parents, but we have very few programs to identify and help potentially suicidal kids before they pull the trigger.

"We believe violence in America to be a public health emergency, largely unresponsive to methods thus far used in its control," declared a recent editorial by two physicians in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The authors, former surgeon general C. Everett Koop and journal editor George Lundberg, are right. We must address violence against youth the way we treat other public health threats like smoking, drunken driving, or drug abuse: We must focus our efforts on prevention.

The most pressing task is to get guns away from children. The widespread availability of firearms makes it far too easy for kids to kill and be killed. Guns figure in more than 75% of adolescent homicides and more than half of adolescent suicides. Should we really be surprised that so many children are infatuated with firearms? There are more than 200 million privately owned guns in America, and half of all households have at least one. Movies, TV programs, and popular songs are saturated with gun-toting heroes and villains. A five-year study by the American Psychological Association found that the average child has witnessed 8,000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence on television by the time he or she has completed sixth grade.

An astounding number of children either own a gun or know how to get one. Says Baltimore County's Colonel Supenski, whose suburban jurisdiction surrounds Baltimore but excludes the city itself: "For youth today, I don't care where

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you live, what class you are, or whether you're white, black, or Hispanic, it's cool to carry a gun. Owing to a lot of things, primarily the entertainment industry, it's a macho thing to do."

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Given the proliferation of guns, it's not surprising that kids say they need to carry one to protect themselves. But the line between "protection" and "aggression" is often so thin that it disappears. At the Henry Horner Homes, a mostly African American housing project on Chicago's West Side, some teenagers view popping a person as a noble act, a matter of honor and pride. Says David Powell, a counselor at Better Days for Youth, an antigang program: "These kids think if someone is messing with their girlfriend and they shoot him, that's not violence. They see what happens on TV. If the hero has a problem, he shoots. And the hero shows no remorse."

Guns are surprisingly easy to get. In the Seattle study, 34% of the students said they had easy access to a handgun. In Chicago, where handgun sales have been banned since 1982, an inner-city youngster can take delivery of the weapon of his choice in under two hours. All it requires is a few bucks and a brief chat with the guys hanging out on his front steps. For \$20 he can buy a used .22 caliber pistol. For as little as \$200 he can own a brand-new, semiautomatic 9-millimeter pistol.

And it takes no skill at all to become a juvenile murderer. The increasingly popular 9-millimeter semiautomatic weighs about 2 1/2 pounds. A teenager can conceal the muzzle in the waistband of his pants and cover up the handle with his sweatshirt or warm-up jacket. The gun's magazine can spew out 15 bullets in less than nine seconds. When one magazine is spent, the shooter can quickly snap on another. This is a point-and-shoot weapon. Aim it at another person and you are likely to inflict great damage, as this writer (who had never used a handgun) discovered when he trained the weapon on a human-shaped firing range target.

James Love knows all about 9-millimeter pistols. When he was 15, he used one to murder a 22-year-old. He also wounded the young man's teenage brother. Now 20, Love, who was tried and convicted as an adult, is serving a life sentence in the Maryland Penitentiary in Baltimore -- eligible for parole in 14 years. As a teenager in an East Baltimore housing project, Love ran a small-time drug ring that netted big money, as much as \$10,000 a day. Love says his two victims owed him \$15,000. When they didn't pay, he shot them.

"When you shoot someone, you don't think about the consequences," says Love, a muscular young African American man dressed in shorts, a T-shirt, and a Nike Air cap. Love now expresses some regret for what he did: "I wish it never would have happened. It ain't worth taking nobody's life for no money."

THAT MESSAGE is not getting through to the streets. Teenagers are not only shooting one another, they are also killing, wounding, and terrorizing their

Fortune, August 10, 1992

younger brothers and sisters. The steady popping of guns can inflict lasting psychological wounds. Children can become withdrawn, mistrustful, fatalistic, defensive, and violent. Says Sharon Brown, a director of programs for children at the Lutheran Social Services center at Cabrini-Green, a housing project on Chicago's North Side: "The kids are all on edge. Brush against them, and they're ready to fight."

Listen to the children of Cabrini-Green describe their world. Says 10-year-old Derrell Ellis: "You can't come outside. You got to duck and dive from the bullets. They be shooting most every day." Eleven-year-old Rachella Thompson used to hurry away from her fifth-floor window when gangs began gunfights in the courtyard of her building. Now, she says, "I don't care. I just sit there and play Nintendo. If they're going to shoot, they're going to shoot. Ain't nobody going to stop them."

Children exposed to a single violent event can suffer anxiety and depression for years. Psychologist James Garbarino, co-author of a new book called *Children in Danger*, has studied children in the war zones of Mozambique, Northern Ireland, Kuwait, and Israel's Occupied Territories, as well as the children of the war zones of American cities. Says he: "We haven't begun to address the issue of kids who see violence every day."

These kids don't see violence just in the streets. All too often they witness it in their homes -- the result of an altercation between people who know each other. Says Dr. Carl Bell, head of Community Mental Health Council, a psychiatric center on Chicago's South Side: "It's not gang related or drug related or crime related. It's just people getting mad at each other and going off on each other."

This kind of violence sends a powerful message to the children who witness it. Says Bell: "Everyone talks about violence on TV. But they forget that a personal endorsement of violence from someone who is loved, trusted, and respected carries the most weight in the world." African American children are not only more likely to witness violence at home, they are also more likely to be victims of it.

Dayton resident Delrine Edwards, a 27-year-old African American woman, knows this only too well. Her second-youngest child, Demetri Green, died last December at the age of 3, strangled by her husband, Lorenzo, who said he was high on drugs at the time. Lorenzo, who was not Demetri's father, pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter and is serving nine to 25 years in prison. Says Delrine Edwards, who has three other children: "Demetri was a child, so I know he's in heaven. At least I don't have to worry about him like I do the others."

Children die violently in white suburban homes as well, but there the most critical problem is suicide. Many factors can prompt adolescents to kill themselves -- a broken romance, poor grades, concern about their homosexuality, sexual abuse by a parent, an impending divorce, the death of a friend or relative. Reverend Charles Rubey, a Catholic priest who for 13 years has run Loving Outreach to Survivors of Stress (LOSS), a suicide survivors organization in Chicago, thinks parents expect their children to achieve too much too fast. Says he: "There is this intense drive to succeed. Parents say they want the best for their kids, but this can put a tremendous amount of pressure on them."

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A BOY

Even in a town like Omaha, Nebraska, the



TIME

VETERAN GUNSLINGER: This Omaha youth has carried firearms since he was 15 years old.

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Y AND HIS GUN

aska, the young are packing weapons in a deadly battle against fear and boredom

By JON D. HULL OMAHA

DOU WASN'T EVEN THAT NERVOUS WHEN HE FINALLY GOT HIS GUN. JUST AWFULLY SELF-conscious and kind of giddy, like when he first started making out with girls. A classmate at Father Flanagan High School gave him the beeper number of a dealer in town. An older guy, maybe in his early 30s, answered the page. "Meet me in the parking lot behind the McDonald's at 30th and Ames. Tuesday night, say around 8."

Doug* took his older brother's Ford pickup truck, which has a nice deep rumble and gives Doug's budding tough-guy image some clout. With a blue baseball cap tipped low over

his eyebrows, the slightly built sophomore waited in the parking lot, smoking Kools one after another and staring awkwardly at other male customers as they stepped out of their cars. Finally, one man nodded slightly in reply and waved Doug over to his car. Doug walked slowly, attempting a saunter. The man popped his trunk open, and Doug peered inside at a shiny pile of handguns and rifles. Silently, he counted the money in his pocket, suddenly wishing to hell he'd brought more. He stared at the weapons. They said: Power. Authority. Respect. All at entry-level prices.

With only \$25 in his wallet—earnings from mowing a few lawns—he quickly settled on a used Remington semiautomatic 12-gauge shotgun. He was pleasantly surprised by its heft as he slid it into a canvas bag and scurried back to his truck. At 16, Doug was finally a force to be reckoned with at Father Flanagan High, in his white, working-class neighborhood of Benson and on the streets of Omaha. "If you have a gun, you have power. That's just the way it is," he says. "Guns are just a part of growing up these days." Doug felt older already. With the radio blaring heavy metal, he smiled all the way home.

That evening, while his parents watched television, Doug sneaked into the garage and got his Dad's hacksaw. Carefully selecting a spot along the barrel, he began to cut. He was amazed at how easily the blade sliced through the metal. Smoothing the end with a metal file, he then cut the stock, reducing the gun by almost 2 ft. in length and transforming it



GUN GLUT: A buyback offer brought in 1,124 weapons, some from juveniles.

into the weapon of choice among many teenage toughs: a pistol-grip, sawed-off shotgun, which he pronounces almost as one word. "Easy to hide and no need to aim. Just *bam!* and you clear the room," he says. Returning the gun to the canvas bag, he hurried back to his room, paused briefly to consider a hiding place, and then slid the weapon under his mattress before joining his parents for dinner.

Getting the gun was the easy part. Firing it for the first time was terrifying. "Hell, it was pretty beat up, and I didn't know if it would jam or something," says Doug. "I mean, how was I supposed to

know whether the damn thing would just blow up in my face because it was busted and maybe that's why the guy sold it to me in the first place?"

Doug and his friend Scott, 15, debated this problem for several days, turning the shotgun over and over in their hands, carefully inspecting and cleaning every part. They bought a box of shells from a friend and practiced loading and unloading the gun. Finally one Saturday, they drove out of town and headed for the countryside. "We didn't know quite what we were going to do until we found this tree near a cornfield that was split right down

*Where only first names are used, they are pseudonyms.



"People think we are just punks and farmers in Omaha, but they're wrong,"

with holes. Doug drives by slowly, confident he won't be recognized. "We did that three months ago. Monday night about 2 a.m. me and six other guys just fired from the street." He shakes his head. "That old man's son has a problem with stealing cars." Doug puts an Ice-T disc on his car CD player and cranks up the volume. "There's a lot of rappers that make a lot of sense," he says. His friend Scott nods reverently. But neither Doug nor Scott can explain what the songs mean to them. While the lyrics may address inner-city issues, the tone resonates among white teenagers like them simply because it's the angriest stuff on the market.

"Now, let's say we were going to shoot that house," says Doug, pointing down the street. "Just about now I'd cut the lights and slow down. Then bang, bang, bang, and I'd punch it out of there." The truck lurches forward. Doug turns the stereo louder.

Most Omaha residents used to dismiss teenage gunplay as a problem confined to the north side of Omaha, which is largely

black and poor. That comfortable notion was shattered last August by a seven-minute fire fight among mostly white teenagers in Benson. "I've lived in this area all my life, and now boys are shooting at each other for the hell of it," says Bonnie Elseman, a single mother in the neighborhood. "I now realize that I owe the blacks in Omaha an apology for ignoring all the shootings because I thought it was just their problem. I could just weep for these kids."

Especially for her son Jeff, an only child. He was one of the shooters last summer during the gun battle at 61st and Sprague, part of a tree-lined neighborhood of neatly kept, working-class houses. "We were just planning on a big fight, like a rumble, when six cars came cruising down the street and the shooting started," says Jeff, 20, whose quick and warm smile defeats even his best efforts at posturing. He ran inside a house, grabbed his .32-cal. pistol and returned fire. Another friend retrieved a mini MAC-10, a semiautomatic he had hidden in the bushes, while a third pulled out a .22-cal. rifle. "That mini MAC

saved us," says Jeff, who blindly blazed away at the cars, which circled the block three times. Seven minutes later, two youths lay wounded, one seriously. Neighboring houses were riddled with bullets; one car had 14 puncture holes. "It's weird nobody died," Jeff says. He pauses, running his hands over his neatly shaved head. "I never really did learn to shoot too well."

Not for lack of trying. Jeff's life came apart in adolescence. "I don't know what happened," says Bonnie. "He was such a beautiful child. He still is my beautiful child. But he got so angry." After he was kicked out of Monroe Junior High for misconduct, Bonnie sent him to Boys Town for three years. But Jeff grew more rebellious. He got his first gun, a .25-cal. semiautomatic, in his mid-teens. A year later, he dodged his first bullet; after a fistfight, his opponent returned with a rifle and opened fire. That same year, he did his first drive-by. "We shot at a house, just to let them know that the games were over," he says. Although he doesn't believe he ever hit anyone, he confesses that "one



THE ARMS RACE: At left, a child surveys the results of a buyback. In downtown Omaha, a teenager cradles his sawed-off shotgun.

wrong," says Tony. "A lot happens here. It's just a smaller scale than L.A."

time we almost hit a four-year-old girl by mistake."

Two years ago, Jeff paid \$50 to a friend for the stolen .32-cal. pistol he used in last summer's shoot-out. After the gunfight, he tossed it in a lake and bought a 12-gauge, sawed-off shotgun. "You feel invincible with a weapon," he says. In April he was arrested for possession of a .410-gauge shotgun, and now faces felony charges.

ALL IN ALL, JEFF DOESN'T CONSIDER himself a violent guy, notwithstanding several broken noses. "I don't have a quick temper, but if I'm mad, I'm mad for three weeks," he says, which is a long time in the life of an armed youth. He graduated from Benson High School last year, and works digging fence holes while awaiting trial. "I'm trying to stay away from guns now, but it's like everybody has them. Guys will be like, 'I've got a 9-mm, and you've only got a peashooter.' Or they'll brag that 'my brother has a MAC-

10.' As crazy as it's getting, I think it should be illegal to have a gun," he says.

Bonnie didn't realize that her son was involved with guns until last summer. In June, after Jeff and some friends were shot at in a drive-by, they jumped into a Jeep and went looking for the assailant's car. When they found the car parked in front of a rival's house, Jeff's friend jumped out and pounded on it with a wooden club. But just as they were about to leave, someone crept up and fired a shotgun blast through the back of their Jeep. Jeff ducked, and his friend was hit in the back and shoulder.

It was the shoot-out in August that really got Bonnie's attention. She decided to fight back, and formed the Benson Youth-Parent Association, which chaperones parties and patrols the streets. "There are drive-bys all the time," she says. "They don't even make the newspaper." Bonnie patrols Benson with a police scanner, banking on her belief that mothers still enjoy some diplomatic immunity on the streets. "If I won a million dollars tomorrow, I'd

buy a few buses, fill them with kids and flee Omaha," she says. Flee where? "I hadn't thought of that," she responds.

The mayhem has spawned another group, MAD DADS, which stands for Men Against Destruction—Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder. They start praying about 10 o'clock every Friday night, just before they hit the streets armed with two-way radios, police scanners, video cameras and a gutsy determination to stop kids from shooting one another. Seven men and two women bow their heads around a small table in the one-story, cinder-block command center in a rough part of town, hoping for peace, or at least enough rain to keep kids off the streets for one more night. "The hour is getting late, and our children need us," says John Foster, a vice president of the city employees union, who founded the group four years ago after his son was badly beaten. The prayer is interrupted by the sound of a gunshot, followed shortly by the wail of an ambulance. Foster shakes his head. "It's becoming so common," he says.

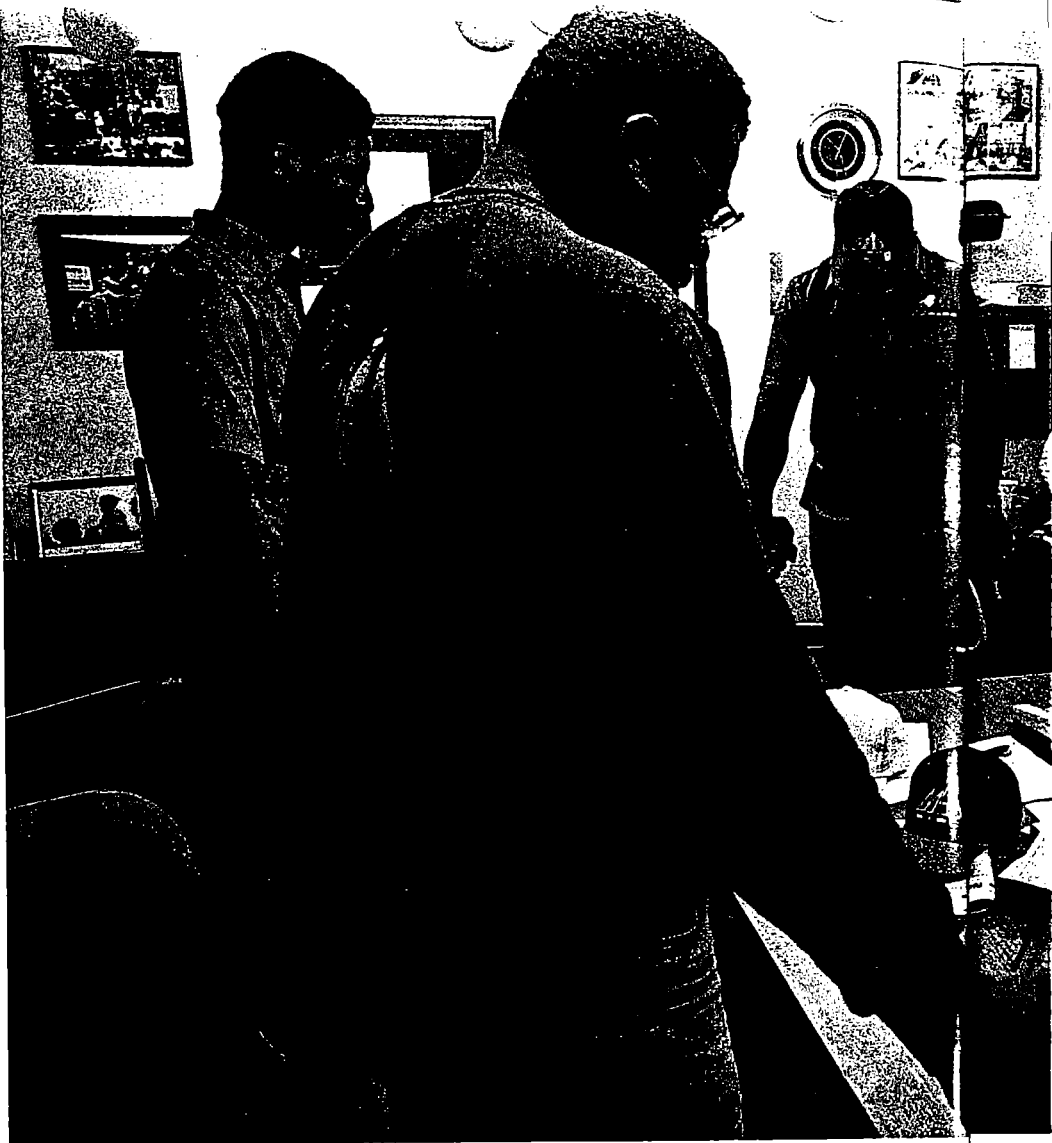
"Some of our young people are turning into cold-blooded killers."

Two weeks later, as Foster patrols the largely black, working-class neighborhoods in north Omaha, a gunshot crackles through the air. Foster turns the corner. A mother and three children run toward his car. "Some kids are shooting at people just down the street there," says the woman, pointing nervously. Foster circles the block, slowing as he approaches a pack of kids mingling in front of a house. "We were just having a party, a birthday party," says one, "when these guys drive by and start shooting at us." Twenty minutes later and only blocks away, Foster comes upon a teenage boy being treated by an ambulance team for a gunshot wound in the arm. "It's so sad," he says. "I remember when you could settle things with fistcuffs. Man, that's antiquated now."

THE MAD DADS SPONSORED TWO gun-buyback programs last winter, offering up to \$50 for a working weapon, with no questions asked. On both days, they ran out of money within half an hour. Total haul: 588 guns, some turned in by juveniles. "It amazed me," says C.R. Bell, president of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce. In May MAD DADS staged another buyback after sending 100,000 flyers to nine school districts. The take: 1,124 guns, which will be welded into a monument by a local artist. Among them was Doug's 12-gauge shotgun. "I figured it was a safe way to get rid of it," Doug says. "I did a lot of crazy things with that gun, and I didn't want to get caught with it." He plans on getting a handgun next.

The birds disappeared from Tony's neighborhood in central Omaha when he was in the fourth grade, shortly after he got his first BB gun. "I guess I shot a lot of animals," he says sheepishly. Now he totes a sawed-off, 20-gauge, pump-action shotgun he bought for \$20 last January from a 16-year-old friend. "The grip was broken, so I got a good price," the 17-year-old says proudly. He doesn't shoot birds anymore, but he fires an occasional salvo into the night sky around Omaha. "Sometimes I just feel like busting it, you know. I just want to pull the trigger and *bam!*"

An only child, Tony has not seen his father since he was five. He is very protective of his mother, a social worker. "I told her she should get a .380, but she doesn't like guns," he says. A senior this fall at Central High with plans to go on to college, Tony doesn't do drugs because he doesn't want them to interfere with his performance on the football team. He spurns gangs and tough-guy behavior, but feels he needs the gun. "It's not a macho thing for me," he says. "I mean, I'm not into fighting, and I ain't going to shoot anybody. But when you have a gun, you feel like



"It's so sad. I remember when you could settle things

can't nobody get you. You can't get got."

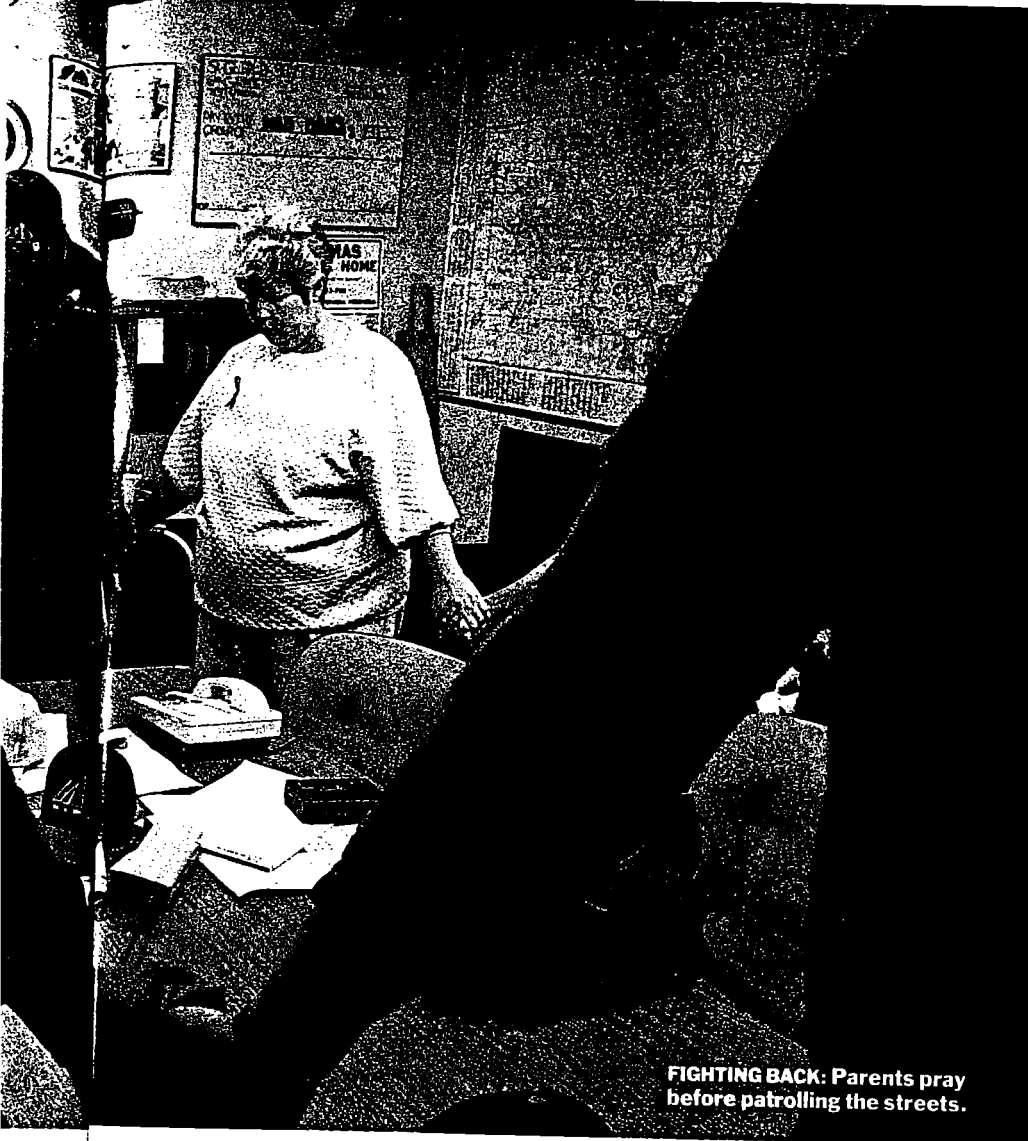
Tony's mom learned he had a gun one Saturday night last May. "I got home around 2 a.m., which is when I'm supposed to be in, and my mom says, 'Hurry inside, there's shooting going on.' I didn't believe her because we rarely have shooting in our neighborhood, but I wasn't going to take any chances, so I turned off all the lights and got my shotgun from under my bed. She wasn't too happy about it, but she's not going to take it away from me."

Tony wants it known that he is not nearly as wild as his friend, Mike, who admits to a quick temper and a violent streak. Raised alternately by his divorced mother and father in Omaha, Mike was 16 when he first saw someone get shot. "It was at a party," he says. "This guy was hit in the chest with a .25. He just dropped." So far, Mike claims, he's been shot at five times, including the big gunfight last August, which persuaded him not to travel unarmed. "Sometimes you need a gun to get out of a situation," he says. "You could be in a parking lot just

kicking it, and people start shooting."

Mike started carrying a gun to school at Central High last winter. "I wasn't trying to be hard or anything. It was just for protection," says the lanky 18-year-old, who wears three gold earrings and favors a black baseball cap emblazoned with a marijuana leaf. "I don't know why, but stuff just started getting hectic, real rough. I mean you can get jumped for no reason." The small, .25-cal. Raven pistol, which he bought from a friend, fit snugly in the pocket of his winter vest. He even took it along to his telemarketing job after work, where he earns \$6.50 an hour manning the phones. He says, "If people know you have a gun, they just don't mess with you."

Mike got caught last April after running into a friend who had some pot in the school parking lot. "We smoked a lot," says Mike, who had his pistol in the right-hand pocket of his jacket along with two clips, one full and the other empty. As he entered the school, a rubbery smile on his face, a security guard stopped him and took him to the principal's office. "They



FIGHTING BACK: Parents pray before patrolling the streets.

Little tngs with fisticuffs. Man, that's antiquated now."

knew I was high, and I was being a dick," he says. "They told me to empty my pockets, and I was like, man, everything hit me. I was like, f____, I messed up!" At the police station, Mike wolfed down a pizza and promptly fell asleep.

THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPELLED MIKE, and the court put him on probation for one year. He transferred to Father Flanagan High and managed to graduate in May. Like Tony, he intends to go to college and considers all the gunplay just a part of growing up. "I'm a pretty normal guy," he says earnestly. "I like to water-ski and read Stephen King books and stuff." He proudly announces that he owns three different kinds of Bibles, which he likes to study. He says he prays every night. After his arrest, Mike's parents were supportive and enrolled him in therapy. "My counselor says I'm susceptible to peer pressure," he says. "I'm trying to work on that."

On a Saturday night in June, Mike and Tony cruise the town in Tony's six-year-old

Ford subcompact. The windows are down, and the tape deck blasts one of their favorite songs, *Six Feet Deep* by the Geto Boys, a Houston rap group. Tony rocks back and forth to the music. Mike wonders out loud how many kids are going to get shot this summer. "I bet one of our friends is going to get it," says Tony, who is wearing a Green Bay Packers cap and an Oakland Athletics shirt. "All the gun stuff used to be fun, but now it's old. You can't even go to a party without worrying about being shot. Someone's always got a gun." Mike agrees and mentions the need to bring along friends: "You've got to go deep."

They drop by Mike's two-story white house in a nice neighborhood in northwest Omaha, where he lives with his dad, so he can change baseball caps and grab some more tapes. "You have, like, a home life and a street life," he explains. "I'm so different at home you wouldn't believe it." Back in the car, they slow down occasionally to reach out through the windows and slap hands as they pass friends who are hanging out. "People think we are just

punks and farmers in Omaha, but they're wrong," says Tony. "A lot happens here. It's just a smaller scale than L.A."

Mike nervously taps his fingers against the dashboard and then turns down the music. "Don't you think it is going to be pretty crazy this summer?" he asks, with a mixture of fear and excitement. "Real crazy," says Tony, who plans to sell his shotgun and get an easier-to-hide .38-cal. pistol. Mike stares out the window, worrying about how his probationary status will leave him unarmed. "Man, Tony," he says, shaking his head slowly. "I just don't see how I'm going to get through this summer without a gun."

Norman Johnson carries no gun anymore, but for a different reason. One afternoon last May, as he rode in the backseat of his cousin's Ford Escort on a city street, a car pulled up and the occupants opened fire. "I was just laying in the backseat, you know, resting, when my friend says there's a car right on our tail. Next thing you know, I felt this incredible shock. No noise, just shock." A bullet slammed into the back of Johnson's neck, crushing two vertebrae. "I looked up, and I saw bullet holes in the window," he says, speaking in a raspy voice and pausing frequently to gasp for air. "I looked down at my body, and, well, I didn't feel anything."

Almost completely paralyzed from the neck down, Johnson, who is 6 ft. 3 in. and 20 years old, spent the first month after the shooting on a breathing machine. He lost 50 lbs. Between hours of physical therapy each day, Johnson has had plenty of time to rethink his attitude toward guns.

The youngest of six and a high school dropout, Johnson drifted into gangs for support and identity. Asked why he was shot, he says, "It's a long story," which means someone was out for revenge. Recalling the streets, he tries to cling to some of his former toughness. "I guess I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time," he says. "It could happen to anyone." But that's not enough. "Sometimes it's so hard," he whispers. "I get high temperatures and real sweaty, and I get these pains." He breathes on his own through a hole in his trachea, which a nurse closes with a plug when Johnson wants to talk. "At first I wanted to die. Now I'm happy to be alive, but I just want to get more feeling back." His voice is meek, beaten, almost hollow. When talk turns to football and basketball, he makes gulping, swallowing noises. Among cards and photos taped to the wall of his hospital bed, an old award certificate is proudly displayed. It reads, BANQUET OF CHAMPIONS FOR LITTLE PRO BASKETBALL BOYS' CLUB OF OMAHA. 1984. "I always loved sports, you know. I mean I was pretty good." He pauses for air. "I had speed," he murmurs. He is too tired to continue. The nurse pulls the trachea plug so he can breathe.

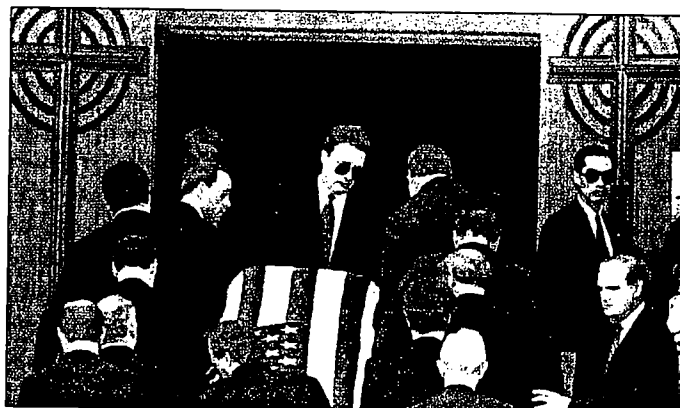


RICK HUNTER - SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS

As every sergeant knows, nothing's as lethal as a 17-year-old with a gun

Wild in the Streets

The body count is rising. A series of brutal, senseless crimes by teenagers brings into the spotlight what law-enforcement and public-health officials have long known: there is a virtual "epidemic" of youth violence spreading across the land from the inner cities to the suburbs. "Violence," says one prosecutor, "is becoming a way of life." **Society: Page 40**



GARY HERSHORN - REUTERS

Foster's funeral at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock

A Stellar Life, and a Sudden Death

The unexplained suicide of deputy White House counsel Vincent Foster, one of Bill Clinton's oldest friends, cast a long shadow last week. Howard Fineman and Bob Cohn report on Foster's death, and columnist Meg Greenfield weighs its impact on Washington. **National Affairs: Page 16**

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Murder and mayhem, guns and gangs: a teenage generation grows up dangerous—and scared

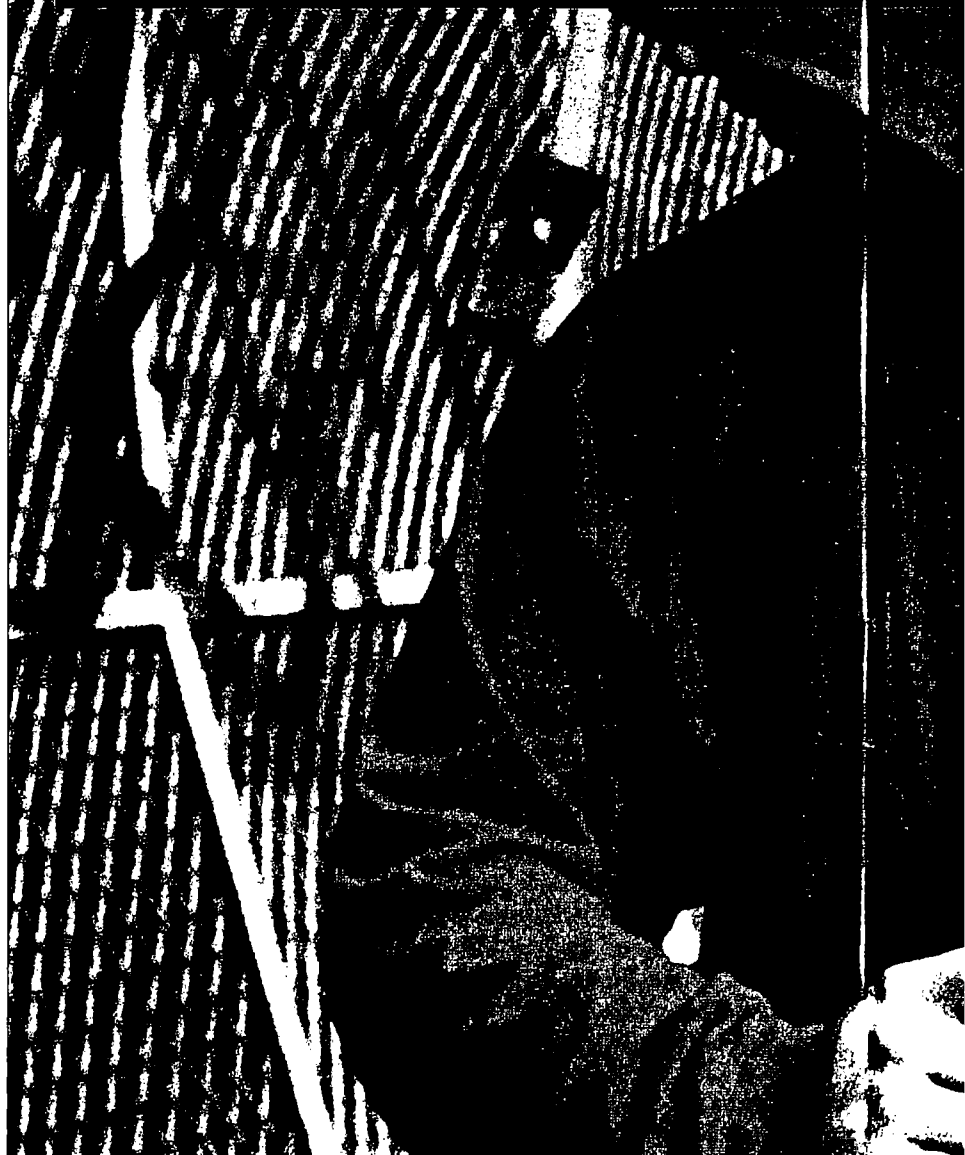
BY BARBARA KANTROWITZ

CHARLES CONRAD DIDN'T HAVE A chance. He was 55 years old, crippled by multiple sclerosis and needed a walker or wheelchair to get around. The boys who allegedly attacked him earlier this month were young—17, 15 and 14—and they were ruthless. Police say that when Conrad returned to his suburban Atlanta condominium while they were burgling it, the boys did what they had to do. They got rid of him. Permanently.

Over a period of many hours—stretching from dusk on July 17 until dawn of the next day—they stabbed him with a kitchen knife and a barbecue fork, strangled him with a rope, and hit him on the head with a hammer and the barrel of a shotgun, according to a statement one of the boys, 14-year-old Carlos Alexander Nevarez, reportedly gave to police. At one point they realized they were hungry. So they heated up the macaroni and cheese they found in Conrad's kitchen, and washed it down with Dr Pepper.

Despite this torture, Conrad survived. According to the statement published by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, a grievously wounded Conrad begged the boys to shoot him and put a swift end to his agony. But, Nevarez said, the boys were afraid people would hear the gunshots. So they allegedly beat him some more, and then poured salt into his wounds to see if he was still alive. When his body twitched in response to the pain, they threw household knickknacks at him. After he was struck in the back by a brass eagle, "he stopped breathing," Nevarez told police. The boys then took off in Conrad's wheelchair-equipped van with their hard-earned loot: a stereo, a VCR, a camcorder and a shotgun, according to an indictment handed down last week. Even law-enforcement officials were shocked when they arrested the boys the next day. The DeKalb County district attorney, J. Tom Morgan, calls it "the worst crime scene I've ever seen."

WILD IN T



HOUSTON

On their way home from a pool party last month, two teenage girls took a shortcut into the woods, where they were viciously raped and strangled. Police arrested six alleged members of the Black N White gang.



Defendant Derrick O'Brien, 18

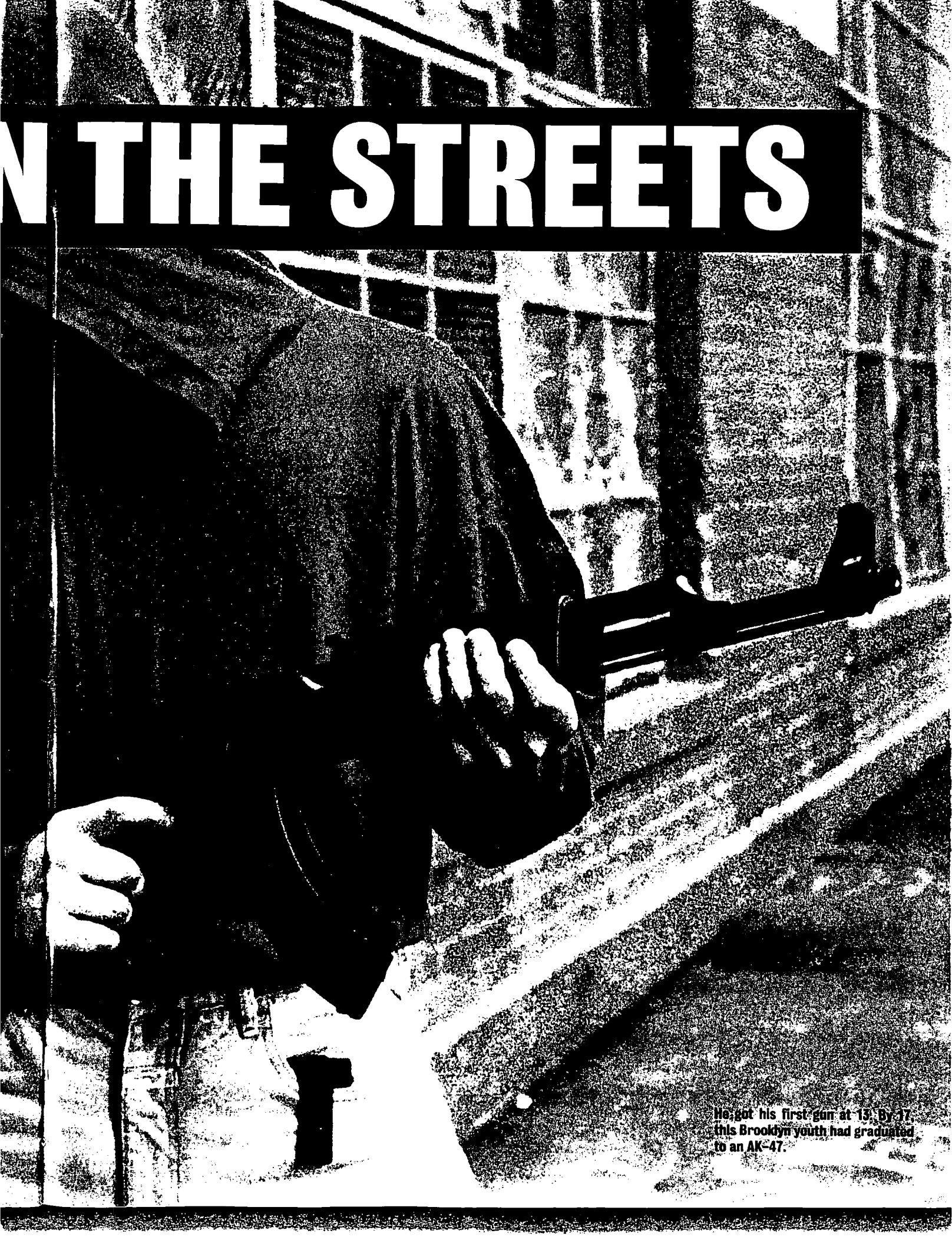
GROVELAND

In rural Massachusetts, Baldwin was charged with killing a 17-year-old girl with a baseball bat. The alleged motive: she wouldn't date him. He denies the charge.



Richard Baldwin, 17

N THE STREETS



He got his first gun at 13. By 17, this Brooklyn youth had graduated to an AK-47.



A San Antonio teen executed by gang members in broad daylight; the city's homicide rate is on apace to surpass last year's record level

Conrad's death was particularly gory, but it was not an isolated incident. Each day seems to bring a new horror story of vicious crimes by boys—and a few girls. Near Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., on July 14, a group of teenagers allegedly beat and stabbed a friend to death; police have yet to come up with a motive. A few days earlier in New York, a Brooklyn mother made the front pages for the saddest of distinctions: losing all three of her young sons to street violence. Some victims, such as the mentally retarded girl sexually assaulted by high-school football players in Glen Ridge, N.J., get whole forests of publicity. But most victims are mourned only by the people who loved them. In February, Margaret Ens-

ley's 17-year-old son Michael caught a bullet in the hallway of his high school in Reseda, Calif. She says a teen shot her son because he thought Michael gave him a funny look. The shooter, she says, is now serving 10 years in a youth-authority camp. "But I have life imprisonment without the possibility of parole," says Ensley. "because I won't ever have my son back again . . . When they were filling his crypt, I said, 'Lord, let me crawl up there with him,' because the pain was so unbearable."

Law-enforcement and public-health officials describe a virtual "epidemic" of youth violence in the last five years, spreading from the inner cities to the suburbs. "We're talking about younger and younger

kids committing more and more serious crimes," says Indianapolis Prosecuting Attorney Jeff Modisett. "Violence is becoming a way of life." Much of it, but by no means all, can be found in poor neighborhoods, where a disproportionate number of victims and victimizers live side by side. But what separates one group from another is complex: being neglected or abused by parents; witnessing violence at an early age on the street or in the house; living in a culture that glamorizes youth violence in decades of movies from "A Clockwork Orange" to "Menace II Society"; the continuing mystery of evil. To that list add the most dangerous ingredient: the widespread availability of guns to kids. In a Harvard School



RICK HUNTER—SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS

of Public Health survey released last week, 59 percent of children in the sixth through the 12th grades said they "could get a handgun if they wanted one." More than a third of the students surveyed said they thought guns made it less likely that they would live to "a ripe old age." Cindy Rodriguez, a 14-year-old living in gang-riddled South-Central Los Angeles, is a testament to the ferocity of unrestrained firepower. Two and a half years ago, a gang bullet ripped through her body as she was talking to the mailman outside her house. Now she's paralyzed for life. And the bullets keep coming. "We hear gunshots every day," she says. "Sometimes I get scared. I'm in the shower and I hear it and I get all scared. But you have to live with the reality."

Violence is devastating this generation, as surely as polio cut down young people 40 years ago. Attorney General Janet Reno says youth violence is "the greatest single crime problem in America today." Between 1987 and 1991, the last year for which statistics are available, the number of teenagers arrested for murder around the country increased by an astounding 85 percent, according to the Department of Justice. In 1991, 10- to 17-year-olds accounted for 17 percent of all violent-crime arrests; law-enforcement officials believe that figure is even higher now. Teenagers are not just the perpetrators; they're also the victims. According to the FBI, more than 2,200 murder victims in 1991 were under 18—an average of more than six young people killed every day. The Justice Department estimates that each year, nearly a million young people between 12 and 19 are raped, robbed or assaulted, often by their peers.

Unmeasured violence: That's the official count. The true number of injuries from teen violence could be even higher. When emergency medical technicians in Boston recently addressed a class of fifth graders, they were astonished to find that nearly three quarters of the children knew someone who had been shot or stabbed. "A lot of violence goes unmeasured," says Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith, assistant dean of the Harvard School of Public Health and author of "Deadly Consequences," a book about teen violence. Paramedic Richard Serino, who is a supervisor in the emergency room at Boston City Hospital, estimates that doctors save seven or eight wounded teens for every one who dies. Many of the "lucky ones," Serino says, end up paralyzed or with colostomy bags.

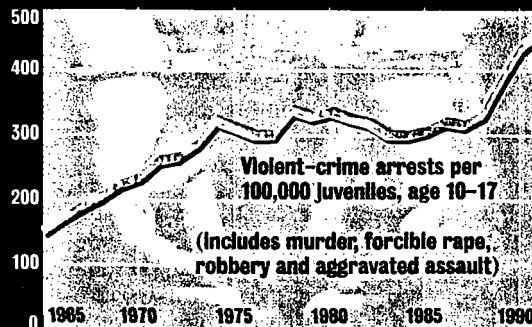
The statistics are shocking—and so is the way some teenagers react when they're caught and accused of brutal crimes. "Hey, great! We've hit the big time," 17-year-old defendant Raul Omar Villareal allegedly boasted to another boy after hearing that they might be charged with murder. Villareal was one of six Houston teens arrested and charged last month in the brutal rape and strangulation of two young girls who made the fatal mistake of taking a shortcut through a wooded area where, police say, the boys were initiating two new members into their gang. In Dartmouth, Mass., this April, two 16-year-olds and one 15-year-old armed with clubs and knives barged into a high-school social-studies class and, police say, fatally stabbed a 16-year-old. One of the accused

killers reportedly claimed that cult leader David Koresh was his idol and laughed about the killing afterward.

Dartmouth is a suburb of New Bedford, the sort of place city dwellers flee to, thinking they'll find a respite from city crime. While the odds may be a bit better, a picket fence and a driveway is no guarantee. Indeed, even suburban police departments around the nation have taken to keeping watch on groups they worry may develop into youth gangs. Thus far, most of these kids seem like extras from "West Side Story," bunches of boys content to deface walls and fight with clubs and chains.

The casual attitude toward violence is most acute in inner-city neighborhoods, where many youngsters have grown up to the sounds of sirens and gunshots in the night and the sight of blood-spattered sidewalks in the morning. After so many years in a war zone, trauma begins to seem normal. This is how Shaakara, a sweet-faced 6-year-old who lives in Uptown, one of Chicago's most dangerous areas, calmly describes one terrible scene she witnessed at a neighbor's apartment: "This lady, she got shot and her little baby had got cut. This man, he took the baby and cut her. He cut her on the throat. He killed the baby. All blood came out. This little boy, when he saw the baby, he called his grandmother and she came over. And you know, his grandmother got killed, but the little boy didn't get killed. He comes over to my house. That man, he took the grandmother and put her on the ground, and slammed her, and shut her in the door. Her whole body, shut in the door." After telling her tale, Shaakara smiles. "You know what I want to be when

JUVENILE ARRESTS



■ Juveniles accounted for 17% of all violent-crime arrests in 1991.

■ Juvenile arrests for murder increased by 85% between 1987 and 1991.

■ Three of every 10 juvenile murder arrests involved a victim under the age of 18 in 1991.

SOURCES: OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION, U.S. JUSTICE DEPT.; FBI

PHOTO BY JOHN CHIASSON—GAMMA-LIAISON

I grow up? A ballerina or a mermaid."

In this heightened atmosphere of violence, normal rules of behavior don't apply. As traditional social supports—home, school, community—have fallen away, new role models have taken their place. "It takes an entire village to raise a child, but the village isn't there for the children anymore," says Modisett, the Indianapolis prosecutor. "The only direction these kids receive is from their peers on the street, the local drug dealers and other role models

who engage in criminal conduct." Katie Buckland, a Los Angeles prosecutor who volunteers in the city's schools, says the kids she sees have already given up the idea of conventional success and seize the opportunities available. "The kids that are selling crack when they're in the fifth grade are not the dumb kids," she says. "They're the smart kids. They're the ambitious kids... trying to climb up their own corporate ladder. And the only corporate ladder they see has to do with gangs and drugs."

With drugs the route to easy money, prison is the dominant institution shaping the culture, replacing church and school. In the last few years, more young black men have gone to jail than to college. Fathers, uncles, brothers, cousins have all done time. April Allen, a 15-year-old who lives in Boston's Roxbury section, has friends who think of jail as a kind of sleep-away camp. "The boys I know think it's fun to be in jail because other boys they know are in jail, too," she says. Prison is a way of looking; the

Girls Will Be Girls

IT'S NOT JUST BOYS. IN SAN ANTONIO, Texas, recently, a 13-year-old girl allegedly beat and then held down another girl while police say several boys sexually assaulted her.

In New Orleans, a 16-year-old schoolgirl pulled out a six-inch kitchen knife and plunged it into a classmate's back. On the streets of Los Angeles and New York, some girls carry small guns in their purses and razor blades in their mouths, in case they need to protect themselves—or find a victim ripe for the taking.

The plague of teen violence is an equal-opportunity scourge. Crime by girls is on the rise, or so various jurisdictions report. In Massachusetts, for instance, 15 percent of the crimes that girls were convicted of committing in 1987 were violent offenses. By 1991, that number had soared to 38 percent. In California, judges send the "hard core" girls to the Youth Authority's Ventura School. "You name the crime, we have it; you think about the worst scenarios and we have them here," says Edward Cue, a school official.

For some girls, the best defense is a good offense. "I've had fights with a lot of guys," says Laura Morales, a South End, Boston, youth. Years ago, she concedes, a girl might have called a brother or a cousin to fight her battles. Today, says Morales, "if I have to take care of something, I'll do it by myself." A third-grade New Or-

leans girl recently took a .357 magnum to school to protect herself from a boy who was allegedly harassing her. After police confiscated the gun, she claimed that her complaints to

shootings. Girls join gangs for a variety of reasons: protection, fun, because they like a particular boy or for acceptance. The gangs also provide a makeshift family. Some teens will do anything to join. In one initiation rite in San Antonio, girls are kicked and beaten by

the brutality of the beatings of girls by other girls," says Dr. Naftali Berrill, director of the New York Forensic Mental Health Group. The violence is a vicious, antisocial pack mentality aimed at a target who is incapable of fighting back, says Berrill. The pack smells weakness, and the situation turns into a free-for-all where no individual person feels responsible.

Social agencies haven't learned much about curbing violence among young women. The police and social workers know only how to worry about whether the girls are pregnant, says Franklin Tucker, director of the Barron Assessment Counseling Center, where students from Boston schools are sent if they are caught with a weapon on school grounds. "These young girls are very angry and very hostile," he says.

They have their reasons—some good, some not. Sheri Pasanen, a San Diego social worker, was caught short recently when she was showing the movie "Thelma and Louise" to a group of jailed young and older women. "When they shot the [attempted rapist], the whole class cheered," she says. The problem, says Pasanen, is that their reaction was reasonable. "Every single one of them in there has probably been abused." But if violence is a learned behavior, it can also be unlearned. And these inmates now have some time to work on that lesson.

CONNIE LESLIE with NINA BIDDLE in Houston, DEBRA ROSENBERG in Boston and JOE WAYNE in San Diego



JOE TYNAN—IMPACT VISUALS

Some girls now carry guns. Others hide razor blades in their mouths.

the school officials had gone unheeded.

Girls are breaking into the traditionally male world of gangs, too. The Kings, one of San Antonio's largest gangs, recently started accepting young women. Where male gang members used to refer to the girls as "hos and bitches," says Sgt. Kyle Coleman of the Bexar County Sheriff's Department Gang Unit, they're a little more reluctant now as those female gang members start to equal them in fights and drive-by

half a dozen gang members.

In Boston, the two biggest female gangs are every bit as ruthless as the boys'. "They're shooting, stabbing, and they're into drug sales and stickups," says Tracy Litthcut, manager for the Boston Streetworkers violence-intervention program. In New York City, not only are packs of boys "whirlpooling," or surrounding girls in public swimming pools and molesting them, but groups of girls are attacking other female swimmers as well. "I've been amazed at



GREG MELLIS—STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

Children grow up seeing blood in the streets, listening to alarms in the night. This little boy bumped into a police action in his lobby.

dropped-waist, baggy-pants look is even called "jailing" in Miami. And prison is a way of acting. "In prison, the baddest, meanest guy runs the cell," says H. T. Smith, a lawyer and African-American activist who practices in Miami's Overtown ghetto. "Your neighborhood, your school—it's the same. You've got to show him you're crazy enough so he won't mess with you."

If prison provides the method of social interaction, guns provide the means. Alexis Vega, a 19-year-old New Yorker, explains the mentality on the streets where she grew up: "If a man threatens me, that's a threat to my life. So I go get a gun and make sure I shoot him first before he shoots me. Even though he might not mean it. Just by saying it, it may scare me so much that I'm going to get him first." Vega has seen run-of-the-mill arguments turn into tragedies. "A bullet doesn't have anybody's name on it," says Vega. "Somebody shoots, they're so nervous, they'll catch you even though you don't have anything to do with it."

One kid with a gun is a finite

danger; a gang equipped with Uzis, AK-47s and sawed-off shotguns means carnage. Unlike adult criminals, who usually act alone, violent teens normally move in a pack. That's typical teen behavior: hanging

together. But these are well-equipped armies, not just a few kids milling outside a pizza parlor. There's a synergistic effect: one particularly aggressive kid can spur others to commit crimes they might not think of on their own. The victims are often chosen because they are perceived as weak or vulnerable, say social scientists who study children and aggression. As horrible as some of the crimes are, kids go along with the crowd rather than go it alone.

A dangerous breed: Some social scientists argue that teenage aggression is natural. In another era, they say, that aggression might have been channeled in a socially acceptable way—into the military, or hard physical labor—options that are still available to putative linebackers and soldiers. But other researchers who have studied today's violent teens say they are a new and dangerous breed. At a conference on teen-violence prevention in Washington, D.C., last week, psychologists and social workers discussed the causes of skyrocketing teen-crime rates. In one of the largest longitudinal studies of violent youth, scientists followed about 4,000 youngsters in Denver, Pittsburgh and Rochester, N.Y., for five years. By the age of 16, more than half admitted to some form of violent criminal behavior, says Terence P. Thornberry, the principal investigator in Rochester and a psychologist at the State University of New York in Albany. "Vi-

GUNS AND HOMICIDES



■ Between 1987 and 1991, juvenile arrests for weapons violations increased 62%.

■ One out of 5 weapons arrests in 1991 was a juvenile arrest.

■ Black youths were arrested for weapons-law violations at a rate triple that of white youths in 1991; they were victims of homicides at a rate six times higher than whites.

SOURCES: OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION, U.S. JUSTICE DEPT.; FBI

PHOTO BY ION LEVY—GAMMA-LIAISON

olence among teenagers is almost normative in our society," Thornberry told the conference. But not all violent teens were the same: the researchers found that 15 percent of the sample were responsible for 75 percent of the violent offenses.

"Risk factors": What made the bad kids so bad? Thornberry and his colleagues identified a number of "risk factors" in the youths' background. "Violence does not drop out of the sky at age 15," Thornberry says. "It is part of a long developmental process that begins in early childhood." Kids who grow up in families where there is child abuse and maltreatment, spouse abuse and a history of violent behavior learn early on to act out physically when they are frustrated or upset. Poverty exacerbates the situation. Parents who haven't finished high school, who are unemployed or on welfare, or who began their families while they themselves were teenagers are more likely to have delinquent children. In New York and other big cities, counselors who work with delinquent youths say they see families with a history of generations of violence. Angela D'Arpa-Calandra, a former probation officer who now directs the Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program, says she recently had such a case in Manhattan family court. When she walked into the courtroom, she saw a mother and a grandmother sitting with the 14-year-old offender. "I had the grandmother in criminal court in 1963," D'Arpa-Calandra says. "We didn't stop it there. The grandmother was 14 when she was arrested. The mother had this child when she was 14. It's like a cycle we must relive."

Problems in school also increase the likelihood that the youngster will turn to violence, the study found. People who work with young criminals report that many are barely literate. Learning disabilities are common among teens in the probation system, says Charntel Polite, a Brooklyn pro-



GWENDOLEN CATES

"You don't have to be in a gang to be shot . . .": Rodriguez, 14

bation officer who supervises 30 youthful offenders. "I have 15- or 16-year-olds in ninth or 10th grade whose reading levels are second or third grade."

Thornberry says the most effective prevention efforts concentrate on eliminating risk factors. For example, students with learning problems could get extra tutoring. Parents who have trouble maintaining discipline at home could get counseling or therapy. "Prevention programs need to start very early," Thornberry says, maybe even before elementary school. "Waiting until the teenage years is too late."

After a while, life on the streets begins to feel like home to older teenagers. Joaquin Ramos, a 19-year-old member of the Latin Counts in Detroit, says he spends his time "chillin' and hanging" with the Counts when he's not in jail. He's spent two years behind bars, but that hasn't made him turn away from the gang. The oldest of seven children, he never met his father, but he has been told that he was a member of the Bagly Boys, a popular gang a generation ago. Ramos began carrying a gun when he was 9; he became a full-fledged Count at the age of 13. He has watched three good friends—

Bootis, Shadow and Showtime—die in street wars.

Bootis was shot when he left a party. "I looked right into his eyes and it looked like he was trying to say something," Ramos recalls. "There was snow on the ground and the blood from the back of his head was spreading all over it. Another buddy tried to lift his head but the back of it was gone. He had a small hole right in the middle of his forehead. And then he was gone. He died. That was my buddy. We were real tight." He adds, "Would you say in the story that we love him and miss him and Shadow and Showtime, too?"

Some kids do manage to leave gang life, usually with the help of a supportive adult. William Jefferson, now 19, quit the

Intervale gang in Boston's Roxbury section after he was shot. "My mom talked to me and told me I had to make a decision whether I wanted to do something with my life or stay on the street and possibly get killed." He started playing basketball and football at school; then he had to keep up his grades to stay on the teams. Last month he became the first of his mother's four children to graduate from high school. He plans to enter junior college this fall. Now, he says, he'll behave because "I have a lot to lose."

Two lives, two different choices. At the risk of sounding melodramatic, Joaquin Ramos and William Jefferson represent different paths for a generation at risk. The young men made their own decisions, but clearly they were influenced by those dear to them: for Ramos it was the gang, for Jefferson, his mother. Day by day, block by block, these are the small judgments that will end up governing our streets. There is little reason to be very optimistic.

With DEBRA ROSENBERG in Boston, LUCILLE BEACHY in New York, PETER ANNIN in Houston, SHAWN D. LEWIS in Detroit, JEANNE GORDON in Los Angeles, PETER KATEL in Miami and MELINDA LIU in Washington

FT. LAUDERDALE

Bobby Kent, the 20-year-old son of a stockbroker, was killed near a quarry pond July 14, his body stabbed, his head smashed with a bat. Police arrested six youths. One of them was his ex-girlfriend, another a former pal.



Donald Danny Semenick, 18



Martin Joseph Puccio Jr., 20



Lisa Marie Connolly, 18



Derek Leon Kaufman, 20



Derek George Dzvirko, 19

PHOTOS BY FT. LAUDERDALE SUN-SENTINEL

On the Streets, They Sell Ounces (of Prevention)

THE BULLET HOLES serve as a deadly reminder to 19-year-old Kevin. In a second-floor apartment of a red-brick project in Boston's South End, the scars of 12-gauge spray are etched in the cinder blocks, on the ceiling and around the window frame. Kevin doesn't know who was trying to gun him down last fall, but he knows why. For five years, Kevin belonged to the Hornets, a South End gang. A rival gang thought he had killed one of its allies. "I wanted to retaliate," he says, "but I thought, 'It's got to stop here'."

If Kevin stays straight, it may be due in part to the efforts of the Boston Streetworkers, a publicly funded program that works with 1,500 troubled youths. It is one of many different types of "violence intervention" programs being tried around the nation. All seek to stem the escalating pattern of teenage rage, frustration and violence found on so many American streets. While there are occasional downturns in the mayhem and the murder, the numbers today have never been more discouraging. "The rage is real," says Richard Green, a Brooklyn, N.Y., community organizer. "These kids are like chemicals. If they collide, they'll explode."

'Crack down': The experts who toil for solutions face a Sisyphean task. In the schools, in the streets and in what's left of homes, they want to try something—anything—to reach a population that's on the verge of being lost. "For the last 20 years politicians have said that we need to crack down on criminals," says Indianapolis Prosecuting Attorney Jeff Modisett. "But crime keeps going

up. Especially with children, we've got to make sure our resources are directed to where they can do the most good."

No one thinks that they've discovered a magic bullet; program directors speak with becoming modesty about their success rate. But still they keep trying because the alternative

disputes and vent anger in a nonviolent way. In Los Angeles, Conflict Busters is a public-school program, beginning in the third grade, that trains students to be mediators. They're not supposed to offer solutions to their peers but teach them to figure out ones of their own.

"Cases" range from sandbox fights to interracial gang disputes. "We're teaching kids skills that most adults don't have," says Rich Mills, a school psychologist who founded Conflict Busters.

ing classes more personal. In New Haven, Conn., police and clinicians have teamed to identify another category of at-risk youths—direct and indirect victims of trauma. Earlier this month, for example, a group of boys watched in horror as a motorist knocked their 7-year-old buddy off his bicycle and killed him. When a cop showed up and saw the faces of the boys, he immediately called a child psychologist at the Yale School of Medicine. The clinician arrived within 10 minutes.

The Child Development-Community Policing Program, the first of its kind, began in 1991 and has now trained 150 of New Haven's 400 officers. A clinician is always on call to come to any crime scene, hospital or precinct. "It's very much a prevention program because when children are exposed to violence... they run the risk of becoming overwhelmed," says Steven Nagler, a Yale social worker—and later repeating the aggression.

Beeper: The schoolyards and the streets are full of random acts of violence. But it is gang warfare that most terrorizes inner cities. In Boston, the Streetworkers seek out the toughest gangbangers. Tracy Litcut, the leader, works a no man's land between cops and gangs. He wears a beeper and he's

regularly called by both sides to wage some peace. Says Litcut: "We stop a lot of things from happening."

Like Kevin, in the South End, from retaliating. He's still got problems, facing an attempted-murder charge from a stabbing that he says was self-defense. But Kevin seems to get it, professing no more interest in the Hornets. "I joined for the money, the drugs, the girls," he says. "But what good is all that if you're dead?"

DAVID A. KAPLAN with DEBRA ROSENBERG in Boston, PETER ANNIN and NINA BIDDLE in Texas, JENNIFER APTER, HEATHER HEIMAN and ROBIN SPARKMAN in New York and bureau reports



GREG MELLIS—STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

Will anything end the gunfire that killed Neil Maddox, 11, in a Chicago drive-by?

is so bleak. There is, for example, the shock approach: the prosecutor's office in Cook County, Ill., has come up with a graphic anti-crime video that has footage from the morgue. There's the big-brother approach: an organization called Mad Dads, centered in Nebraska, which mobilizes men in a community to be role models. And there are even lawyers in Los Angeles who volunteer to spend time with young parolees coming out of the California Youth Authority; with all that aggression they could all grow up to be Arnie Becker.

The goal of many programs is to teach kids how to resolve

The best time for intervention is between elementary school and junior high, according to one study of inner-city youths in New York and Baltimore. Edward Seidman, a New York University psychologist, concludes that early adolescence is the worst time to move kids out of the controlled and personal environment of grade school. "Junior high is bigger, more anonymous," he says. "Classes change every period. There are different teachers. We find self-esteem deteriorates and schoolwork suffers." Seidman points with approval to school experiments aimed at mak-

The Violence in Our Heads

The culture of aggression shows up in our speech, our play and our entertainment. It's better than hip, it's commercial.

BY DAVID GELMAN

TEENAGERS DON'T INVENT VIOLENCE, THEY LEARN IT. TO A considerable extent, they act out the attitudes and ethics of the adults closest to them. Thus any study of the causes of teen crime might look first at the violence grown-ups have been carrying in their heads. In the last 30 years, Americans have developed a culture of violence surpassing in its pervasiveness anything we experienced before. It shows up in our speech, in our play, more than ever in the entertainments we fashion and fancy, in business style. "There's an extraordinary degree of violence in the language, and it's the window to the actual feelings and mores of the culture," says Dr. Robert Phillips, director of forensic services for the Connecticut Department of Public Health. "You get a sense of how the social fabric is beginning to wear thin—a lot of it is directed at minorities."

Everyone seems aggressively on the defensive these days. A rampant "make my day" ethic expressed at various levels of the culture may be largely to blame for both the rise in teen crime and its increasing callousness, says Deborah Prothrow-Stith, an assistant dean at the Harvard School of Public Health. Our national icons tend to be men who excel at violence, from John Wayne to Clint Eastwood. When President Clinton ordered a retaliatory airstrike on Baghdad because of an alleged plot against George Bush, his popularity rating took a leap, just as Bush's had when, as president, he ordered up the gulf war, in which an estimated 100,000 Iraqi civilians were killed by bombs and missiles.

Ironically, a quarter century of feminist consciousness-raising has managed, among worthier achievements, to bring us back to a macho mystique. Meanwhile the Schwarzenegger generation is pumping iron and signaling "Don't mess with me." T-shirts are broadcasting more direct messages—and so are rap lyrics: "Beat that bitch with a bat," one of them urges. "Violence is hip right now," says Jack Levin, a professor of sociology and criminology at Northeastern University. Better than hip: it's commercial.

In her 1991 book, "Deadly Consequences," Prothrow-Stith says that, for adolescents, an attraction to violence is developmentally normal. But what accounts for adults' voyeuristic fascination with it? Are Rambo and RoboCop our surrogate avengers, as one psychologist suggests? It's not only teenagers who flock to the latest kung fu epic. It's certainly not teenagers alone who are guzzling beer and starting brawls at sports contests that are themselves turning ever more violent.

With new, improved technology, films grow more and more like demolition derbies. Trailers for these movies are edited to breathtaking montages of blazing guns, exploding cars and heads, and bodies hurtling out of windows. The destruction is cartoonish, but the shattered glass and bodies look real enough to leave disturbing afterimages. On the tube, growly-voiced promos whip up viewers' lust for bone-crunching, bloodletting sports contests to come. Videos capture football's hardest hits, complete with spliced-in grunts and groans. On the field, despite a belated ban, players still dance

the obscene little touchdown shimmy that is intended to add manly insult to injury. If that doesn't sate your appetite, you can always attend the fights, at the hockey game—and, lately, at basketball and baseball games as well. Fans seem to love them. The danger, psychiatrists say, is that the constant repetition of violence and violent imagery desensitizes us in much the way a therapist desensitizes a phobia patient: by deliberate exposure to what's scary.

Images are not reality, but they feed into the perception many people have of an inescapable, "out of control" violence in the country. And it would be a mistake to think this sensory inundation doesn't have an impact on the young. By now, the media-violence relationship is one of the best-researched connections in social science, says Myriam Miedzian, author of "Boys Will Be Boys: Breaking the Link Between Masculinity and Violence." But it is also, she adds, one of the best-kept secrets. "There's been an enormous reluctance to deal with this. Mothers will still say, 'Oh, I took the kids to see the Slasher, and they came home and had milkshakes and cookies'."

The constant repetition of violence desensitizes us in much the same way a therapist desensitizes a phobia patient

In fact, milkshakes and cookies may not be such a bad idea. The impact of violent movies and TV—almost impossible to put off-limits since the advent of VCRs—can be mitigated by a caring parent who sits down with the children and helps put things

in perspective. That, of course, assumes a caring parent is available. "It's virtually impossible when the parent is working 50 or 60 hours a week," says Stephen Klineberg, a professor of sociology at Rice University, in Texas. In 1974, for the first time, 50 percent of American children had nobody at home when school let out at 3 o'clock. Now, it's closer to 80 percent, but schools still kick kids out at 3. "While the family has undergone a revolution, there's been a failure of these other structures to change accordingly," says Klineberg. "It's what sociologists call a cultural lag."

The failure of schools to adapt is only one example of what social analysts believe is a general failure of will, a kind of paralysis in the face of the growing dimensions of the problem. The token gesture of the TV networks in volunteering parental-guidance labels for certain shows scarcely changes the picture. There are obvious dangers in imposing more aggressive restraints and flinging the doors open wider to censorship. But meanwhile, the levels of tolerated violence in the media, in sports and in the real world keep ratcheting upward. When do we stop feeling helpless and start doing something? "The surgeon general's reports for years have said that violence on television is related to violence in children," says Carol Nagy Jacklin, dean of the division of social science and communication at the University of Southern California. "It's so upsetting that, on the one hand, we seem to deplore this violence but, on the other, we are not stopping it in the ways that we know it needs to be stopped."

Taken down to cases, there are more proximate causes of adolescent crime in this country—guns and drugs, to name just two. But in the longer view, they may be no more responsible than the cultural violence of which we are the principal makers and consumers, and which we still hesitate to bring under effective control. ■

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WEST MEMPHIS, Ark.

After he was arrested last month with two other teenage boys, Jessie Lloyd Misskelly Jr., 18, reportedly described the killings of three 8-year-olds, and denied participating in the killings. He allegedly told of rape, mutilation and eating the meat of a dog.



PROGRESS REPORT FOR: Adolescents and Young Adults

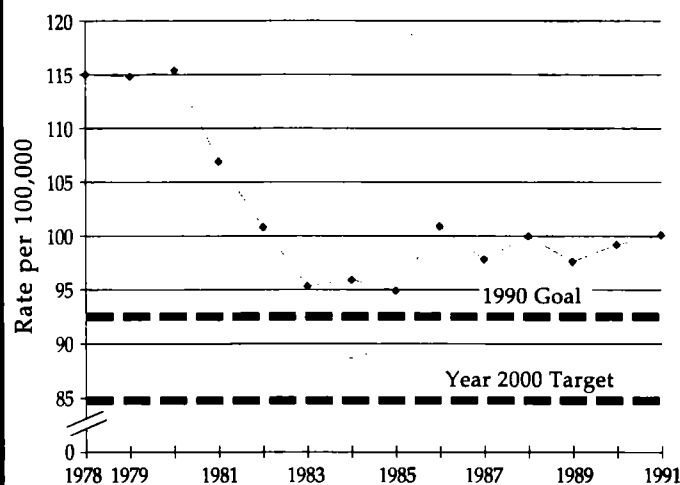
ON DECEMBER 17, 1993, the Public Health Service (PHS) conducted a crosscutting review of progress on HEALTHY PEOPLE 2000 objectives related to adolescents and young adults. The PHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control and National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) provided an overview of critical health problems of adolescents and reviewed strategies toward achieving the year 2000 targets. A highlight of progress on HEALTHY PEOPLE 2000 objectives was presented by the Director of CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. The U.S. Department of Education's (DEd) Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education co-chaired the review. Staff of the Health Care Financing Administration and the Administration for Children and Families attended along with representatives from the American Medical Association, Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, Office of Technology Assessment, and Maternal and Child Health Policy Research Center. Other PHS participants included the Office of Population Affairs, President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, CDC's Office on Smoking and Health, and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, as well as HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau and Bureau of Primary Health Care.

The progress review began with Joycelyn Elders, M.D., U.S. Surgeon General, expressing concern about the health status of young people. She called for more comprehensive programs targeting the needs of youth and noted that the purpose of this progress review was to reflect on current status, as well as to discuss what can be done to improve the health of the Nation's young people. Dr. Elders stressed her desire that "the Nation make an 'A' in adolescent health." The Assistant Secretary for Education emphasized the important relationship between health and education and expressed support for collaborative efforts at the Federal and community levels.

Sixty HEALTHY PEOPLE 2000 objectives target adolescents and young adults. One general health status indicator (see first chart) shows that the death rate for adolescents and young adults was 100.1 per 100,000 in 1991. This rate, which declined from 1980-1983 and then leveled off, has increased over the past several years; the rate now is above the 1990 goal and is moving away from the year 2000 target of 85 deaths per 100,000.

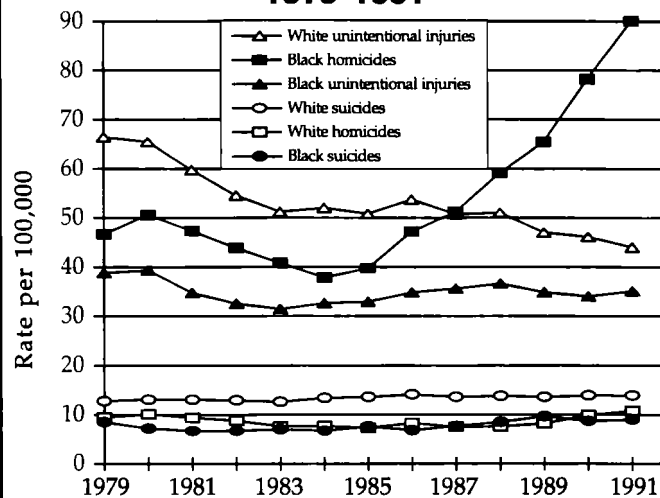
The three leading causes of death for 15- to 24-year-olds are unintentional injuries, suicide, and homicide (see second chart). Homicide increasingly is affecting young people, both as perpetrators and victims, and has

Death Rates for Adolescents and Young Adults 15-24 Years of Age, 1978-1991



Source: CDC/NCHS, NVSS, 1978-91.

Leading Causes of Death for Adolescents and Young Adults 15-24 Years of Age 1979-1991



Source: CDC/NCHS, NVSS, 1979-91.

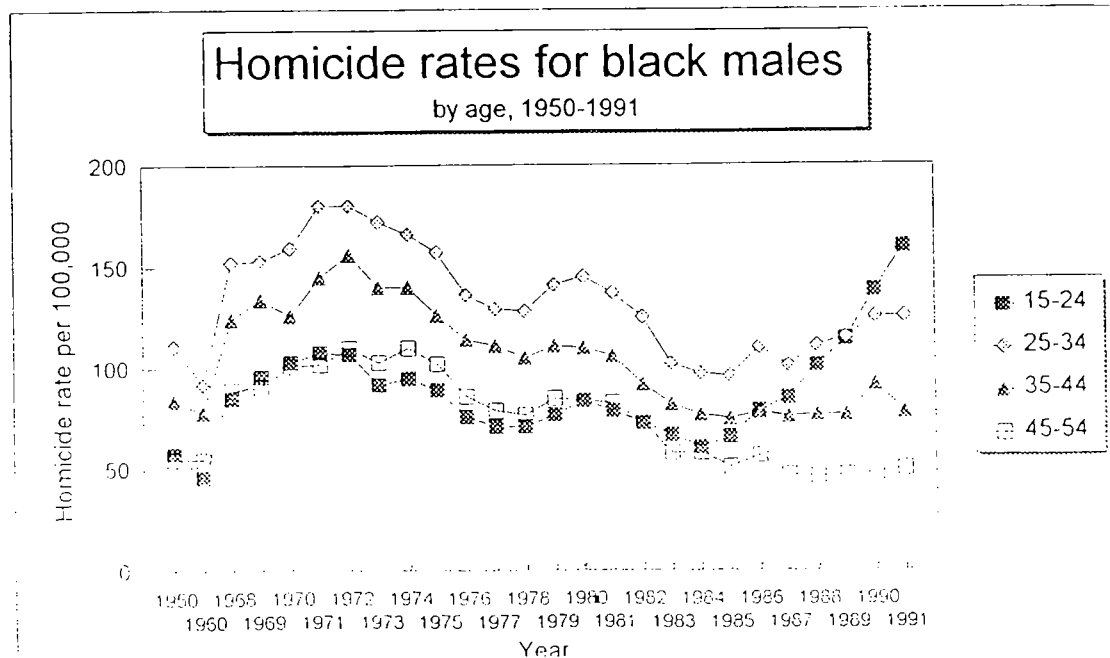
VICTIMS

- The homicide rate for black males age 15-24 has doubled since the mid 1980's.
- The homicide rate for older black males has either been stable or has declined in recent years.

Source: Center for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics: Data computed by the Office of Analysis and Epidemiology from the Compressed Mortality File.

Death rates for homicide-black males

	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54
1950	58	111	84	55
1960	46	92	78	55
1968	85	152	124	89
1969	96	153	134	91
1970	103	159	126	101
1971	108	180	145	102
1972	107	180	156	110
1973	92	172	140	103
1974	95	166	140	110
1975	89	157	126	102
1976	76	136	114	86
1977	71	129	111	79
1978	71	128	105	77
1979	77	141	111	85
1980	84	145	110	84
1981	79	137	106	83
1982	73	125	92	73
1983	67	102	82	58
1984	61	97	77	58
1985	66	96	75	51
1986	79	110	78	57
1987	85	101	76	47
1988	101	111	77	46
1989	114	115	77	47
1990	138	125	92	48
1991	159	125	78	50



VIOLENCE:

In a recent survey conducted by Newsweek and the Children's Defense Fund, children between the ages of 10 and 17 reported that their biggest fear involved them or a member of their family as the victim of a violent crime. Not being able to afford a doctor when they needed was the third most commonly reported fear.

WHAT OUR CHILDREN FEAR MOST:

- 1.) FAMILY MEMBER VICTIMIZED BY VIOLENT
CRIME
- 2.) PARENTAL JOB LOSS
- 3.) NOT BEING ABLE TO AFFORD A DOCTOR.

THESE FEARS MIRROR REALITY:

"America is the most violent country in the industrialized world."

*Dr. Mark Rosenberg, Assoc. Director
CDC National Center for Injury Control*

- More than 2.2 million Americans are victims of violent injury each year. (4)
- Approximately one third of all injuries in America are estimated to be the result of violence. [1]
- Over 50,000 of these violent injuries are fatal. (6)
- In three of our largest states, California, New York and Texas, as well as in D.C., Virginia, Louisiana, and Nevada, there were more deaths caused by firearms than motor vehicle during 1991. Among Americans age 25 - 34 firearm deaths presently exceed the rate of motor vehicle deaths. (HHS)
- Motor vehicle violence is still the leading cause of death for people between the ages of 15 and 24, but a recent HHS report indicates that by 1995, homicides could surpass the number of young deaths caused by automobile accidents. By the year 2003, CDC estimates that firearms may be the leading cause of death nationwide.

ON AN AVERAGE DAY IN AMERICA:

- More than 50 people kill themselves with a gun. (3)
- At least 60 people die from interpersonal violence. (3)
- **14 children lose their lives to gun-related violence. (CDF)**

FIREARM DEATHS ARE ON THE RISE, AS IS THE PREVALENCE OF GUNS:

- 7 out of 10 homicides in the U.S. are committed with a gun.
- Among the 38,317 firearm deaths reported in 1991,
 - 47 % were homicides,
 - 48 % were suicides. (NCHS)**
- There are more than 200 million firearms in the U.S. today. (DPC report)
- Half of the households in this country now have one or more firearms. (DPC)

CHILDRENS' FEARS SURROUNDING HEALTH CARE ARE EQUALLY REALISTIC:

- 58 million Americans are without health insurance at some point each year.
- 38.5 million are without health insurance at any given time.
- An additional 23 million are "underinsured".
- **19 million of the uninsured are children.**

"Financial ruin from medical bills is almost exclusively an American disease."

Roul Turley

THE CRISIS OF HEALTH CARE & THE CRISIS OF VIOLENT CRIME:

Violence takes a heavy toll on our health care system:

- It overburdens and endangers our health care providers.
- It threatens the viability of our health care institutions.
- It adds billions to this nation's health care bill.

Counting the indirect costs, both financial and societal, violence is one of the premiere threats to public health in America, and the costliest epidemic we face.

"Violence is every bit a public health issue for me and my successors in this century as smallpox, tuberculosis and syphilis were for my predecessors in the last two centuries."

C. Everett Koop, U.S. Surgeon General, 1984

VIOLENCE OVERBURDENS AND ENDANGERS PROVIDERS:

Uncompensated Care:

- Trauma patients often require a greater time commitment from the provider, particularly as measured in follow-up care, than do elective cases.
- Services provided in the trauma center often go unreimbursed, compounding the physician's loss of income.
- Because trauma injuries occur mostly at night, working late and being on 24-hour call is disruptive to some surgeons' lifestyles and can result in their having less time for elective surgeries and office care.
- One D.C. trauma surgeon reported that in 1991, he and the surgeons on his five-member team each provided more than \$100,000 worth of free care to gunshot patients alone. [17]

VIOLENCE OVERBURDENS AND ENDANGERS PROVIDERS:

Providers Are Increasingly at Risk Themselves:

- Upon entering one Los Angeles trauma center, 25% of patients were carrying a lethal weapon .
 - * Some of these weapons go unnoticed by providers.
 - * In some trauma centers, it is not unusual to assign patients aliases to avoid their being tracked down and further assaulted by their perpetrators. (AMNA) As a result, outbreaks of violence are not uncommon in some emergency departments.
- Over 70% of nurses working in psychiatric facilities have been assaulted during their career. The majority of injuries occur while attempting to contain patient violence. (AMNA.)
 - * Data suggests that workers at a maximum security forensic hospital are at higher risk of work-related injuries than employees in the most hazardous industry in the country -- construction.
- A recent JAMA article highlights one urban trauma center's "devastating psychosocial effect on physicians and their staff" which the article sites as being minimal compared to the "emotionally dampening and debilitating" experience of underserved local inhabitants who come for treatment.

VIOLENCE THREATENS THE VIABILITY OF OUR HEALTH INSTITUTIONS:

- Inner-city trauma centers are repositories for the victims of violent crime and drug wars because they have to treat those severely injured who often are uninsured and do not pay their bills. [17]
- Already overburdened public hospitals must continue to meet rising demands with progressively diminishing resources.
- Overcrowding has reached a new peak of disarray, commonly referred to as emergency department gridlock -- numerous interlocking stretchers obstruct the paths between stretchers and the nurses station.
- The emergency department at King/Drew Medical Center, the only major hospital serving So. Central Los Angeles, was closed to incoming patients 67% of the time in 1991 because of saturated facilities. [16]
- The ramifications of this are even more detrimental to the public health in light of the fact that 82% of hospital admissions at King/Drew are through the emergency department. This kind of admissions routine is not out of the ordinary. It is largely due to the low socio-economic status of many patients, lacking health insurance, and overcrowded neighborhood outpatient clinics. [16]
- Such overloading delays treatment and exacerbates the incidence of shock and shock-related organ failures. [16]
- Conditions of overcrowding tie up already scarce expensive diagnostic and intensive care facilities, increase costs, and unfavorably affect physical outcome of patients. [16]

VIOLENCE:

- The majority of violent injuries, are penetrating injuries -- such as gunshot and knifewounds. Not only are they among the most expensive injuries to treat; the incidence of these injuries is rapidly increasing.
- The average charge per hospital admission for a trauma patient is three times higher than that for a regular acute care admission. [17]
- Urgently needed trauma care disrupts hospital routines and physicians' private practices and lifestyles, and upsets some private patients. [17]
- At one hospital surveyed by GAO, surgeries, including 15 colon surgeries, were postponed for up to 3 weeks because of trauma disruption. Hospitals rely heavily on their paying customers to reimburse them for the financial losses they incur when treating uninsured trauma victims. But, many hospital officials fear these paying patients will avoid the trauma care environment and seek services elsewhere, causing the hospital to lose revenue. [17]

INDIRECT COSTS TO PROVIDERS:

- In 1989, about 80% of gunshot and stabbing victims treated in some urban trauma centers were uninsured, underinsured, or Medicaid-eligible. [17]
- Hospitals have been forced to hire more security guards, install metal detectors, and take other safety precautions. [17]
- Some hospitals are finding it increasingly difficult to attract and retain qualified surgeons because of the effects of trauma care on physicians' income and lifestyle. [17]
- Rises in unreimbursed trauma care costs have paralleled the increases in penetrating injuries associated with crime and violence. [17]

HEALTH CARE COSTS ADDED TO THE NATION'S BILL AS A RESULT OF VIOLENCE:

- The average cost of any violent injury (fatal and nonfatal) = \$44,000 in \$1992 (Miller)
- Direct health care costs alone due to violent injuries are estimated at \$5.7 billion per year. (30)[1]
- Our health care system treats 1.5 million victims of violent crime every year, according to the National Institute of Justice. (8) [23]
- Approximately 85% of hospital costs for treatment of penetrating trauma (firearms and stabbings) are unreimbursed and subsequently cost-shifted onto the privately insured. (34a)
- Up to 30% of emergency room visits by women are the result of injuries from domestic violence, which accounts for over 1.4 million doctor visits each year. [1]

THE MOST EXPENSIVE SOCIETAL COST IS THE EFFECT ON OUR CHILDREN:

- Gunshot kills a child every two hours in the U.S, while a police officer is killed by guns every 5 days and 9 hours. (CDF)
- More than 100,000 children bring a gun into school on any given day. (NEA)

"For too many young, people it is easier to find a gun than a good friend, a good teacher, or a good school."

U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Joycelyn Elders

CHILDREN AS VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE:

- Homicide is now the third leading cause of death for elementary and middle school children. (CDF)
- Almost 3 out of 4 children in one fifth grade class in a Boston school reported knowing someone who had been shot or stabbed. (23A)[25]
- 160,000 children miss school because of fear of injury. (NEA)
- The effect on inner-city children of exposure to violence has caused them to show symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder comparable to children in Mozambique, Cambodia and Palestine. (CDF)
- More than 2.9 million children were reported abused or neglected in 1992. (CDF)
- Each year 1,300 children die as a result of abuse or severe neglect. (DPCp.1)

"Violence prevention means understanding the reason for gangs in our cities -- what needs they fulfill, what security they offer young people who do not find it at home or in school."

U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Joycelyn Elders

THE SETTING OF VIOLENCE:

"Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime." Aristotle

- Victims of crime are disproportionately low-income people. (DPC)
- One in five children in this country is living below the poverty line. (CDF)

"Must the hunger become anger and the anger fury before anything will be done?"

John Steinbeck

- 59 % of children grades 6 - 12 say they know where to get a gun if they want one -- in a recent study done by Harvard SPH.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND GUN PREVALENCE:

Violence transpires overwhelmingly between two people who know each other, are drinking, and have gotten into an argument. The presence of a gun significantly increases the chance that someone is shot, or killed. These are the results of a large scale statistical analysis conducted by Mark Rosenberg, Assoc. Director of CDC's National Center for Injury Control.

- In almost half of all homicides, alcohol is consumed by the victim, the perpetrator, or both. (11) [20]
- 43 % of high school seniors report they that have used an illicit drug, according to a 1993 study by the Universty of Michigan. Teenage drug use is on the rise for the first time in a decade.
- Incidence of violence among drug abusers is 16 times higher than the rate in the general population. (DPC)
- 40 % of all homicides are drug-related.
- In D.C., evidence of cocaine has been found in 80% of homicide victims. (14)[21]

THE INDIRECT COSTS OF THE VIOLENCE EPIDEMIC:

Two of the most recent estimates regarding the costs, direct and indirect, of violence have been done by Third Party Payer's Injury Prevention Resource Center.

- Lost productivity per penetrating fatality in 1992 cost about \$940,000 in physical injury, in psychological injury, and in productivity lost by other employees.
- Incarcerations in this country cost almost \$ 50 billion annually.
- The total cost of maintaining our present level of law enforcement is over five times that amount.
- **It is estimated that one in 99 people in the U.S. will live behind bars in the year 2000.**
- The average annual cost to incarcerate a juvenile in California was about \$90,000 in 1992.
- The annual California expenditure for education per child in 1992 was \$5,029. (JAMA, 1/93)

HOW TO TURN 40 CENTS INTO \$2 MILLION

Money Magazine's most recent issue tracked the cost of one hollow-point bullet -- a bullet that shot into the spine of David Johnstone while he was walking down a street on a business trip in San Francisco. David Johnstone died one month later, leaving behind a wife, two children, and a financial record of the economic toll violence is taking on our society.

\$65,017 =	hospital bills, including \$10,890 for the air ambulance,
\$525,000 =	Johnstone's business accident travel provision at five times his \$65,000 annual salary,
\$46,000 =	paid annually to the Johnstone family by Social Security and worker's compensation,
\$22,000 =	contributed by Johnstone's colleagues in a college fund for the two children,
\$15,000 =	the oldest son qualifies for an additional scholarship as a result,
\$18,000 =	the cost so far of an on-going police investigation to find the perpetrator's accomplices,
\$15,000 =	the juvenile sentencing hearing for the juvenile who fired the gun,
\$200,000 =	the minimum to keep the convicted juvenile and one accomplice behind bars,
\$1 million+ =	economic loss for the 20-plus years of productivity lost when Johnstone died at 43 years of age.
TOTAL =	\$ 2 million in overall measurable costs.

Third Party Prevention estimates that the average overall cost of a violent fatality comes to \$ 2.8 million.

This organization has just finished tracking the expense of one small bullet. He estimates that the injury price tag on each bullet sold in the U.S. in 1992 was \$ 27 total. This includes not just bullets that maimed people, but ones aimed at animals, aimed at targets, and ones still sitting in the glove compartment. Each price tag includes:

\$.60 in direct cost for medical care and emergency services

\$7.80 in lost earnings and housework

\$18.60 in pain, suffering and lost quality of life.

TEN BETTER WAYS TO INVEST \$2 MILLION

\$ 2 MILLION COULD FINANCE:

1. the refurbishing of 133 rundown playgrounds in D.C.

Average cost of a new playground in D.C. is \$45,000. Average cost of refurbishing an old playground is \$15,000. (The D.C. Dept. of Recreation and Parks will replace 10 old playgrounds this year for about \$150,000.)

*Controller/Administrator for Financial & Administrative Support Services,
D.C. Recreation & Parks*

2. more than 14,000 weeks at summer camp away from the city.

One week of summer camp away from the city costs \$140 per child.

Boy Scouts of America

3. 166 national service slots with AmeriCorps.

One national service slot with AmeriCorps costs \$7,225 in stipends, plus \$4,800 in scholarship upon completion of one year of service. Total cost to cover one participant = \$12,025.

Corporation for National Service

4. 1,000 new Macintosh computers with printers for D.C. public schools.

Average cost of a school computer = \$2,000 for Mac, printer, and software

Office of Procurement, D.C. Public Schools

5. the hiring of at least 75 new teachers into the public school system.

Average salary of a new teacher in D.C. public schools = \$26,000 with no prior experience

Personnel, D.C. Public Schools

or, the hiring of 68 school counselors to help students work on conflict resolution.

Average salary of in school counselor = \$29,000 with a Masters

Superintendent, D.C. Public Schools

6. vaccines for over 15,000 children to be immunized in the public sector.

Cost of vaccines to immunize one child in D.C. = \$130 in the public sector

ASPE, Dept. of Health & Human Services

7. over 12,600 comprehensive HIV tests with counseling.

A comprehensive HIV test with counseling = \$158

Center for Disease Control

8. almost 29,000 periodic exams with a family practitioner,

A periodic exam with a family practitioner = \$69 on average.

or, over 31,000 periodic gynecological exams.

A periodic gynecological exam costs \$64 on average.

Physician Marketplace Statistics 1992, AMA

9. nine months of full-time child care so that a child who has a child can still receive an education.

The cost of nine months of full-time child care so that a child who has a child could still receive an education = \$4,500 (\$500/mo.)

Local D.C. DayCare Center

10. the buying of 20,000 guns off the street at \$100 each.

The number of guns that could be bought off the street at \$100 per gun, as in the recent Toys for Guns campaign.

— — —

"If we are to have true security in health care reform, we must restore security in our homes, our schools, our streets and our nation."

Dr. Joycelyn Elders, U.S. Surgeon General

"Children Who Kill," World Press Review, June 1993, By Jocelyn Maker, James Brittain, Giancarlo Piraino, and S.P. Somtow
Twenty percent of elementary-school children see more than 40 hours of television a week. On an average weekend, there are about 800 acts of violence--among them 150 murders--to see on television.

"Wild in the Streets," Newsweek, August 2, 1993, by Barbara Kantrowitz

"Much of it, [violence] but by no means all, can be found in poor neighborhoods, where a disproportionate number of victims and victimizers live side by side. But what separates one group from another is complex: being neglected or abused by parents; witnessing violence at an early age on the street or in the house; living in a culture that glamorizes youth violence in decades of movies from A Clockwork Orange to Menace II Society; the continuing mystery of evil. To that list add the most dangerous ingredient: the widespread availability of guns to kids. In a Harvard School of Public Health survey released last week, 59 percent of children in the sixth through the 12th grades said they 'could get a handgun if they wanted one.' More than a third of the students surveyed said they thought guns made it less likely that they would live to 'a ripe old age.' (pp. 42-43)"

"Between 1987 and 1991, the last year for which statistics were available, the number of teenagers arrested for murder around the country increased by an astounding 85 percent, according to the Department of Justice. In 1991, 10- to 17-year-olds accounted for 17 percent of all violence-crime arrests; law-enforcement officials believe that figure is even higher now. According to the FBI, more than 2,200 murder victims in 1991 were under 18--an average of more than six young people killed every day [three of every 10 juvenile murder arrests involve a victim under the age of 18]. The Justice Department estimates that each year, nearly a million young people between 12 and 19 are raped, robbed or assaulted, often by their peers" (p. 43).

"The casual attitude toward violence is most acute in inner-city neighborhoods, where many youngsters have grown up to the sounds of sirens and gunshots in the night and the sight of blood-spattered sidewalks in the morning" (p. 43).

"In Massachusetts, for instance, 15 percent of the crimes that girls were convicted of committing in 1987 were violent offenses. By 1991, that number had soared to 38 percent" (p. 44).

"In the last few years, more young black men have gone to jail than to college. Fathers, uncles, brothers, cousins have all done time. April Allen, a 15-year-old who lives in Boston's Roxbury section, has friends who think of jail as a kind of sleep-away camp" (p. 44).

"Unlike adult criminals, who usually act alone, violent teens normally move in a pack. That's typical teen behavior: hanging

together. But these are well-equipped armies, not just a few kids milling outside a pizza parlor. There's a synergistic effect: one particularly aggressive kid can spur others to commit crimes they might not think of on their own" (p. 45).

"But other researchers who have studied today's violent teens say they are a new and dangerous breed. In one of the largest longitudinal studies of violent youth, scientists followed about 4,000 youngsters in Denver, Pittsburgh and Rochester, N.Y., for five years. By the age of 16, more than half admitted to some form of violent criminal behavior, says Terence P. Thornberry, the principal investigator in Rochester and a psychologist at the State University of New York in Albany. 'Violence among teenagers is almost normative in our society,' Thornberry told the conference. But not all violent teens were the same: the researchers found that 15 percent of the sample were responsible for 75 percent of the violent offenses" (pp. 45-46).

"Kids who grow up in families where there is child abuse and maltreatment, spouse abuse and a history of violent behavior learn early on to act out physically when they are frustrated or upset. Poverty exacerbates the situation. Parents who haven't finished high school, who are unemployed or on welfare, or who began their families while they themselves were teenagers are more likely to have delinquent children" (p. 46).

"Problems in school also increase the likelihood that the youngster will turn to violence, the study found. People who work with young criminals report that many are barely literate. Learning disabilities are common among teens in the probation system, says Charntel Polite, a Brooklyn probation officers who supervises 30 youthful offenders" (p. 46).

"Kids Are Killing, Dying, Bleeding," Fortune, August 10, 1992, by Ronald Henkoff

"The number of children under the age of 18 arrested each year for murder has jumped 55% in the past decade, to 2,674 in 1990" (pp. 62-63).

"For too many children, there are no safe havens. They are victimized at home, at school, on the street. An astonishing number of youngsters are beaten, maimed, molested, and murdered by parents, relatives, or baby sitters. The National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA), using reports filed by all 50 states, calculates that 2.7 million kids--some 4% of American children--suffered from abuse or neglect last year; that's an increase of 40% just since 1985. An estimated 1,383 children (half of them under the age of 1 year) died from maltreatment in 1991, the worst year on record" (p. 63).

"According to the National Center for Health Statistics, homicide by firearms is now the second-leading cause of death (after motor vehicle crashes) for 15- to 19-year-old whites. For African-Americans in that age bracket, homicide is the leading cause of

death. Altogether, 2,771 children, ages 10 to 19, died from homicide in 1989, up 48% from 1984. Another 2,245 in that age group died from suicide, now the third-leading cause of death among adolescents" (p. 63).

"Teenage violence mostly affects urban African Americans (except for suicide, a predominantly white problem). But it is beginning to spread. Under pressure from big city police departments, gangs are stashing their guns and dope in the suburbs and recruiting high school students, as pushers. Says Captain Richard Kozak, chief of intelligence for the Illinois State Police: 'We're seeing gang activities in places where they didn't exist two years ago. The gangs are playing off the fact that law enforcement in the suburbs is not prepared to deal with them'" (p. 63).

"We are constantly acting after the fact, trying to mend bodies after they have been broken" (p. 63).

"Guns figure in more than 75% of adolescent homicides and more than half of adolescent suicides. There are more than 200 million privately owned guns in America, and half of all households have at least one. A five-year study by the American Psychological Association found that the average child has witness 8,000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence on television by the time he or she has completed sixth grade" (p. 63).

"Guns are surprisingly easy to get. In the Seattle study, 34% of the students said they had easy access to a handgun. In Chicago, where handgun sales have been banned since 1982, an inner-city youngster can take delivery of the weapon of his choice in under two hours. All it requires is a few bucks and a brief chat with the guys hanging out on his front steps. For \$20 he can buy a used .22 caliber pistol. For as little as \$200 he can own a brand-new, semiautomatic 9-millimeter pistol" (p. 64).

"Three years ago Florida became the first state to make adults partially responsible for the use of guns by children. Any adult who fails to keep a loaded gun safely away from a child under age 16 can be charged with a felony if the child uses the gun to shoot somebody. Laws similar to the Florida act are now on the books in ten states and three cities."

"'Medicine' for '724 Children,'" Newsweek, March 22, 1993, by George F. Will, p. 78

"That is from a recent article in the The Journal of the American Medical Association, which reported a survey of elementary school-age children in New Orleans: 90 percent had witnessed violence; 70 percent had seen a weapon used; 40 percent had seen a corpse. An estimated 10 to 20 percent of Los Angeles homicides are witnessed by children. And a study at Boston City Hospital found 10 percent of the children treated in the pediatric primary

care clinic have witnessed a shooting or stabbing before they are 6, half at home, half in the streets."

"This last, especially, can be urgent for health: an inner-city person who becomes a victim of violence has a 40 percent chance of becoming a victim again."

"In America; Violence and the Young," The New York Times, August 15, 1993, by Bob Herbert

"'Forty-five percent said they had witnessed muggings, 31 percent said they had witnessed shootings and 39 percent said they had seen dead bodies.'"

"With no concerted effort to check it, violence has spun way out of control. More Americans have been murdered already in the 1990's than were killed in all the years of Vietnam. According to the F.B.I., there were more than 24,000 homicides in the United States in 1991 and an estimated 23,000 last year."

"Hope Seen for Curbing Violence," The New York Times, August 11, 1993, by Daniel Goleman

"The escalation in violence among young people is captured in statistics like these: a 61 percent increase in the 1980's in shootings committed by Americans 15 to 19 years old, and a 1,740 percent rise in the number of children and teen-agers treated for knife and gunshot wounds since 1986 at the Children's National Medical Center in Washington."

"In a 22-year study of 875 boys and girls first observed at age 8, Dr. Eron [Michael Eron, a psychologist at the University of Michigan] found that those parents used the harshest discipline were most likely to be most violent with their playmates, starting fights and shoving for no good reason. As 30-year-olds, the more aggressive children had grown into violent adults with criminal records, and as parents they were also most likely to use harsh physical punishment with their children, he said."

"Among the other factors that contribute to children's becoming violent, the report said, were learning to handle frustration by lashing out, or doing poorly in school and then feeling stigmatized as 'dum,' or having trouble learning social cues, leading some children to become social outcasts because they failed to pick up signals that could allow them to interact smoothly with playmates."

"Growing up in impoverished neighborhoods with a sense that opportunities are closed because of discrimination against one's group can also lead to violence. The report said discrimination damaged children's self-confidence and laid 'a foundation for anger, discontent and violence.'"

"Our Violent Kids; A Rise in Brutal Crimes by the Young Shakes

the Soul of Society," Time, June 12, 1989, Anastasia Toufexis

"Statistics show an upsurge in the most violent types of crimes by teens. In part, this trend may result from better reporting, but some experts believe it reflects a true increase in violence. According to the FBI, between 1983 and 1987 arrests of those under 18 for murder jumped 22.2%, for aggravated assault 18.6% and for rape 14.6%. Those figures may not seem dramatic, but they should be seen in the context of a 2% decline in the total number of teenagers in the U.S. since 1983."

"Gun Crazy," by Nicholas Von Hoffman, *The New Yorker*, August 2, 1993, p. 23.

"A Louis Harris poll published last week tells us that, among pupils in grades six through twelve, nine percent have taken a shot at another human being and eleven percent have had a shot taken at them by another human being. Nearly sixty percent said they would know where to get a gun if they needed one. Not surprisingly, more than a third of the children attending Sarajevo-like institutions of instruction believe there is a good possibility that they will die before they reach threescore and ten. Fifty-five percent of those academic-combat veterans also said they would like to see metal detectors installed at school entrances."

"School Violence: Two Ways to Fight Back," By Anne Chase, *Governing*, March 1993, pp. 20-21.

Two ways to get kids to stop using guns and finding alternative ways of settling disputes.

"The 'big-stick' approach involves a beefed-up security staff and other security measures such as metal detectors. The 'speak-softly' approach involves teaching children peaceful means of settling disagreements. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive: Many school systems are doing both at the same time."

"The big-stick can be expensive. New York City, the nation's largest school system with nearly a million students, spent \$60 million on school security in the 1991-92 school year. This buys a small army of security guards, 2,450 of them, and pays for full- or part-time metal detectors at 41 high schools."

"Nationwide, the National Education Association estimates that 100,000 kids take guns to school every day and that some 2,000 students and 40 teachers are attacked every hour."

"Another facet of the big-stick approach is using real cops, rather than security guards, in the schools. Baltimore, San Diego and Miami are among the schools systems that have taken that route."

Some of the other security measures:

issuing of ID cards, banning of gang clothing and insignia, forming of volunteer parent patrols, banning of opaque book bags -- "...students must use transparent mesh bags, making it difficult to hide weapons."

San Diego has gotten rid of student lockers, as well as ordering all the lights turned off at all school buildings after hours to know when something is awry at the school.

"The 'speak-softly' approach takes the attitude that violence is a learned behavior.

The culture has taught kids to lash out. Some schools are teaching the opposite, and even the security folks have seen it work."

"School systems around the country are now teaching kids as young as kindergartners that it's not smart to fight, to stay away from guns and that it hurts when you get shot. And thousands of students are learning peaceful means of resolving differences through techniques of conflict resolution."

"Conflict resolution means teaching kids to talk, not fight. It includes 'peer mediation,' where students are selected and trained to resolve conflicts between other students. In some elementary schools, third-graders learn to stop fights on the playground. And it's not just the good-two-shoes kids who are chosen. In the Robert Poole Middle School in Baltimore, a school with a reputation for racial conflict which began its peer mediation in the 1991-92 school year, mediators also were chosen from a group the school refers to as 'non-received leaders' (translation: problem kids)."

"The mediators are not judges. They do not tell the quarreling parties (known in mediation-speak as 'disputants') what to do. They are there to help the disputants decide what they are fighting about and find a non-violent way to solve the problem."

"There are some drawbacks to mediation: For one thing, it can be costly; staff and students need to be trained. And it virtually requires a staff member who does nothing but ride herd on the process."

"Once mediation and conflict resolution become established at a school, however, educators say it has lasting benefits. Arthur Foresta, the principal of P.S. 261 in Brooklyn, uses a curriculum developed by the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, a collaboration between the New York City public schools and Educators for Social Responsibility. About half of the teachers at P.S. 261 have been trained by RCCP, and the school has about 40 student mediators for a student body of 745. Fights at P.S. 261 have been cut almost to zero, Foresta says."

"It took 5 years of hard work to achieve that result; teachers and administrators agree that none of the measures schools are using to reduce violence are going to change them overnight."

"Reading, Writing and Murder," By Susan Reed and Bill Shaw, *People*, June 14, 1993, pp. 44-47.

"According to a 1990 survey on Youth Risk Behavior conducted by the Centers for Disease Control, one of five high school students carries a weapon at least once a month for self-protection or for use in a fight. Last year the American Medical Association reported that guns had become second only to automobile accidents as the leading cause of death among young adults."

31 people died violently in our schools during the academic year that is just ending (1992-93). (p. 44)

"Roll Call of the Dead," *People*, June 14 1993, pp. 50-53.

"The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence counted 65 student and 6 school employees killed with guns from 1986 to 1990 --- about 18 a year." (p. 50)

"Restoring the Peace," *People*, June 14, 1993, p. 54.

James P. Comer, M.D., Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry, Yale University Child Study Center

"Our School Development Program operates in 300 schools in 18 states where children are socially underdeveloped, unprepared. Its effectiveness derives from our belief that to change the culture of a school you have to strengthen the family. So we bring together not only teachers, administrators, and students but also parents to develop a comprehensive plan of social and academic goals."

Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D., Assistant Dean for Government and Community Programs, Harvard School of Public Health

"I started teaching violence prevention in a Boston high school in 1978 when I was a medical student. In 1987 it was formalized as the Violent Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents. Since then, we've had 10,000 requests for the program from 48 states. It's designed to get kids thinking about how violence occurs, that it's not inevitable. We challenge the assumption that a fight is the only way to resolve a dispute. We teach kids not to fuel hostility: Don't pass the rumor; don't gather around to watch a fight.

Our motto is 'Friends for life don't let friends fight.' Learning to handle anger is a basic skill. The more people practice, the better they get."

"A Blackboard Jungle," *Maclean's*, March 16, 1992, p. 30.

"According to the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control, one U.S. student in five carries a weapon of some kind and about one student in 20 carries a gun. The National Crime Survey shows that almost three million crimes occur in or near U.S. schools every year---one every 10 seconds."

"It's Not Just New York...," by Tom Morganthau, *Newsweek*, March 9, 1992, pp. 25-30.

"The number of young Americans killed by firearms each year more than doubled, from 1,059 to 2,162, between 1970 and 1990, and homicide is now the leading cause of death among black males under the age of 35." (p. 25)

"The root causes of this bizarre and lethal trend include all the usual demons of American society---the easy availability of guns, the rise of drug-related crime, parental irresponsibility and so on. As always, educators contend that public schools merely mirror the broader trends in society---and if guns, drugs and violent crime are on the increase, they say, schools will be affected, too." (p.25)

"Fully a quarter of the nation's large urban school districts now use metal detectors to search for weapons carried by students, and teachers and parents are joining forces to make school safety a major issue. A shooting at Castlemont High School in Oakland, Calif., sparked a teacher walkout last fall---and in Washington D.C., last week, parents and teachers joined in protest after a 13-year-old boy was allowed to return to Noyes Elementary School after being arrested for carrying a gun." (p. 25)

"'It's not an issue [that is] centered on the large cities anymore.' Texas A&M's [Paul] Kingery, [director of health promotion at Texas A&M University] whose research shows an alarming rise in the number of children who carry guns in rural Texas schools, agrees. 'It's a myth that rural schools are safe havens from the problem,' Kingery says. 'All the people who are taking their kids out of urban schools and moving to rural areas are living on false hope.'" (pp. 25-26)

"Cops and school officials say very few guns are actually obtained in school. Instead, **according to experts like Ronald D. Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center in Westlake Village, Calif., 80 to 90 percent of the guns that wind up being seized by school officials come from the home.** They are usually the parents' guns, and that fact has led some states to impose new restrictions on gun ownership. California, for example, now makes parents criminally responsible for shootings involving their children." (p. 26)

"A national survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics last year showed, for instance, that more than 400,000 students between the ages of 12 and 19 say they have been the victims of violent crime, and that younger children are more likely to report victimization than older teens. (p. 29)

"A survey conducted last summer by the University of Alabama at Birmingham shows, for example, that 43 percent of a sample of inner-city children age 7 to 19 say they have actually witnessed a homicide." (p. 29)

Statistics from Ronald D. Stephens, National School Safety Center

- **According to the National Crime Survey, almost 3 million crimes occur on or near school campuses every year---16,000 per school day, or one every 6 seconds.**

- One fourth of major urban school districts now use metal detectors.
- Almost one third of the students in 31 high schools in Illinois said they had brought a weapon to school for self-protection at some time during their high-school career. One in 20, or 5.3 percent, said they had brought a gun.
- In California in the 1988-89 school year, assaults were up 16 percent, to 69,191. Armed assaults were up 25 percent over the previous year, to 1,830.
(p. 26)
- "Fire drill" doesn't mean what it used to. Oakland and Los Angeles, Calif., and even towns like Cokeville, Wyo., have drills to teach youngsters to hit the floor when they hear gunfire.
- An Illinois study showed that one in 12 public high-school students reported being the victim of a physical attack in school or on the way to school. One in 12 also said he'd stayed home from school one or more days out of fear.
- Teachers, too, are worried. A 1990 survey found that 20 percent had been threatened.
(p. 29)

"How to Keep Kids Safe," by Eloise Salholz, *Newsweek*, March 9, 1992, p. 30.

"School violence has become a dismal fact of life, yet many educators continue to respond with not-in-my-schoolyard denial. Not George Sams, an ex-cop who in June 1990 became director of safety and security for Chicago's 410,000 public-school students. With his former police comrades, Sams launched a program called SAFE: Schools Are For Education. Since the program began, he says, there hasn't been a single shooting in the district during school hours.

Operation SAFE hasn't cleared all the guns out of Chicago's schools, but its success has intrigued other districts. Nearly a quarter of all major urban high schools now use metal detectors; what's different in Chicago is the surprise factor. The district moves its three walk-through detectors from school to school on a random basis...Another component is cooperation between city cops (150 of them paid for by the district to patrol Chicago's 70 public high schools) and 412 unarmed security officers. While as a rule police searches require probable cause, in school settings authorities can act on the less stringent standard of reasonable suspicion. In Chicago, once a guard's suspicions prove on target, a police officer can make the arrest."

● **Teach the teachers:** Teacher training needs to prepare instructors to deal

with disruptive students and to break up fights---before they escalate into murder. The National School Safety Center (NSSC) has developed a training program in crisis prevention, management and resolution."

"● Teach the children: Schools need to identify fight-prone kids when they're young and introduce them to nonviolent alternatives. Schools can help by offering peer mediation, clear-cut standards for behavior and consistent discipline...In a study published in 1990, Chicago psychiatrist Carl Bell found that 74 percent of the 1,000 inner-city schoolchildren screened had witnessed a killing, stabbing, shooting or robbery."

"● Keep weapons away from kids: Several states, including California, Iowa, Connecticut and Florida, now have laws that make adults responsible for crimes committed by children wielding their weapons."

"● In the meantime, be ready to duck: Cities like Oakland and Los Angeles, and even small towns such as Cokeville, Wyo., have started DBS (drive-by shooting) drills and "drop drills," teaching kids how to hit the floor when gunfire breaks out."

"A Boy and His Gun," Time, August 2, 1993, by Jon D. Hull

Bonnie Elseman, a single mother in Omaha, formed the Benson Youth-Parent Association, which chaperones parties and patrols the streets, in response to the involvement of her son, Jeff, in a major drive-by shootout. "Bonnie patrols Benson with a police scanner, banking on her belief that mothers still enjoy some diplomatic immunity on the streets" (p. 25).

"The mayhem has spawned another group, **MAD DADS**, which stands for Men Against Destructure-Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder. They start praying about 10 o'clock every Friday, just before they hit the streets armed with two-way radios, police scanners, video cameras and a gutsy determination to stop kids from shooting one another" (p. 25). The group was founded by John Foster, a vice president of the city employees union, four years ago after his son was badly beaten.

"Kids Are Killing, Dying, Bleeding," Fortune, August 10, 1992, by Ronald Henkoff

David Powell, a counselor at Better Days for Youth, an antigang program, in Chicago (?) (p. 64).

"Hawaii's Healthy Start program, funded by the state, intervenes from day one. A case worker interviews new parents in the hospital shortly after their baby is born. The aim is to identify parents at risk of abusing their children: teen mothers, alcoholics, drug users, welfare recipients, or people who have themselves been abused, either by their own parents or their spouses.

Parents who fall into the high-risk category are offered, at no charge, the services of a home visitor. The visitors are paraprofessionals, typically high school graduates who grew up in stable households. A home visitor may counsel a family for as long as five years. Parents are not compelled to enroll in the program, but only a handful refuse the service.

The home visitors, who work for private social service agencies under contract to the state, act as all-purpose advocates for the family. They show parents how to feed and nurture a baby. They ensure that children get regular preventive medical care, including inoculations. In some cases they help parents secure jobs, housing, and, when eligible, welfare and Medicaid.

Healthy Start shows healthy results. Without intervention, some 20% of high-risk parents can be expected to mistreat their children, a figure borne out by research by other states. Among the 1,204 families served by Healthy Start between 1987 and 1989, there were just three cases of abuse and six of neglect -- less than 2%. Once the program expands to cover all at-risk families in the state, the total annual cost will be about \$16 million. That's substantially less than the \$40 million a year Hawaii spends on post-abuse protective custody and foster care.

Healthy Start is also likely to have a salutary effect on

crime later in life. Abused children are walking evidence that violence begets violence. A Denver study of first-time juvenile offenders, for example, concluded that 84% had been abused before the age of 6.

The National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse, using a \$1 million grant from the Ronald McDonald Children's Charities, is campaigning for the establishment of home visitor programs nationwide. It hopes to have Healthy Start programs in place in 25 states by 1995."

"At the Roth Middle School in Dayton, which is nearly 90% African American, several hundred students take part in a program called Positive Adolescents Choices Training (PACT). Developed by psychologists at nearby Wright State University and incorporated into the middle school's health education classes, PACT aims to defuse violence by teaching African Americans students how to talk instead of fight.

PACT participants use role playing to reenact the kinds of real-life disputes that can escalate into violence. For example, an adolescent boy confronts a friend who has been spreading false rumors that his sister is pregnant. Instead of cussing his friend out, the boy asks if they can talk, says something positive about their friendship, states what he is angry about and why, tells his friend what action he'd like him to take, asks if he understands, and thanks him for his time. If they can't reach an agreement on the first boy's terms, they try to negotiate a compromise.

Hard as it is to teach kids surrounded by violence to cool their emotions, preliminary studies show that students trained by PACT are less likely to get suspended from school for fighting and more able to handle themselves peaceably in tough situations.

The PACT students who have shown the most progress are those whose parents have enrolled in Impact, a companion program to help them deal with their anger. Says Willa Cotten, a parent participant: 'I used to get into total screaming matches with my daughter. This program helped me understand all the peer pressure these kids are going through.' Cotten now tries to make 13-year-old Wilhemina understand that if she breaks the rules, she won't be shouted at or beaten, but that she will lose privileges.

PACT, like Healthy Start, stresses a most important concept that has eroded in many families: parental responsibility. Says Michelle Hassell, coordinator of the program: 'These parents yell at their kids, throw things at them, and threaten them, but they don't discipline them. If you don't discipline your kids, you set them up to fail, because no one is going to love them the way you do.'

There are many school-based violence prevention programs, but no one has attempted to evaluation their long-term effectiveness. Cautions Rodney Hammond, PACT's project director: 'These programs are not a panacea. The absence of social skills is not the prime reason for violence. But if our society refuses to deal with the big variables that contribute to violence, like poverty and the easy availability of guns, then we as

psychologists need to minimize the casualties as best we can.'"

"Wild in the Streets," Newsweek, August 2, 1993, by David A. Kaplan

Boston Streetworkers, a publicly funded program that works with 1,500 troubled youths. "It is one of many different types of 'violence intervention' programs being tried around the nation. All seek to stem the escalating pattern of teenage rage, frustration and violence found on so many American streets" (p. 47). "Tracy Litthcut, the leader, works a no man's land between cops and gangs. He wears a beeper and he's regularly called by both sides to wage some peace. Says Litthcut: 'We stop a lot of things from happening'" (p. 47).

"No one thinks that they've discovered a magic bullet; program directors speak with becoming modesty about their success rate. But still they keep trying because the alternative is so bleak. There is, for example, the shock approach: the prosecutor's office in Cook County, Ill., has come up with a graphic anti-crime video that has footage from the morgue" (p. 47).

"There's the big-brother approach: an organization called Mad Dads, centered in Nebraska, which mobilizes men in a community to be role models" (p. 47).

"And there are even lawyers in Los Angeles who volunteer to spend time with young parolees coming out of the California Youth Authority" (p. 47).

"The goal of many programs is to teach kids how to resolve disputes and vent anger in a nonviolent way. In Los Angeles, Conflict Busters is a public-school program, beginning in the third grade, that trains students to be mediators. They're not supposed to offer solutions to their peers but teach them to figure out ones of their own. 'Cases' range from sandbox fights to interracial gang disputes. 'we're teaching kids skills that most adults don't have,' says Rich Mills, a school psychologist who founded Conflict Busters" (p. 47).

"In New Haven, Conn., police and clinicians have teamed to identify another category of at-risk youths--direct and indirect victims of trauma. Earlier this month, for example, a group of boys watched in horror as a motorist knocked their 7-year-old buddy off his bicycle and killed him. When a cop showed up and saw the faces of the boys, he immediately called a child psychologist at the Yale School of Medicine. The clinician arrived within 10 minutes. The Child Development-Community Policing Program, the first of its kind, began in 1991 and has now trained 150 of New Haven's 400 officers. A clinician is always on call to come to any crime scene, hospital or precinct. 'It's very much a prevention program because when children are exposed to violence...they run the risk of becoming overwhelmed,' says Steven Nagler, a Yale social worker--and later repeating the

aggression" (p. 47).

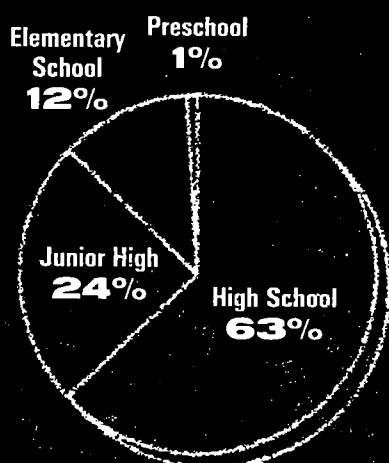
FACTS & FIGURES

Today, sending children to school may mean a death sentence. Firearms are the second-leading cause of death for American teens. And for young black males, it is the first, reports the Centers for Disease Control [see "The Battle Over Gun Control," Washington Page, this issue]. Young black males (ages 15 to 19) are 11 times more likely to be killed by gunfire than young white males. Teens (ages 12 to 19) are the victims of 30% of all violent

crimes. Almost 3 million crimes occur on or near school property every year. About half of teen violent crime occurs in school buildings, on school property or on nearby streets. Every day, 135,000 guns are brought into schools. Three years ago, 82% of homicides among 15- to 19-year-olds were gun-related, and the number is rising. Juvenile homicides could skyrocket from 2,555 in 1990 to 8,000 by the year 2000.

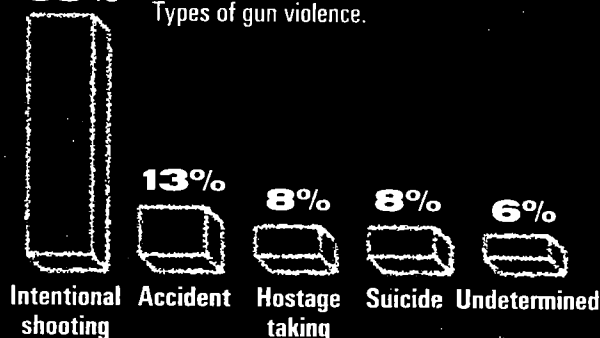
—Rhonda Reynolds

Percent of incidents involving guns on school property.

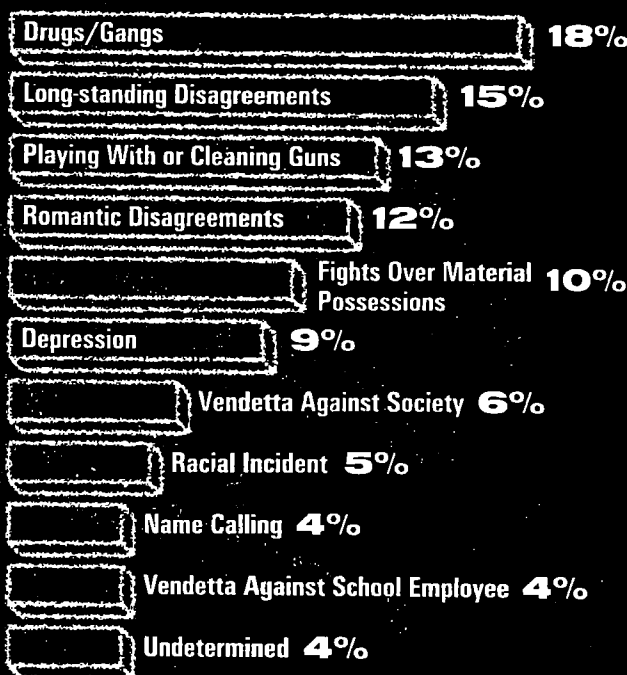


65%

Types of gun violence.



Percent of gun-related incidents on school property.



Source: Center to Prevent Gun Violence, Washington, D.C., 1991.

"Gun Crazy," by Nicholas Von Hoffman, *The New Yorker*, August 2, 1993, p. 23.

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"School systems around the country are now teaching kids as young as kindergartners that it's not smart to fight, to stay away from guns and that it hurts when you get shot. And thousands of students are learning peaceful means of resolving differences through techniques of conflict resolution."

"Conflict resolution means teaching kids to talk, not fight. It includes 'peer mediation,' where students are selected and trained to resolve conflicts between other students. In some elementary schools, third-graders learn to stop fights on the playground. And it's not just the good-two-shoes kids who are chosen. In the Robert Poole Middle School in Baltimore, a school with a reputation for racial conflict which began its peer mediation in the 1991-92 school year, mediators also were chosen from a group the school refers to as 'non-received leaders' (translation: problem kids)."

"The mediators are not judges. They do not tell the quarreling parties (known in mediation-speak as 'disputants') what to do. They are there to help the disputants decide what they are fighting about and find a non-violent way to solve the problem."

"There are some drawbacks to mediation: For one thing, it can be costly; staff and students need to be trained. And it virtually requires a staff member who does nothing but ride herd on the process."

"Once mediation and conflict resolution become established at a school, however, educators say it has lasting benefits. Arthur Foresta, the principal of P.S. 261 in Brooklyn, uses a curriculum developed by the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, a collaboration between the New York City public schools and Educators for Social Responsibility. About half of the teachers at P.S. 261 have been trained by RCCP, and the school has about 40 student mediators for a student body of 745. Fights at P.S. 261 have been cut almost to zero, Foresta says."

"It took 5 years of hard work to achieve that result; teachers and administrators agree that none of the measures schools are using to reduce violence are going to change them overnight."

"Reading, Writing and Murder," By Susan Reed and Bill Shaw, *People*, June 14, 1993, pp. 44-47.

"According to a 1990 survey on Youth Risk Behavior conducted by the Centers for Disease Control, one of five high school students carried a weapon at least once a month for self-protection or for use in a fight. Last year the American Medical Association reported that guns had become second only to automobile accidents as the leading cause of death among young adults."

31 people died violently in our schools during the academic year that is just ending (1992-93). (p. 44)

"Roll Call of the Dead," *People*, June 14 1993, pp. 50-53.

"The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence counted 65 student and 6 school employees killed with guns from 1986 to 1990 --- about 18 a year." (p. 50)

"Restoring the Peace," *People*, June 14, 1993, p. 54.

James P. Comer, M.D., Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry, Yale University Child Study Center

"Our School Development Program operates in 300 schools in 18 states where children are socially underdeveloped, unprepared. Its effectiveness derives from our belief that to change the culture of a school you have to strengthen the family. So we bring together not only teachers, administrators, and students but also parents to develop a comprehensive plan of social and academic goals."

Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D., Assistant Dean for Government and Community Programs, Harvard School of Public Health

"I started teaching violence prevention in a Boston high school in 1978 when I was a medical student. In 1987 it was formalized as the Violent Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents. Since then, we've had 10,000 requests for the program from 48 states. It's designed to get kids thinking about how violence occurs, that it's not inevitable. We challenge the assumption that a fight is the only way to resolve a dispute. We teach kids not to fuel hostility: Don't pass the rumor; don't gather around to watch a fight.

Our motto is 'Friends for life don't let friends fight.' Learning to handle anger is a basic skill. The more people practice, the better they get."

"A Blackboard Jungle," *Maclean's*, March 16, 1992, p. 30.

"According to the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control, one U.S. student in five carries a weapon of some kind and about one student in 20 carries a gun. The National Crime Survey shows that almost three million crimes occur in or near U.S. schools every year---one every 10 seconds."

"It's Not Just New York...," by Tom Morganthau, *Newsweek*, March 9, 1992, pp. 25-30.

"The number of young Americans killed by firearms each year more than doubled, from 1,059 to 2,162, between 1970 and 1990, and homicide is now the leading cause of death among black males under the age of 35." (p. 25)

American society---the easy availability of guns, the rise of drug-related crime, parental irresponsibility and so on. As always, educators contend that public schools merely mirror the broader trends in society---and if guns, drugs and violent crime are on the increase, they say, schools will be affected, too." (p.25)

"Fully a quarter of the nation's large urban school districts now use metal detectors to search for weapons carried by students, and teachers and parents are joining forces to make school safety a major issue. A shooting at Castlemont High School in Oakland, Calif., sparked a teacher walkout last fall--- and in Washington D.C., last week, parents and teachers joined in protest after a 13-year-old boy was allowed to return to Noyes Elementary School after being arrested for carrying a gun." (p. 25)

"'It's not an issue [that is] centered on the large cities anymore.' Texas A&M's [Paul] Kingery, [director of health promotion at Texas A&M University] whose research shows an alarming rise in the number of children who carry guns in rural Texas schools, agrees. 'It's a myth that rural schools are safe havens from the problem,' Kingery says. 'All the people who are taking their kids out of urban schools and moving to rural areas are living on false hope.'" (pp. 25-26)

"Cops and school officials say very few guns are actually obtained in school. Instead, **according to experts like Ronald D. Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center in Westlake Village, Calif., 80 to 90 percent of the guns that wind up being seized by school officials come from the home.** They are usually the parents' guns, and that fact has led some states to impose new restrictions on gun ownership. California, for example, now makes parents criminally responsible for shootings involving their children." (p. 26)

"A national survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics last year showed, for instance, that more than 400,000 students between the ages of 12 and 19 say they have been the victims of violent crime, and that younger children are more likely to report victimization than older teens. (p. 29)

"A survey conducted last summer by the University of Alabama at Birmingham shows, for example, that 43 percent of a sample of inner-city children age 7 to 19 say they have actually witnessed a homicide." (p. 29)

Statistics from Ronald D. Stephens, National School Safety Center

- **According to the National Crime Survey, almost 3 million crimes occur on or near school campuses every year---16,000 per school day, or one every 6 seconds.**
- **One fourth of major urban school districts now use metal detectors.**

- Almost one third of the students in 31 high schools in Illinois said they had brought a weapon to school for self-protection at some time during their high-school career. One in 20, or 5.3 percent, said they had brought a gun.

- In California in the 1988-89 school year, assaults were up 16 percent, to 69,191. Armed assaults were up 25 percent over the previous year, to 1,830.

(p. 26)

- "Fire drill" doesn't mean what it used to. Oakland and Los Angeles, Calif., and even towns like Cokeville, Wyo., have drills to teach youngsters to hit the floor when they hear gunfire.

- An Illinois study showed that one in 12 public high-school students reported being the victim of a physical attack in school or on the way to school. One in 12 also said he'd stayed home from school one or more days out of fear.

- Teachers, too, are worried. A 1990 survey found that 20 percent had been threatened.

(p. 29)

"How to Keep Kids Safe," by Eloise Salholz, *Newsweek*, March 9, 1992, p. 30.

"School violence has become a dismal fact of life, yet many educators continue to respond with not-in-my-schoolyard denial. Not George Sams, an ex-cop who in June 1990 became director of safety and security for Chicago's 410,000 public-school students. With his former police comrades, Sams launched a program called SAFE: Schools Are For Education. Since the program began, he says, there hasn't been a single shooting in the district during school hours.

Operation SAFE hasn't cleared all the guns out of Chicago's schools, but its success has intrigued other districts. Nearly a quarter of all major urban high schools now use metal detectors; what's different in Chicago is the surprise factor. The district moves its three walk-through detectors from school to school on a random basis...Another component is cooperation between city cops (150 of them paid for by the district to patrol Chicago's 70 public high schools) and 412 unarmed security officers. While as a rule police searches require probable cause, in school settings authorities can act on the less stringent standard of reasonable suspicion. In Chicago, once a guard's suspicions prove on target, a police officer can make the arrest."

● **Teach the teachers:** Teacher training needs to prepare instructors to deal with disruptive students and to break up fights---before they escalate into murder. The National School Safety Center (NSSC) has developed a training

program in crisis prevention, management and resolution."

"● Teach the children: Schools need to identify fight-prone kids when they're young and introduce them to nonviolent alternatives. Schools can help by offering peer mediation, clear-cut standards for behavior and consistent discipline...In a study published in 1990, Chicago psychiatrist Carl Bell found that 74 percent of the 1,000 inner-city schoolchildren screened had witnessed a killing, stabbing, shooting or robbery."

"● Keep weapons away from kids: Several states, including California, Iowa, Connecticut and Florida, now have laws that make adults responsible for crimes committed by children wielding their weapons."

"● In the meantime, be ready to duck: Cities like Oakland and Los Angeles, and even small towns such as Cokeville, Wyo., have started DBS (drive-by shooting) drills and "drop drills," teaching kids how to hit the floor when gunfire breaks out."

People to Contact for Events

Alex Rascon
School Police Services Director
San Diego School District
San Diego, California
("Big-stick" method: one who got rid of lockers and ordered the lights in all school buildings after hours)

Annebelle Sher
Baltimore Safe Schools Committee
Office of the Superintendent
Baltimore City Schools
200 E. North Ave., Baltimore, MD 21202
410-396-8723

Baltimore Safe Schools Committee is working for more school police, expanded conflict mediation in schools, a safe-schools hotline and increased attention to the problem of school violence.

Joe Washington, Director
Project BRAVE, Criminal Justice Dept.
Coppin State College
2500 W. North Ave., Baltimore, MD 21216
410-383-5755

Project BRAVE (Baltimoreans Reducing All Violent Encounters) has developed a violence-prevention curriculum and operates a peer mediation program at a Baltimore elementary school.

The Center for Handgun Violence
1225 I St., N.W., Suite 1150
Washington, D.C. 20005
202-289-7319

"Straight Talk About Risks" is a curriculum for kids grades K-12 that teaches children to handle conflict through negotiation.

Linda Lantieri, Coordinator
Resolving Conflict Creatively Program
163 Third Ave., No. 239
New York, NY 10003
212-260-6290

The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program operates in NYC and four other school systems around the country, teaching children how to handle disagreements without fighting. It also has a student mediation program.

*Arthur Foresta, the principal at P.S. 261 in Brooklyn who uses the program

Ronald D. Stephen, Executive Director
The National School Safety Center
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Suite 290
Westlake Village, CA 91362
805-373-9977

The National School Safety Center publishes reports on school safety issues, including "The School Safety Check Book," a handbook on ways to improve the school climate and school security.

Peter Blauvelt
Dept. of Security Services
Prince George's County Public Schools
507 Largo Road
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
301-336-5400

The Association of School Safety and Law Enforcement Officers does school security assessments for school districts for a fee.

Source: *Governing*, March 1993, "School Violence: Two Ways to Fight Back," By Ann Chase

George Sams
Director of Safety and Security
Chicago School System
Chicago, Illinois

Author and Director of Operation SAFE (Schools Are For Education)

Carol Beck, Principal
Thomas Jefferson High School
Brooklyn, NY

Principal who accomplished major violence reform in her school from her arrival in 1987 to 1992.

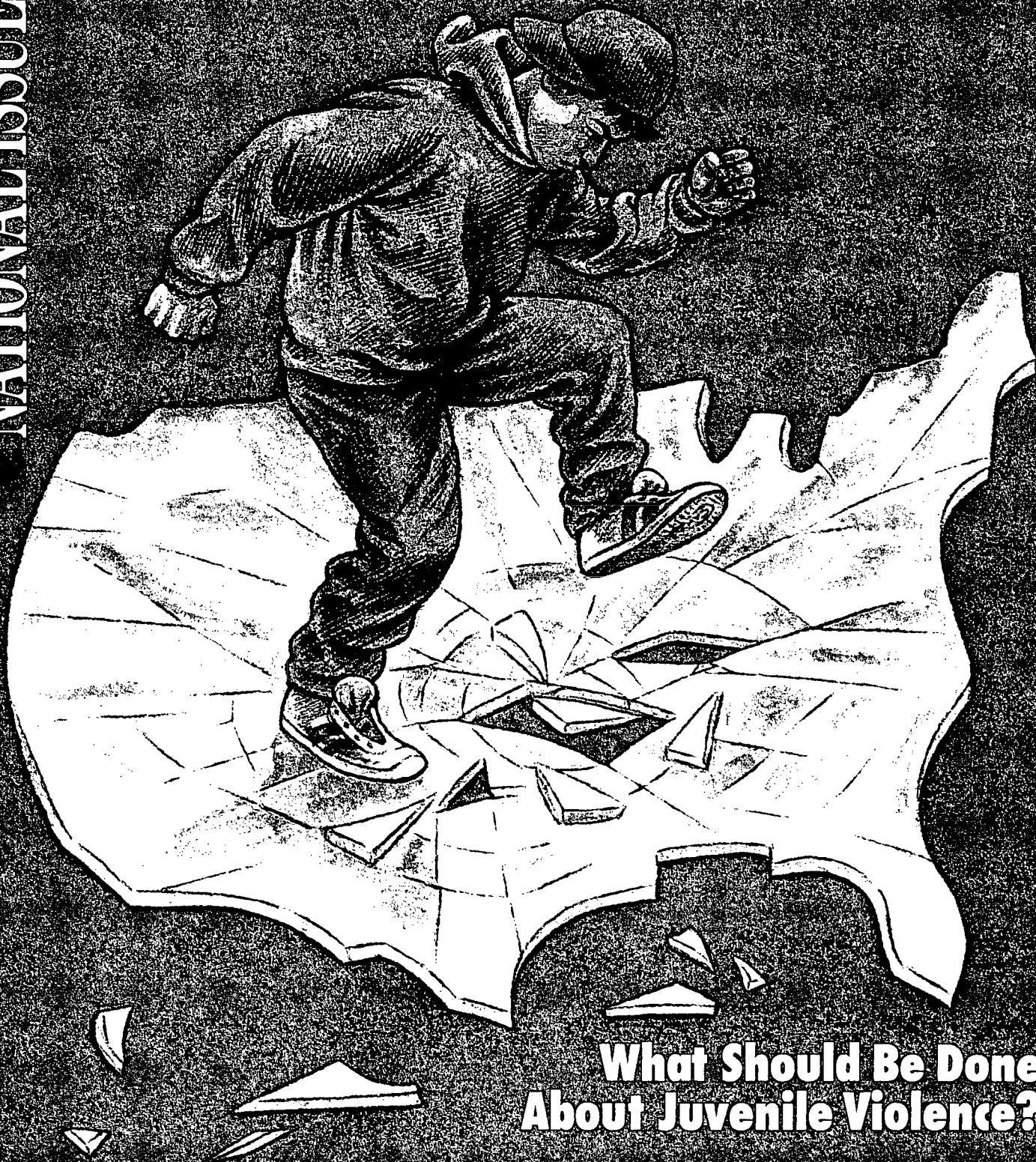
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KIDS WHO COMMIT CRIMES



**What Should Be Done
About Juvenile Violence?**

THE PROBLEM

GUNS AND VIOLENCE:

- o American children are extremely vulnerable to firearms violence. In 1991, children and adolescents (ages 0-19) were the victims of nearly 3,000 homicides, 1,500 suicides, and over 500 unintentional shootings. Among teenagers 15 to 19 years old, one of every four deaths is attributable to a firearm injury. Between 1985 and 1990, the risk of dying from a firearm injury increased by 87% for teenagers 15 to 19 years of age.
- o Firearm homicide is the leading cause of death among young black males 15-24 years of age, and young black males in their twenties face the greatest risk of any age-race-sex group. For 1988-1991, the homicide rate for all young U.S. men aged 15-24 was nearly nine times higher than that for young men in the industrialized country with the next highest rate (Italy)--the rate for young black men 15-24 years of age was 37 times higher.

JUVENILE CRIME:

- o Juveniles account for a disproportionate share of the reported violent crime increases. Between 1988 and 1992, juvenile arrests for murder increased by 51%, compared with 9 percent for those aged 18 and older.
- o Involvement of younger juveniles in violent crimes is increasing. Between 1990 and 1992, the number of juveniles under age 15 arrested for violent crimes increased 25 percent. Juveniles are responsible for a small but significant percentage of all violent crime arrests. In 1992, juveniles were responsible for 17.5 percent of all violent crime arrests.

SCHOOLS:

- o Nearly 3 million thefts and incidents of violent crime occur on or near school campuses each year. This equates to nearly 16,000 incidents per school day or one every six seconds.
- o Nearly one in five students in grades 9-12 reported they had carried a weapon at least once in a 30-day period.
- o Data collected by ED and other national organizations indicate that approximately 33 persons (students, teachers, faculty, and others) were killed in schools, on their way to school, or on school property during the 1991-93 school year. In the first three months of the 1993-94 school year, there were six homicides.

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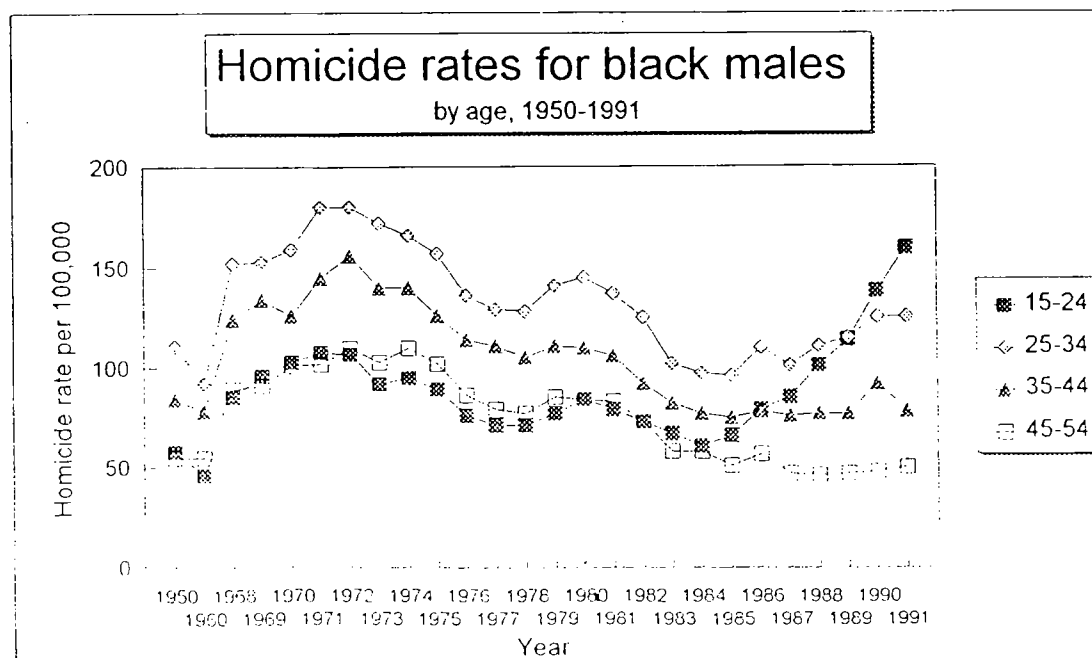
VICTIMS

- The homicide rate for black males age 15-24 has doubled since the mid 1980's.
- The homicide rate for older black males has either been stable or has declined in recent years.

Source: Center for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics: Data computed by the Office of Analysis and Epidemiology from the Compressed Mortality File.

Death rates for homicide-black males

	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54
1950	58	111	84	55
1960	46	92	78	55
1968	85	152	124	89
1969	96	153	134	91
1970	103	159	126	101
1971	108	180	145	102
1972	107	180	156	110
1973	92	172	140	103
1974	95	166	140	110
1975	89	157	126	102
1976	76	136	114	86
1977	71	129	111	79
1978	71	128	105	77
1979	77	141	111	85
1980	84	145	110	84
1981	79	137	106	83
1982	73	125	92	73
1983	67	102	82	58
1984	61	97	77	58
1985	66	96	75	51
1986	79	110	78	57
1987	85	101	76	47
1988	101	111	77	46
1989	114	115	77	47
1990	138	125	92	48
1991	159	125	78	50



U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention



OJJDP

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

John J. Wilson, Acting Administrator

Fact Sheet #17 June 1994

Juvenile Victimization: 1987-1992

Joseph Moone

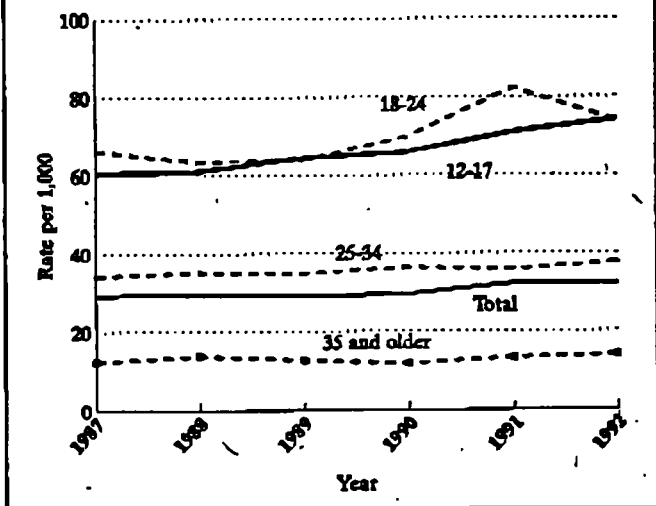
Violence trends

In 1992, 1.55 million violent crimes were committed against juveniles (ages 12-17) -- a 23.4% rise over the 1.26 million committed in 1987. Although juveniles accounted for one tenth of the population age 12 and over, nearly 1 in 4 violent crimes involved a juvenile victim in 1992 -- up from 1 in 5 in 1987. During this period, the overall number of violent crime victimizations increased 14%, from an estimated 5.8 million in 1987 to more than 6.2 million in 1992. The total violent crime victimization rate increased 9.4% from 29.3 per 1,000 in 1987 to 32.1 per 1,000 in 1992 (from about 1 violent crime for every 33 persons to about 1 in 31¹). These statistics are drawn from the annual National Crime Victimization Survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (see shaded box).

In 1987, almost 1 in 17 (61 per 1,000) juveniles were victims of violent crime. By 1992, this ratio had increased to more than 1 in 13 (74 per 1,000; Table 2)². The 12-17 age group and the 18-24 age group followed the same general increase. The rate differences between these age groups are not significant for any year or crime category. For persons 35 years and older, the crime rate did not significantly fluctuate: about 1 in 81 (12.3 per 1,000) in 1987 compared to 1 in 72 (13.9 per 1,000) in 1992 (Figure 1).

An examination of the growth in violent crime for the whole population can obscure trends within specific age groups.

Figure 1. The rates of violent crime against juveniles and young adults increased between 1987 and 1992.



While the number of violent crimes against juveniles rose 23.4% from 1987 to 1992, the juvenile population grew less than 1%, resulting in a significantly higher rate of violent juvenile victimization (Table 1). The number of such crimes against persons over 35 showed comparable growth (24.5%), yet that population grew about 10.2%, a steeper increase than the juvenile population. As a result, the victimization rate for

Table 1. Changes in violent crime victimization rates per 1,000 from 1987 to 1992 for persons aged 12 to 17

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	Percent Change '87-'92	Percent Change '91-'92
Population	20,756,000	20,346,000	20,049,000	20,102,000	20,370,000	20,909,000	0.7%	2.6%
Total victimizations	1,258,000	1,245,000	1,294,000	1,328,000	1,448,000	1,552,000	23.4	6.7
Crimes of Violence ^a	60.6	61.2	64.6	66.0	71.1	74.2	22.5%*	4.3%
Completed	24.3	22.8	24.3	26.1	26.5	25.0	2.7	-6.1
Attempted	36.3	38.4	40.2	39.9	44.6	49.3	35.8*	9.5
Robbery	8.1	8.7	10.3	11.3	10.3	10.9	35.3	6.1
Completed	4.4	5.9	6.9	7.9	6.4	6.4	46.6	0.6
Attempted	3.7	2.7	3.5	3.5	3.9	4.5	21.9	13.8
Assault	51.0	52.0	52.9	53.2	59.1	61.8	21.2*	4.4
Aggravated	15.4	16.4	14.2	16.0	15.2	20.1	30.5	24.2
Simple	35.6	35.6	38.7	37.2	43.9	41.8	17.2	-5.2

^aThe difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

^bIncludes data on rape not displayed as a separate category.

this group increased more slowly from 12.3 per 1,000 to 13.9 per 1,000 in 1992 (an increase of 13%). The larger population of the older age groups dominates the calculation of total victimization rates, dampening the effects of the increased juvenile victimization rate (Figure 1).

Juvenile victimization in 1992

Compared with persons aged 25 to 34, juveniles in 1992 had almost twice the victimization rate: 74.2 per 1,000 for juveniles versus 37.6 for 25-34 year olds. Compared to persons 35 and over, juveniles had more than five times the victimization rate (Table 2).

Comparing rates for specific crime categories also shows significant differences between juveniles and those over 25. The rate differences are significant at the 95% confidence level in virtually all crime categories. In 1992, the rate of assault (simple and aggravated) among juveniles was more than twice that of those aged 25 to 34 and almost 6 times that for those over 35.

Table 3. Total victimizations in 1992

	Total Victimizations	Juvenile Victimizations		
		Total	Percent of Total	Juvenile
Crimes of Violence	6,621,000	1,552,000	23.4%	100.0%
Completed	2,410,000	523,000	21.7	33.7
Attempted	4,212,000	1,030,000	24.5	66.3
Rape	141,000	•	•	•
Robbery	1,226,000	229,000	18.7	14.7
Completed	806,000	134,000	16.6	8.6
Attempted	419,000	95,000	22.6	6.1
Assault	5,255,000	1,293,000	24.6	83.3
Aggravated	1,849,000	420,000	22.7	27.1
Simple	3,406,000	873,000	25.6	56.2

*Too few sample cases to report accurate estimate.

compared to 5 out of 10 against persons 18 and older (Table 3). Across all age categories, 1 of every 3 violent victimizations was completed while 2 out of 3 were attempts.

Violent victimizations against juveniles accounted for 23% of the estimated 6.62 million victimizations in 1992. Juvenile victims accounted for almost one fourth of the estimated 5.26 million assaults (24.6%). Also, one fifth (18%) of the estimated 1.23 million robberies were against juvenile victims (Table 3).

Of violent crimes against juveniles, roughly five out of six (83.3%) were assaults. The majority of violent juvenile victimizations (56.2%) were simple assaults, those that do not involve a weapon and result in at most minor injury. More serious aggravated assaults amounted to roughly half the number of simple assaults or 27.1% of all violent juvenile victimizations. Robberies, both completed and attempted account for only 14.7% (about 1 in 7) of all violent juvenile victimizations. Juveniles experience robberies at only one sixth the rate of assaults (10.9 compared to 61.8; Table 2).

¹The NCVS counts victimization incidents per year rather than the number of victims. However, the number of multiple victimizations to one person in a year is relatively small (about 5% of all persons victimized per year). These ratios, and others reported in this Fact Sheet, represent only a rough estimate of the number of persons victimized in a year.

²All comparisons reported in this Fact Sheet are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level unless otherwise noted. For a full description of how the confidence intervals are calculated, see the BJS report *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1992*.

This Fact Sheet was prepared by Joseph Moone, a Social Science Analyst with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. OJJDP wishes to acknowledge the support and assistance of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, particularly Lisa Bastian and Marshall DeBerry, who provided statistical support and consultation in the production of this Fact Sheet.

Table 2. Violent crime victimization rates per 1,000 in 1992 by age

	12-17	18-24	25-34	35+	Total
Crimes of Violence ^a	74.2	74.0	37.6 ^b	13.9 ^b	32.1
Completed	25.0	28.2	14.7 ^b	4.8 ^b	11.7
Attempted	49.3	45.7	22.9 ^b	9.1 ^b	20.4
Robbery	10.9	13.0	7.7	2.9 ^b	5.9
Completed	6.4	8.0	5.1	2.2 ^b	3.9
Attempted	4.5	5.1	2.7	0.7 ^b	2.0
Assault	61.8	58.8	29.4 ^b	10.7 ^b	25.5
Aggravated	20.1	22.0	9.3 ^b	4.1 ^b	9.0
Simple	41.8	36.8	20.1 ^b	6.5 ^b	16.5

^aIncludes data on rape not displayed as a separate category.

^bThe difference from the 12-17 age group is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

The juvenile experience of violent crime differed somewhat from the general pattern of victimization. Only about 1 in 7 victimizations against juveniles was a robbery compared to more than 1 in 5 victimizations against those 35 and older. Six out of 10 victimizations against juveniles were simple assaults

Crime victimization measured annually by the Bureau of Justice Statistics

Each year the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) conducts a national household survey of crime victimization, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). This survey interviews persons age 12 or older requesting information on all incidents of crime. The NCVS collects information on personal crimes such as assault, robbery, and larceny. This Fact Sheet focuses only on personal crimes: robbery, assault, and rape (although rape is not reported as a separate category). The crimes of violence selected for this Fact Sheet include those crimes which physically threaten or harm the victim. These offenses include attempted as well as completed crimes. The definitions of these crimes are provided in the BJS publication *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1992*. This volume is available from the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse. Call (800) 638-8736 to receive a copy.

A GENERATION THAT'S KILLING ITSELF

PHILADELPHIA—Violence by youth, violence against youth—concern about its ferocity, emblematic of our society's lost innocence, is ricocheting across communities from coast to coast.

Every day in the United States, on average, 14 children are killed by guns. From 1986-91, the homicide rate among youths age 14-17 soared 68 per cent.

The issue was dramatically crystallized in Philadelphia by the senseless horror of a baseball-bat murder that was perpetrated in November by a gang of teenage marauders from suburban Montgomery County. Their victim, 16-year-old Eddie Polec, was brutally slain in front of his church in a middle-class section of Northeast Philadelphia.

The Philadelphia Inquirer then did the unusual: The newspaper invited young people themselves, students from the city and across the region, to submit letters in which they described their experiences with, and reactions to, the epidemic of youth-on-youth violence.

The response from young people was overwhelming—in all, the newspaper received more than 1,500 letters. Some replies, reported the *Inquirer's* Chris Satullo, were scrawled in angry black pencil, others in looping pen strokes. Yet others were composed on personal computers.

It's not possible to read the three pages of letters from young people that *The Inquirer* printed without being moved by their heartrending pleas for peace and tranquillity, their condemnation of indifference on the part of adults and society at large, their pointed critiques of unfettered violence on television, in film and in comics.

"Just about an hour before Eddie Polec's death, I saw him talking and joking with his friends, so full of life, and only days later I saw him lying in a casket, lifeless and pale," wrote Rebecca Currie, one of the slain youth's classmates at Cardinal Dougherty High School.

"I am appalled by the hostility and hatred in our society," wrote Michele Knobbs. "There is no respect for human life anymore. Violence is everywhere."

From Camden, N.J., just across the Delaware River, 14-year-old Brian Percell wrote: "Violence in Camden is a bitch. You can't even walk to the store without someone getting killed or hurt. . . . I have known many innocent children who have been killed or hurt. Some as a result of cross fires or accidents or gang shootings. . . . It is probably difficult for any grown-up to understand the pain I feel inside. Nobody wants to talk or listen anymore."

One of the most graphic and dramatic responses came from an 11-year-old, Adelle Crump, a student at Holy Cross School in Philadelphia: "Drip! Drip! Drip! More tears fall from another parent's face after another child has been beaten, shot, stabbed or raped to death. I'M SICK OF IT! Yeah, you say cartoons are safe for us, but every day I turn on that television, why do I see blood?"

Christina Johnson, a 14-year-old student at Masterman High School in Philadelphia, wrote: "My generation is slowly killing itself. . . . It's time for the young people to take the initiative, stop the madness, stop the violence."

The young people and the adults who care about youth-on-youth violence should get a hefty boost as a four-part Bill Moyers special for PBS—*What Can We Do About Violence?*—debuted on public television stations across the nation this month.

The Moyers series is heavy on grass-roots examples of young people who are actively involved in efforts to stem violence on the streets, in schools and at home.

Five-to-7-year-olds living in shelters in Ann Arbor and Battle Creek, Mich., describe growing up in homes where they were physically, sexually and emotionally abused. At a "Kid's Club" support group developed by the University of Michigan's clinical psychology department, these young victims are encouraged to talk about the abuses that, untended, could cause them to engage in violent acts when they grow up.

From New York City, the Moyers series reports on conflict mediation in two new experimental

high schools, showing how young people are involved in helping to settle disputes and curtail violence.

The series starts with the story of James Darby, who was murdered in New Orleans on Mother's Day 1994, shortly after he sent a letter to President Clinton in which he pleaded with him to stop the killing in his neighborhood. The segment includes interviews with Darby's friends and family, and those who know his alleged murderer.

A separate but related PBS broadcast—an installment of the *Frontline* series titled *Does TV Kill?*—aired the day after the debut of the Moyers series.

Television ratings-watchers may scoff at these efforts. PBS, they'll note, is likely to reach a very thin segment of national audiences with its story on violence's impact and potential remedies. Meanwhile, the commercial networks and cable television—not to mention local news broadcasts—will carry on with their usual menus of mayhem and murder.

But a broad alliance of public broadcasters, joined by private foundations and national and local civic organizations, has launched a nationwide "Act Against Violence" campaign. Starting with the Moyers series, the coalition is pledging at least two years of radio and television programming, along with national teleconferences, to exchange ideas and community and school-based activities to stem the surge of youth-on-youth violence.

It's only a start, and it seems to have missed an opportunity—at least initially—to link up with local newspapers whose editors and editorial boards are also alarmed by the tide of mean violence in our communities. Still, it's possible, finally, to report that the outlines of a concerted and caring national antiviolence effort are coming into focus. ■

Violent youth

Michel Manciaux

Throughout history, the chief causes of premature mortality have been infectious diseases and violence", wrote William H. Foege, Executive Director of the Carter Center, in the *New England journal of medicine* in 1987. This brief quotation reminds us that, contrary to what many of our contemporaries think, violence has always existed and that, in common with communicable diseases, it is a source of suffering, trauma, disablement and death: all of which could be avoided through a well-planned prevention campaign. It is far from certain that violence is more widespread and more frequent in our modern societies than it was in the past. There are no figures enabling us to judge, and even if we had them any real comparison would be difficult, since the definition of violence is itself highly subjective.

What is sure is that aggression and violence intrude more and more into

Daily observation and statistics confirm that adolescents and young adults, more than any other age group, are both the instigators of violent behaviour and its victims.

our daily lives: the instantaneous and worldwide coverage by the media makes sure of that. Another certainty, which daily observation and statistics confirm, is that adolescents and young adults more than any other age group are at one and the same time the instigators of violent behaviour and its victims. In the industrialized world, and in many Third World countries, violent death – which includes suicide, murder and accidental death – heads the list of causes of death among those aged 15 to 24, especially young men.

Hecatombs of the young

We are justified in blaming this hecatomb of the young on young people's behaviour: experimentation, risk-taking, defiance of parental authority and of adults in general, and defiance of the norms and constraints of society, of death itself; but also collective behaviour where sudden impulse may overcome self-control and the instinct of self-preservation.

But other reasons are very evident in today's world: the absence of a recognized social status for the young, the loosening and even the total breakdown of traditional links within the family, the community and society itself, and uncertainty about the future. These factors combine to push a growing proportion of youngsters into the margins of society. Depression – which is more frequent during adolescence than most people realize – and aggression often reflect the disappearance of such traditional support networks as the extended family, peer groups, teachers. Marginalization, loneliness, the lack of a fallback position at times of stress can lead to violence and – in its terminal form – to suicide. The increase in suicide rates among the young is an alarming sign of the disintegration of the social fabric.

Violence in young people can turn against themselves, and self-aggression is a frequent symptom. Furthermore it can join forces with delinquent behaviour in a curious sequence: crime, guilt feeling, reaction of self-punishment; this may often explain truly suicidal behaviour at the wheel of a stolen car. Indeed, in many cases it is hard to trace the borderline between accident and suicide. The example of the car – like that of firearms, freely on sale in some countries – shows that aggression and



What does the future hold for this young refugee from Bosnia Herzegovina?

violence can have all the more serious results because the instruments for expressing those emotions are always to hand.

This discussion of road accidents would not be complete without a reference to the contributory role of alcohol. Many studies carried out in the USA have shown that the drivers most often implicated in fatal accidents are young males, driving at night and especially at the weekend, after a party where they have had a few drinks. Highlighting the fact that

adolescence is the age of access both to motor vehicles and to alcohol, one Swiss writer proposes combining two youth training campaigns: "Learn to drive – and learn to drink."

Drugs are less frequently a cause of traffic accidents than alcohol: the violence which drugs generate is more often linked to trafficking. But in some countries it has reached an absolutely catastrophic level and risks destabilizing the whole of society: almost no region of the world is free from it.



A modern paradox, the loneliness of life in a huge and crowded city.



Young people meet...

Doing violence to young people

Very sure of their own judgement and opinions, whether personal, social or political, and quick to put their ideals into practice, adolescents can readily be mobilized for all sorts of causes, for better or for worse. In every period of history and all over the globe, it is the young who have provided the soldiers – and therefore the victims – in racial conflicts and warfare. Modern times show us all too many examples.

Youngsters too – in common with the elderly – are the principal victims of economic and social crises. The unemployment rate among young people, higher than the national average in many countries, is a disturbing indicator of the inability of those countries to integrate this living force – youth – into a harmonious social system. This constitutes a veritable denial of human rights – the right to work, to financial independence, to a social status – and its individual and social consequences are catastrophic. It amounts to doing violence to young people.

For if young people are often violent in their individual and collective behaviour, isn't this because in many ways our societies do violence to them? In other words, even though there are many palliatives for violence in young people in the form of education, regulations or even repression, the true remedy lies somewhere else. At the end of an article about violence in young people and the possible solutions, the executive director of the American Council for Crime Prevention concluded: "The burden is on us. Unless we help our young people develop a sense of stake in their communities and their futures, there may be neither communities nor future." ■

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THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

BACKGROUND

The Crime Bill, which has now emerged from Conference, includes a massive prevention strategy dedicating \$630 million to after-hours Community Schools programming, offering comprehensive services to at-risk children, youth and families, to be administered through HHS. While this is a dramatic commitment to those most in need, recent research has shown that less than a handful of similar efforts are already underway in cities across the Nation. This suggests that the vast majority of community school efforts, to be undertaken in conjunction with the passage of the bill, will be put together by those with no directly relevant experience.

We propose a unique tripartite public/private partnership between **The White House, Quincy Jones** (and an array of strategic entertainment and communication resources), and **the Annenberg Foundation** to provide funding, technical support and visibility to a series of model Community School programs throughout the Nation. This Administration's commitment to such important community-based, inner-city initiatives merits such a carefully coordinated approach.

The Administration's Empowerment Zone initiative was designed to pool all applicable Federal resources to assist in designated community development efforts. We propose a similar convening of resources targeted to the needs of children, youth and families and wrapped around the Community Schools initiative. Formal models should be put in place, guidelines developed, strategic coordination established between the myriad existing youth and family-serving programs of the prime youth development sponsoring Federal departments (i.e. HUD, Education, HHS, Justice and Labor), and an aggressive communication strategy implemented to insure success. Federal Community School funding will not accomplish anywhere near as much as it could without these elements. The proposed partnership can accomplish these objectives.

KEY PREMISES

- Sudden availability of significant Crime Bill-related funding to support such efforts, while extremely positive, must be coordinated with thoughtful, practical guidelines, model efforts and technical assistance;
- Highly visible demonstration Community Schools projects should be undertaken in conjunction with the distribution of such funds, in select cities across the country, to offer living examples of how to accomplish the objective. Staff working in these pilot schools will become the technical assistance providers for additional replication sites in each region;
- To insure success of the programs offered within the schools (i.e. mentoring), large numbers of volunteers will need to be recruited and trained. Strong community support must be generated at each site, and across the Nation;

DETERMINED TO BE AN ADMINISTRATIVE

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- Federal funds should be triggered by a demonstration of local, private funding support and complementary local university sponsorship in each targeted community;
- Applicable Federal resources should be inventoried and coordinated on a tactical basis to insure the success of these pilot, and broader replication, efforts; and
- Regular, positive media attention focussed on the demonstration sites will help to call attention to the effort, and entice others to attempt this in their own communities.

PARTNERSHIP ROLES

The White House can play an important, pro-active "clearinghouse" role to help pool the most important relevant Federal resources and make them directly available to select youth and family-serving Community School model programs. This action will, in turn, provide the necessary guidance and resources (i.e. Federal grant opportunities, training, recruitment, etc.) to accomplish the broader goal.

With White House attention, heretofore disparate Federal resources could be pulled together and applied tactically to specific school locations to make a real difference, and to demonstrate the ability to harness such resources for such important purposes.

Quincy Jones, the world-renowned musician, producer and arranger has expressed a strong interest in helping the Administration to accomplish this important initiative. In conjunction with an aggressive White House-generated coordinating effort, Mr. Jones and an array of highly visible partners in the entertainment and communication fields would assemble a powerful coalition of resources to help call attention to the effort, spotlight the seriousness of the undertaking, generate volunteers, and provide the project initiative with overall positive identification. This leg of the partnership would generate regular celebrity visits to model schools, arrange for print media updates on activities, film and tape a range of creative Public Service Announcements calling for mentors, etc. The model effort would generate exciting, hip "how to" manuals, and an appealing, coordinated, and hard-hitting ad campaign. Through this highly complementary strategy, the initial schools per city would be empowered to serve as "guiding lights" to other similar initiatives. The dual focus on the pilot schools, and the broader volunteer recruitment strategy will enable the partnership to impact every community seeking to participate in the initiative.

The Annenberg Foundation has committed the largest single grant to public education in our Nation's history. To leverage the planning underway in numerous cities for comprehensive school reform strategies to qualify for this funding, we propose partnering in common sites. As Ambassador Annenberg's grants (likely \$50 million per city) will be provided on a matching basis, Federal funding, targeted into pilot-school sites in these cities could help to trigger one another. The affiliation with a major university in each city will also support the broader Annenberg objectives. Connecting each partner's resources can be the seed for a vast array of complementary positive activities for youth and families in each city.

CONCLUSION

A tripartite public/private partnership between the White House, Quincy Jones and the Annenberg Foundation is an exciting prospect. Together the partnership could provide funding, technical support, and visibility to a major administration initiative providing a focussed strategy for the entertainment community to rally around and support the President's call for violence reduction.

Model community schools featuring mentoring, job training, basic skills tutoring, and health care programs, complemented by training manuals, celebrity visits and technical assistance can all be interwoven to both insure the success of the designated pilots and to assist in the development of mass replication of these after-school based efforts.