

## Patterns of Violent Crime and Weapon Use, 2000-2004

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Violent crime and the use of weapons continue to be predominant topics of concern to policymakers and law enforcement officials across the country. In 2001, the federal government established an initiative called Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) to target the reduction of violent crimes with an emphasis on gun violence.

As part of the federal PSN initiative, a variety of federal, state, and local agencies in West Virginia have engaged in a range of efforts designed to reduce violent crime. Given the increased efforts to target and address these offenses across the state, this report provides a comprehensive examination of the nature and prevalence of violent crime and weapon use in WV.

An estimated 1,367,009 Violent Crime Index<sup>1</sup> offenses were reported by law enforcement in the U.S. in 2004, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Of the approximately 1.3 million Violent Crime Index offenses reported in 2004, WV accounted for fewer than one half of one percent of all known Index offenses. A total of 4,116 Violent Crime Index offenses were reported by WV law enforcement agencies in 2004.

As a result, WV's Violent Crime Index offense rate was less than half the U.S. rate for the same offenses in 2004. According to the FBI,

approximately 465.5 Violent Crime Index offenses were committed for every 100,000 U.S. residents in 2004. In comparison, WV's rate for Violent Crime Index offenses was roughly 226.7 per 100,000 population or less than half the national rate.

These violent crime estimates follow recent declines in the number of offenses reported at both the state and national level. A five-year trend shows that violent crimes known to law enforcement have decreased in the U.S. and WV since 2000. Compared to national estimates, however, the reductions in violent crime have been much more pronounced in WV. Between 2000 and 2004, the number of Violent Crime Index offenses reported by law enforcement declined by 17.7% in WV, compared to only 4.1% nationally.

These recent declines have led to fewer arrests, particularly in WV. Since 2000, the number of arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses declined by 26.9% in 2004. According to national estimates released by the FBI, the number of arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses declined by 3.5% during this same time period.

In spite of the recent reductions in violent crime offenses and arrests, a substantial proportion of violent crime continues to involve the use of weapons both locally and nationally. A weapon, including the use of a firearm, knife, or

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### Report Highlights

- Of the 1.3 million Violent Crime Index offenses reported in the U.S. in 2004, a total of 4,116 were reported in WV.
- In 2004, WV's rate for Violent Crime Index offenses was 226.7 offenses per 100,000 residents compared to a rate of 465.5 in the U.S.
- For both WV and the nation, aggravated assault was the most frequently reported Violent Crime Index offense in 2004.
- Between 2000 and 2004, the number of Violent Crime Index offenses reported by law enforcement declined by 17.7% in WV, compared to 4.1% nationally.
- Despite an overall decline since 2000, WV experienced an 11.7% increase in the number of violent crimes reported by law enforcement between 2003 and 2004.
- Violent Crime Index offenses increased by 5.9% between 2003 and 2004 in WV.
- Six counties – Kanawha, Cabell, Wood, Mercer, Raleigh, and Berkeley – accounted for nearly 60.0% of all Violent Crime Index offenses in 2004.

## Report Highlights

- Kanawha County had the highest Violent Crime Index offense rate in 2004 at 5.17 per 1,000 residents.
- In 2004, approximately one-third (32.2%) of murder, robbery, and aggravated assault offenses involved a firearm in WV compared to just over one-quarter (26.4%) nationally.
- Nearly one-third of the Violent Crime Index offenses involving a firearm in 2004 occurred in Kanawha County.
- The rate of *arrest* for Violent Crime Index crimes in WV (91.3 per 100,00) was less than half the rate for the nation (200.4 per 100,000) in 2004.
- Only 6.0% of those arrested for violent crimes in 2004 were juveniles.
- Of all violent crime arrests in 2004, 12.6% of those arrested were nonwhite.
- Both white (68.9%) and nonwhite (10.2%) males are overrepresented in terms of violent crime arrests.
- The Violent Crime Index *arrest rate* for nonwhite males has grown at a faster pace than that for white males. The arrest rate for nonwhite males was 3.7 times higher than the arrest rate for white males in 2004.
- Logan County at 2.6 per 1,000 population experienced the highest Violent Crime Index *arrest rate*, while Mercer County at 8.4 had the highest *arrest rate* for all other violent crimes in 2004.

personal artifact such as hands, fists, feet, or teeth, was used in nearly eighty-five percent of violent crime offenses in WV during 2004. Likewise, roughly one-third of murders, robberies, and aggravated assaults involved a firearm in WV, compared to only one-quarter of these offenses for the U.S. population.

To further assess how violent crime in WV compares to national figures, this report begins with an examination of the distribution of Violent Crime Index offenses in WV and the nation in 2004.

### Distribution of Violent Crime Index Offenses in 2004

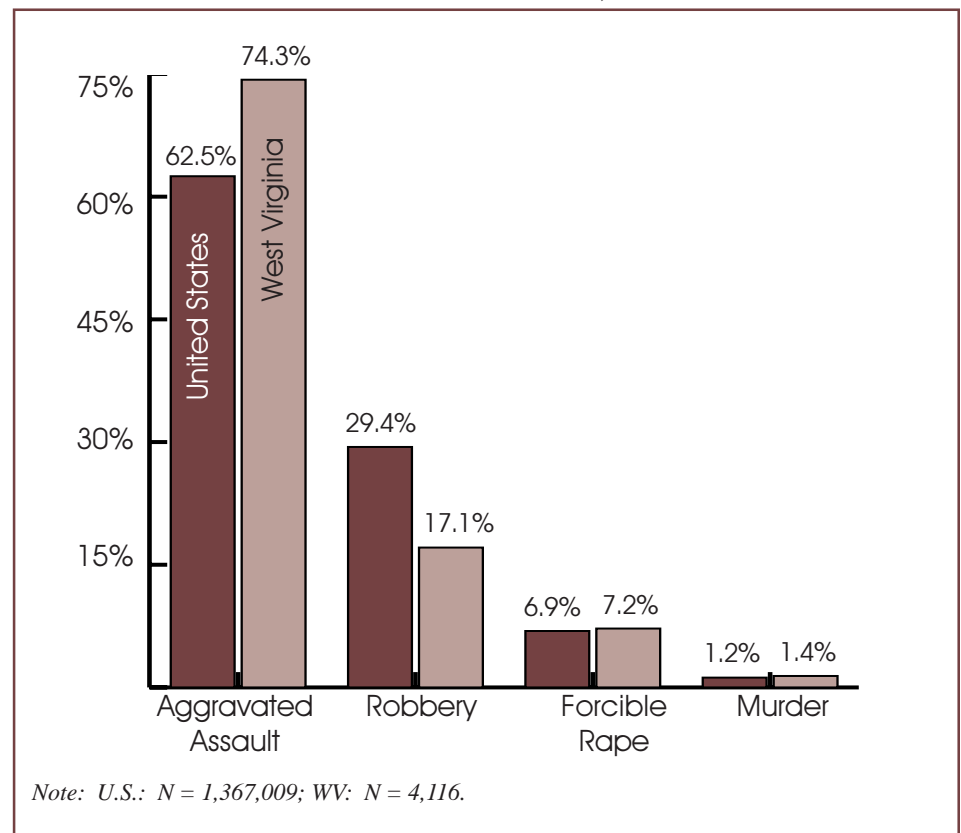
Graph 1 shows the distribution of Violent Crime Index offenses in WV compared to the nation. According to the FBI, there were a total of 1,367,009 Violent Crime Index offenses reported in the United States in 2004. Of the 1.3

million offenses reported in the nation, a total of 4,116 were committed in WV.

For both WV and the nation, aggravated assault was the most frequently reported Violent Crime Index offense in 2004. In comparison to national figures, however, aggravated assaults made up a greater proportion of all Index offenses reported in WV. While aggravated assault constituted roughly two-thirds (62.5%) of all Index offenses nationally, this offense accounted for nearly three-quarters (74.3%) of Index offenses reported in WV. On the other hand, the offense of robbery was less common in WV. Robbery comprised only 17.1% of Index offenses reported, compared to 29.4% of Index offenses reported in the U.S.

The offenses of forcible rape and murder comprised a similar proportion of the Violent Crime Index at both the

Graph 1  
Violent Crime Index Offenses in the U.S. and WV, 2004



state and national level. Less than ten percent of all Violent Crime Index offenses involved the crimes of forcible rape and murder in WV and the nation. In 2004, forcible rape made up 7.2% of all Violent Crime Index offenses in WV, compared to 6.9% nationally. The crime of murder constituted 1.4% and 1.2% of all Violent Crime Index offenses in WV and the nation, respectively.

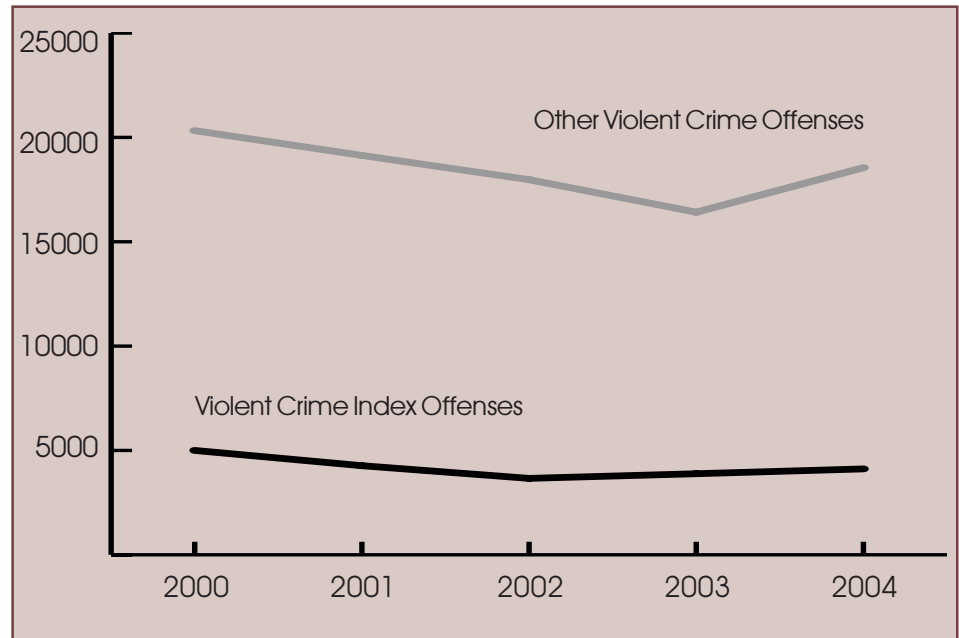
### Recent Trends in Violent Crime in WV

Graph 2 illustrates the trend in the number of reported Violent Crime Index offenses and other violent crimes since 2000. Both Violent Crime Index offenses and other violent crime offenses ended this five-year period at levels less than what was reported in 2000.

The reduction in the number of violent crimes in WV is somewhat consistent with national estimates that also show fewer Violent Crime Index offenses being reported over this period. However, the declines in WV are much greater than what has occurred at the national level. The number of Violent Crime Index offenses and other violent crime offenses in WV declined by 17.7% and 8.7% between 2000 and 2004, respectively. Nationally, the number of Violent Crime Index offenses declined by only 4.1% during this time period.

In 2000, a total of 5,001 Violent Crime Index offenses were reported by law enforcement. The number of these offenses declined by 14.6% in 2001 and by 14.2% in 2002. This brought the number of Violent Crime Index offenses to 3,662 in 2002, the lowest level during the five-year period. Between 2002 and 2003, Violent Crime Index offenses

Graph 2  
Trends in Violent Crime Offenses, 2000-2004



increased by 6.1%. In 2004, these offenses continued to increase by 5.9% to 4,116.

Other violent crimes began this five-year period with 20,324 reported offenses in 2000. This number declined each year until 2004 with the greatest decrease occurring between 2002 and 2003. The number of other violent crimes declined by nearly nine percent (8.7%) between 2002 and 2003. The lowest number of these offenses was reported in 2003 at 16,415. However, the number of these offenses reported by law enforcement increased by 13.0% in 2004 to a total of 18,551.

While the overall number of violent crimes known to law enforcement in WV have declined since 2000, there have been some small increases in recent years. As shown in Table 1, the Violent Crime Index increased by 5.9% between 2003 and 2004. Likewise, violent crimes such as simple assaults, intimidation, kidnapping/abduction, and

other sex offenses increased by 13.0%.

During this same time period, however, national figures showed that Violent Crime Index offenses continued to decline in the U.S. According to the FBI, Violent Crime Index offenses decreased by 1.2% between 2003 and 2004.

Of all Violent Crime Index offenses, murder was the only crime to decrease between 2003 and 2004 in WV. A total of 56 murders were reported by law enforcement in 2004. This represented an 8.2% reduction compared to 2003. At the same time, however, WV experienced an increase in the number of robberies, aggravated assaults, and forcible rapes reported during 2004. The offense of robbery increased by the greatest percentage at 10.0%. Robbery was followed by an increase in both aggravated assault (5.7%) and forcible rape (2.4%).

At the national level, forcible rape was the only Violent Crime Index

Table 1  
Violent Crime Offenses and Percent Change, 2003-2004

	# Offenses in 2004	% of Total Violent Offenses	% Change 2003-2004
<b>Violent Crime Index</b>	<b>4,116</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
Murder	56	0.2%	-8.2%
Forcible rape	297	1.3%	2.4%
Robbery	705	3.1%	10.0%
Aggravated assault	3,058	13.5%	5.7%
<b>Other Violent Crime</b>	<b>18,551</b>	<b>81.8%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
<b>Other Assaults</b>	<b>17,685</b>	<b>78.0%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>
Simple assault	14,640	64.6%	14.4%
Intimidation	3,045	13.4%	9.6%
<b>Other Sex Offenses</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Forcible sodomy	86	0.4%	7.5%
Sexual assault with an object	138	0.6%	3.8%
Forcible fondling	369	1.6%	-0.3%
Incest	16	0.07%	-36.0%
Statutory rape	110	0.5%	-0.9%
<b>Kidnapping/Abduction</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>
<b>Total Violent Crime Offenses</b>	<b>22,667</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>

offense to exhibit an increase between 2003 and 2004 at 0.8%. According to the FBI, the offenses of robbery, murder, and aggravated assault all declined between 2003 and 2004 nationally.

WV also experienced an increase in other violent crimes such as kidnapping/abduction, simple assault, intimidation, forcible sodomy, and sexual assault with an object. Simple assaults, which accounted for nearly eighty percent of the other violent crimes in 2004, increased by 14.4% during this time period. Kidnapping/abduction offenses increased by 19.5% while the number of intimidation offenses increased by roughly ten percent (9.6%). Forcible sodomy and sexual assault with an object grew by 7.5% and 3.8% between 2003 and 2004,

respectively. A decline in the number of offenses known to law enforcement occurred for incest, statutory rape, and forcible fondling.

#### Violent Crime Rates by County

The range in the number of reported Violent Crime Index offenses varies greatly across the state. In 2004, these offenses ranged from only 1 offense reported in Calhoun County to 1,010 offenses reported in Kanawha County. Kanawha, Cabell, Wood, Mercer, Raleigh, and Berkeley counties accounted for nearly 60.0% of all Violent Crime Index offenses in 2004.

When rates are calculated based on county population, Kanawha County had the highest Violent Crime Index offense rate compared to all other WV counties

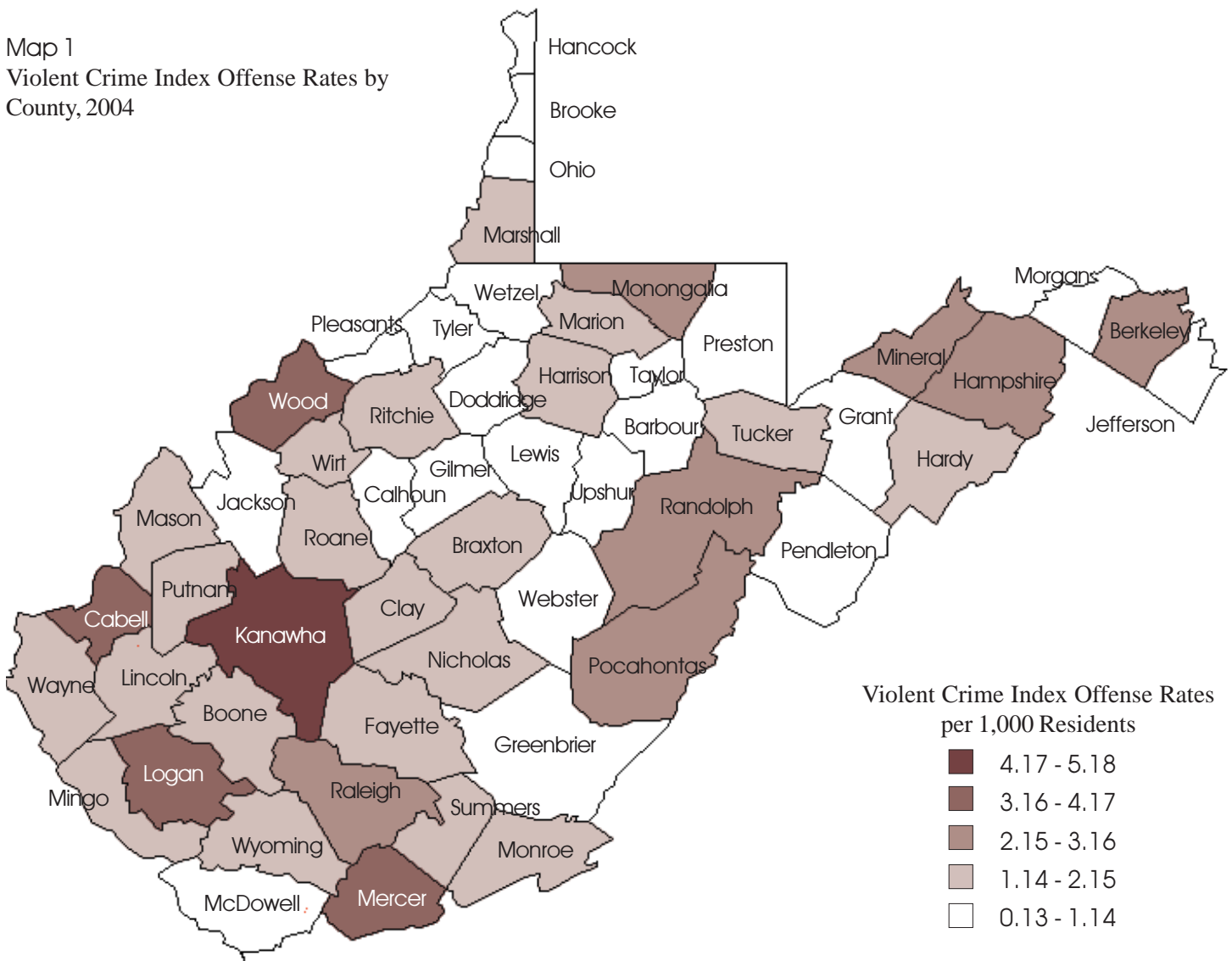
in 2004 at 5.17. Hence, roughly five Violent Crime Index offenses were reported for every 1,000 residents of Kanawha County. At the same time, Calhoun County had the lowest rate for Violent Crime Index offenses at 0.13 per 1,000 residents.

In 2004, the Violent Crime Index rate in WV was less than half of the national rate for the same offenses. The statewide Violent Crime Index offense rate was 2.27, or just over two reported offenses for every 1,000 residents in 2004. This figure further translates into roughly 227 offenses per 100,000 WV residents. In comparison, the 2004 rate for Violent Crime Index offenses in the U.S. was 465.5 per 100,000 residents or over twice the rate for WV.

Map 1 further illustrates the county distribution of Violent Crime Index offense rates per 1,000 residents for 2004 using equal intervals. Violent Crime Index offenses appear to be more heavily concentrated in the southern counties of the state.<sup>2</sup> A total of nine counties had Violent Crime Index offense rates higher than the statewide average. Kanawha County alone made up the highest category with a rate of 5.17. Cabell, Logan, Mercer, and Wood comprised the second highest category with rates falling between 3.16 and 4.17.

In addition to Raleigh County, six counties in the northeastern area (Berkeley, Hampshire, Randolph, Monongalia, Pocahontas, and Mineral) of the state experienced moderate rates of Violent Crime Index offense. Many of the counties with the lowest rates were concentrated in the northern part of the state. Only 3 counties in the south (McDowell, Greenbrier, and Jackson) experienced Violent Crime Index offense rates in the lowest category in 2004.

Map 1  
Violent Crime Index Offense Rates by  
County, 2004



### Violent Crime Offenses Involving Weapons

The type of weapon and/or force used is required to be reported for each of the Violent Crime Index offenses and all of the other violent crimes, except intimidation, incest, and statutory rape. Weapons include the use of strongarm tactics, or the use of personal “weapons” such as an offender’s hands, fists, feet, or teeth. In 2004, a weapon was used in nearly eighty-five percent of reported Violent Crime Index offenses and other violent crimes.

Graph 3 shows the distribution of murder, robbery, and aggravated assault

offenses by type of weapon used for WV and the U.S. in 2004. Firearms and knives were involved in a greater proportion of these offenses in WV compared to the nation.

Nationally, strongarm (30.7%) was the most frequently reported weapon used in murder, robbery, and aggravated assault offenses collectively. However, in WV the greatest proportion of these offenses involved the use of a firearm. Roughly one-third (32.2%) of these offenses involved a firearm in WV compared to just over one-quarter (26.4%) nationally. Slightly fewer

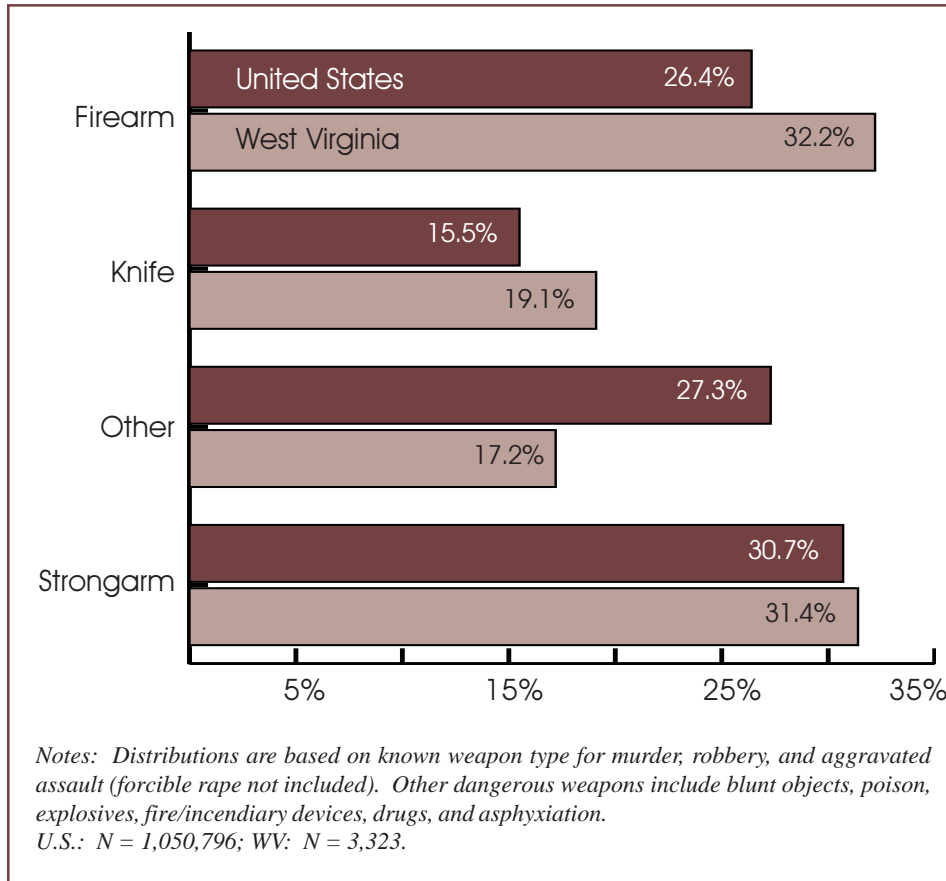
(31.4%) involved strongarm tactics in WV.

Knives were involved in 19.1% of these offenses in WV and 15.5% of offenses nationally in 2004. Other dangerous weapons, on the other hand, were much more likely to be involved with these offenses nationally than in WV. Just over 27.0% of murder, robbery, and aggravated assaults in the U.S. in 2004 involved other dangerous weapons compared to 17.2% of offenses in WV.

Table 2 further illustrates the most serious type of weapon involved for each of the violent crime offenses

Graph 3

Violent Crime Index Offenses by Weapon Type in the U.S. and WV, 2004



reported in WV during 2004. Firearms, knives, and other dangerous weapons were more likely to be involved in the Violent Crime Index offenses. However, similar to other violent crimes, forcible rape offenses most often involved strongarm tactics.

The greatest proportion of both murder (64.7%) and robbery (41.3%) offenses involved the use of a firearm. Aggravated assaults were equally likely to involve the use of a firearm or strongarm. Less than ten percent of forcible rapes involved the use of a firearm, knife, or other dangerous weapon.

Of the other violent crimes, only kidnapping/abduction offenses involved the use of a weapon other than strongarm to any extent. The vast majority of simple assault, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, and forcible fondling offenses involved strongarm tactics.

Graph 4 shows the changes in the type of weapons involved in Violent Crime Index offenses from 2000 to 2004.

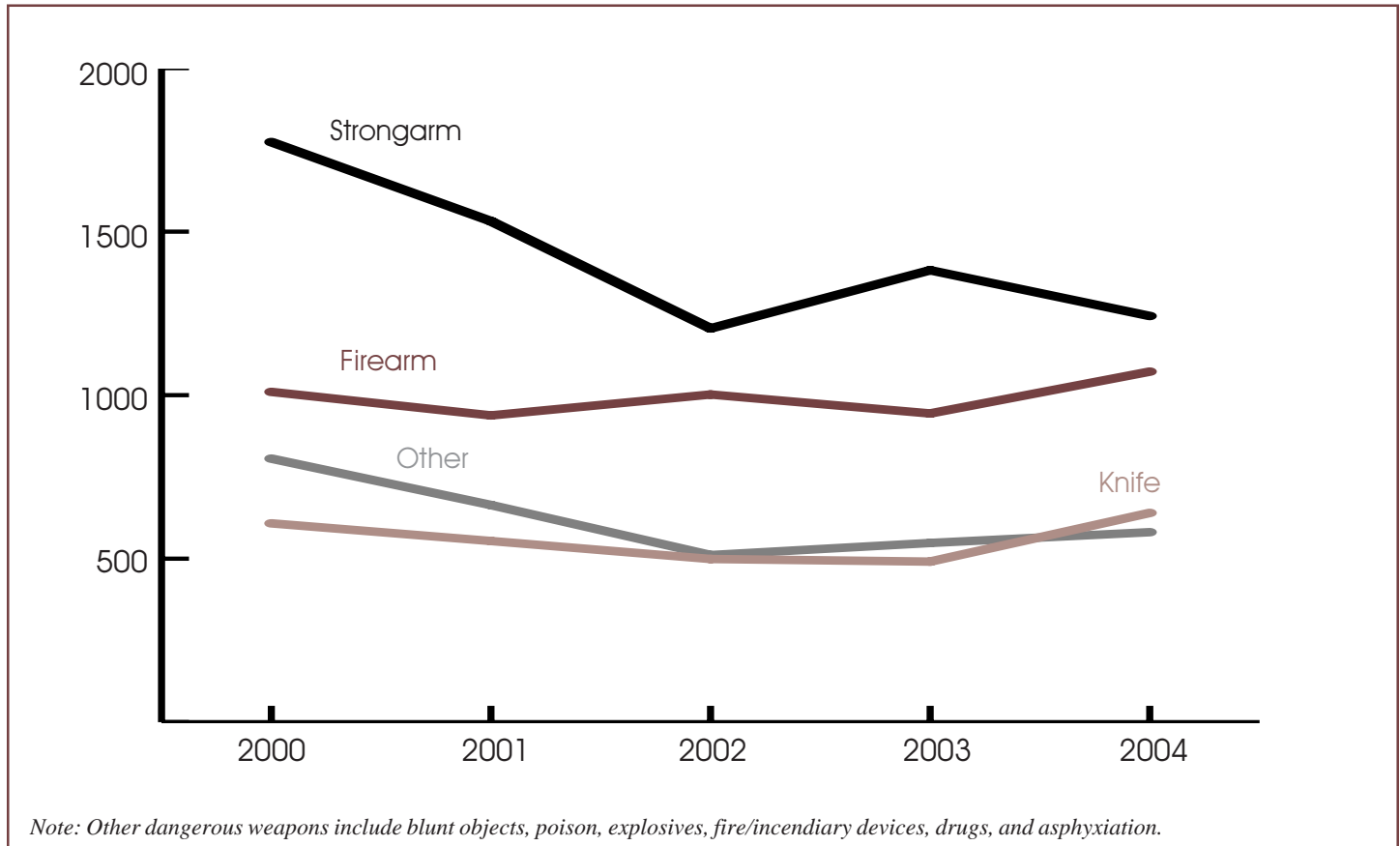
Table 2

Violent Crime Offenses by Most Serious Weapon Type, 2004 (N = 16,518)

	Total	Firearm	Knife	Other	Strongarm
Violent Crime Index	3,535	30.3%	18.1%	16.4%	35.1%
Murder	51	64.7%	11.8%	13.7%	9.8%
Forcible rape	212	1.4%	1.9%	3.8%	92.9%
Robbery	588	41.3%	13.9%	7.5%	37.2%
Aggravated assault	2,684	29.5%	20.4%	19.4%	30.6%
Other Violent Crime	12,983	0.2%	0.1%	5.1%	94.7%
Simple assault	12,520	---	---	5.1%	94.9%
Forcible sodomy	59	6.8%	3.4%	6.8%	83.1%
Sexual assault with an object	90	3.3%	2.2%	8.9%	85.6%
Forcible fondling	236	---	0.4%	0.8%	98.7%
Kidnapping/Abduction	78	21.8%	9.0%	10.3%	59.0%

*Note: The other violent crime category does not include intimidation, incest, and statutory rape given that they do not require a weapon to be reported.*

Graph 4  
Violent Crime Index Offenses by Weapon Type, 2000-2004



While the use of strongarm force and other dangerous weapons declined during this five-year period, firearm and knife use increased slightly.

In 2000, there were 1,774 Index offenses where strongarm force was used against a victim. By 2004, this number had declined to 1,242 after a 14.8% increase in 2003. The use of other dangerous weapons also fell during the period from a high of 806 offenses in 2000 to 581 offenses in 2004. Slight increases in the use of other dangerous weapons were, however, seen after 2002.

As shown in Graph 4, the number of Violent Crime Index offenses involving firearms fluctuated over the past five years, but ended with an overall increase in 2004. A total of 1,010 offenses involved firearms in 2000

compared to 1,072 in 2004. The greatest increase occurred between 2003 and 2004 at 13.6%. Offenses involving the use of knives also increased slightly during this period. In 2000, there were 608 Violent Crime Index offenses involving knives. After a steady decline through 2003, this number increased to 640 in 2004.

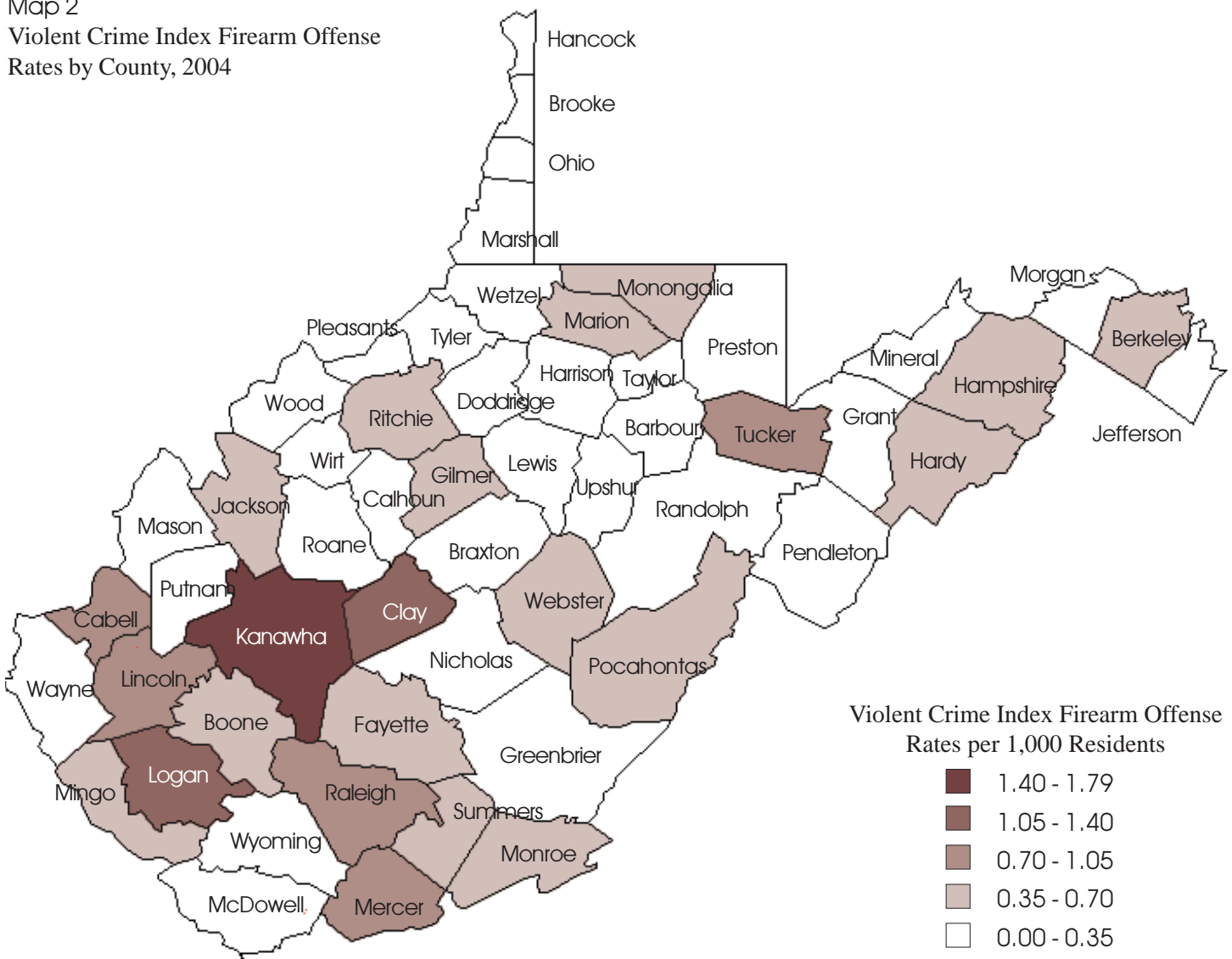
#### Firearm Offenses by County

Similar to the variation in the number of Violent Crime Index offenses across the state, the distribution of offenses involving a firearm also varies considerably. Nearly one-third of the 1,072 Violent Crime Index offenses involving a firearm in 2004 occurred in the state's most populous county, Kanawha. Over 50 firearm offenses were reported in Raleigh (81), Cabell

(77), Mercer (60), and Berkeley (57) counties. Four counties reported no Index offenses involving a firearm.

Map 2 illustrates the distribution of these rates by county using equal intervals. Statewide the Violent Crime Index firearm offense rate was 0.59 per 1,000 residents in 2004. Violent Crime Index offenses involving firearms appear to be even more heavily concentrated in the southern part of the state. Kanawha County again had the highest rate at 1.79 Violent Crime Index firearm offenses for every 1,000 residents. While Logan and Clay counties had fewer reported firearm offenses than some other counties, their firearm offense rates were 1.34 and 1.25, respectively, thus placing them in the second highest category.

Map 2  
Violent Crime Index Firearm Offense  
Rates by County, 2004



The northern county with the highest Violent Crime Index firearm offense rate in 2004 was Tucker County (1.0). The remaining four counties (Raleigh, Mercer, Lincoln, and Cabell) in this middle category with rates ranging from 0.70 to 1.05 were all in the southern part of the state.

Some notable differences can be seen between the distribution of Violent Crime Index offenses and Index offenses involving firearms. Wood County had one of the highest rates of Violent Crime Index offenses in 2004

(Map 1), but fell into the lowest category for Violent Crime Index offenses involving firearms (Map 2). Randolph and Mineral counties also had high Violent Crime Index rates compared to other counties, but a rather small proportion of offenses involving firearms. Clay County, on the other hand, was in the next to lowest category for Violent Crime Index offenses (Map 1), but had the third highest rate for Violent Crime Index offenses involving firearms in 2004 (Map 2).

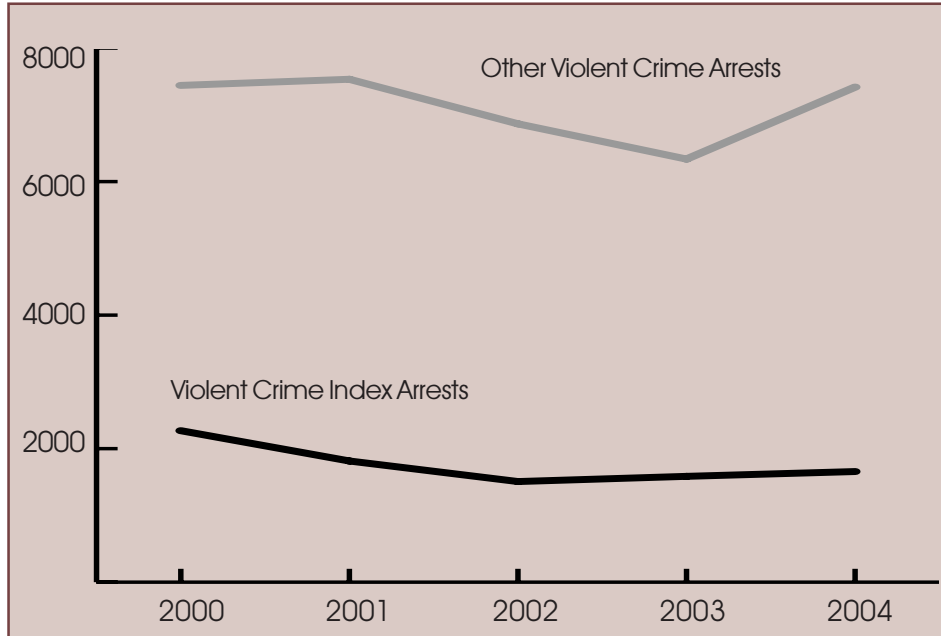
### Distribution of Violent Crime Arrests in 2004

Since 2000 there has been an average of 1,767 arrests annually for Violent Crime Index offenses in WV. Arrests for other violent crimes have averaged 7,118 annually. Together Violent Crime Index and other violent crime arrests accounted for 17.8% of all reported arrests in 2004.

As shown in Graph 5, arrests for both Violent Crime Index offenses and other violent crimes increased between 2003 and 2004. However, the total



Graph 5  
Trends in Violent Crime Arrests, 2000-2004



number of arrests for violent crimes in 2004 remained lower than the 2000 level. Arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses were on the decline from 2000 to 2002 before increasing by 5.2% in 2003 and 4.5% in 2004. Other violent crime arrests increased by 17.0% from 2003 to 2004.

Arrests for robbery and aggravated assault led to the overall increase in Violent Crime Index arrests from 2003 to 2004 (Table 3). Both were up roughly 5.0% in 2004. Arrests for forcible rape were down by 11.1%, while the number of arrests for murder remained the same as in 2003.

At the national level, the number of arrests in 2004 for Violent Crime Index offenses decreased by 1.5% from 2003 (Table 3). Specifically, arrests for forcible rape and aggravated assault were down by 2.9% and 2.0%, respectively. The number of murder arrests, however, increased by 1.9% nationally. Arrests for robbery also increased by 0.6%.

The greatest proportion of arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses in WV are for aggravated assault. Nearly 85.0% of these arrests in 2004 were for aggravated assault offenses. Robbery comprised 10.7% of the arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses while forcible rape and murder offenses made up 2.4% each.

Table 3  
Violent Crime Index Arrests and Percent Change in the U.S. and WV, 2003-2004

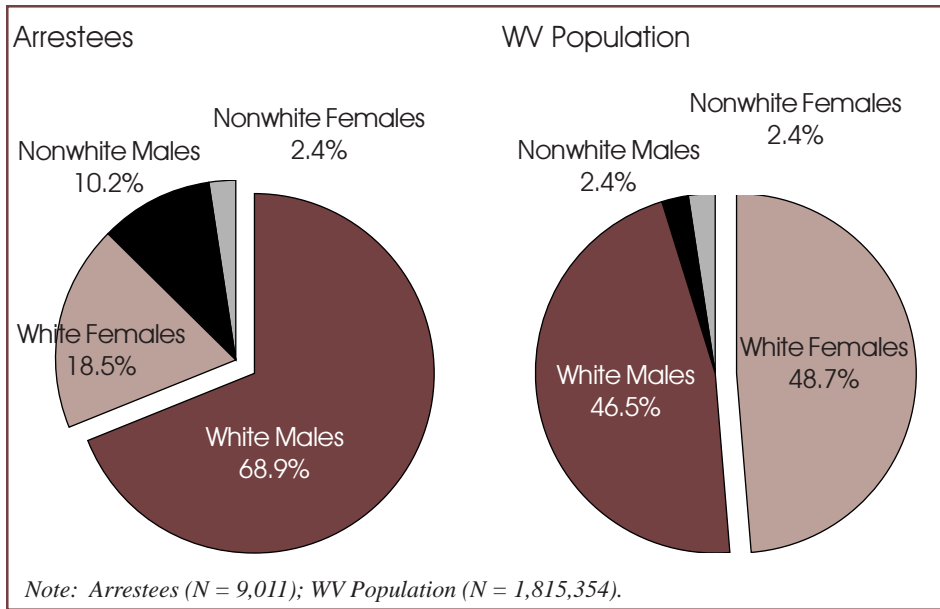
	West Virginia			United States		
	# Arrests	% of VCI	% Change 03-04	# Arrests	% of VCI	% Change 03-04
Murder	39	2.4%	0.0%	13,467	2.3%	1.9%
Forcible rape	40	2.4%	-11.1%	26,066	4.4%	-2.9%
Robbery	177	10.7%	5.4%	108,992	18.6%	0.6%
Aggravated assault	1,401	84.6%	5.1%	438,033	74.7%	-2.0%
<b>Total VCI</b>	<b>1,657</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>586,558</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>-1.5%</b>

WV's distribution of Violent Crime Index arrests was somewhat different than that experienced by the U.S. in 2004. Of all Violent Crime Index arrests in the U.S. in 2004, 74.7% were for aggravated assault. A greater proportion of arrests in the U.S. were for robbery (18.6%) than in WV. Forcible rape accounted for 4.4% of Violent Crime Index arrests in the U.S. in 2004 while 2.3% of arrests were for murder.

The vast majority of arrests for other violent crimes were for simple assault (88.2%) in WV in 2004. Intimidation accounted for 9.3% of other violent crime arrests. Collectively, all other sex offenses made up 2.0% of these arrests while 0.6% were for kidnapping/abduction.

Thus, the increase in arrests for other violent crimes in 2004 was mainly the result of a 17.3% increase in simple assault and intimidation arrests. Arrests for the other sex offenses were down collectively by 0.7% from 2003 to 2004. Kidnapping/abduction arrests also increased from 30 in 2003 to 43 in 2004.

Graph 6  
2004 Violent Crime Arrestees Compared to WV Population by Gender and Race



#### Arrestee Demographics

Graph 6 shows the gender and race of those persons arrested for violent crimes in 2004 compared to the WV population. Both white and nonwhite males are overrepresented in terms of arrests. Nearly 70.0% of violent crime arrestees were white males, while 10.2% were nonwhite males. White males comprise 46.5% of WV's population and 2.4% are nonwhite males.

White females, on the other hand, are underrepresented based on the proportion of the population they represent. Only 18.5% of arrestees were white females, however, 48.7% of the population are white females. Nonwhite females made up 2.4% of arrestees in 2004 and 2.4% of the population.

The average age of violent crime arrestees in 2004 was 32. The most frequently reported arrestee age was 22. Nearly thirty percent (29.2%) of all arrestees were between the ages of 25 and 34. Offenders age 35 to 44 and 18

to 24 comprised just under one-fourth of arrestees each. Only 6.0% of arrestees were juveniles. Less than 1.0% were over the age of 65. The

Table 4  
Nonwhite Proportion of Violent Crime Arrests, 2004

	# Arrests of Nonwhites	% of all Arrests
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,134</b>	<b>12.6%</b>
<b>Violent Crime Index</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>15.9%</b>
Murder	6	15.4%
Forcible rape	4	10.0%
Robbery	54	30.5%
Aggravated assault	199	14.3%
<b>Other Violent Crime</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>11.8%</b>
Simple assault	783	12.1%
Intimidation	67	9.9%
Forcible sodomy	2	8.7%
Sexual assault with an object	2	7.7%
Forcible fondling	7	11.3%
Incest	0	0.0%
Statutory rape	1	3.8%
Kidnapping/Abduction	9	20.9%

Notes: A total of 62 arrests were missing race and are not included in the totals used to calculate percentages in this table. Percentages are based on 9,011 total arrests (1,650 Violent Crime Index, 7,361 other violent crime).

remaining 14.6% were between the ages of 45 and 64.

Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the proportion of 2004 arrests attributed to nonwhites and females, respectively. Based on 2004 population estimates obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, 4.8% of WV's population is nonwhite and just over half (51.1%) is female.

Compared to their representation in the population, nonwhites were overrepresented in arrests for every offense, except incest and statutory rape (Table 4). Of all the arrests for violent crimes in 2004, 12.6% of those arrested were nonwhite. For Violent Crime Index offenses, 15.9% of those arrested were nonwhite. Nonwhites were also overrepresented to a lesser extent for other violent crimes (11.8%).

Of the Violent Crime Index offenses, nonwhites were most

overrepresented for robbery (30.5%). For robbery, the percentage of nonwhite arrestees is over 6 times greater than their proportion in the general population.

Simple assault was the most frequently reported violent crime in 2004. Nonwhites made up 12.1% of all arrests for simple assault in 2004.

Females are underrepresented in relation to their proportion in the population for all violent crimes. It is important to note, however, that 20.9% of all those arrested for violent crimes in 2004 were females (Table 5). In 2002, females accounted for 19.6% of violent crime arrests.

In 2004, 15.8% of arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses and 22.0% of arrests for other violent crimes involved females. Simple assaults and intimidation accounted for the majority of female arrests. Of all the arrests for

simple assault in 2004, 22.6% involved females. One-fifth of those arrested for intimidation were females.

Graphs 7 and 8 illustrate the change from 2000 to 2004 in Violent Crime Index arrests and other violent crime arrests by gender and race of the arrestee. Over the five-year period, arrest rates were by far higher for nonwhite males than any other group in both crime categories. In contrast, white females had the lowest arrest rates for both Violent Crime Index offenses and other violent crimes.

Violent Crime Index arrest rates increased for both white and nonwhite males after 2002 (Graph 7). However, arrest rates for nonwhite males grew at a faster pace reaching a rate that was 3.7 times higher than that for white males by 2004. In spite of these increases, arrest rates for both white (1.4) and

nonwhite (5.1) males in 2004 were lower than 2000 arrest rates.

Violent Crime Index arrest rates for nonwhite females were up slightly at the end of this five-year period to 0.9. Arrest rates for nonwhite females were at their highest in 2003 when they nearly reached the rate for white males. Violent Crime Index arrest rates for white females remained low throughout the period averaging a rate of just 0.3 arrests per 1,000 residents.

Arrest rates for other violent crimes declined dramatically for nonwhite males from a high of 18.4 in 2000 to 12.1 in 2002 (Graph 8). After increasing again in 2003 and 2004, arrest rates for nonwhite males ended the period at 15.8 per 1,000 residents. In addition, the degree of disparity in other violent crime arrest rates between nonwhite and white males declined slightly by 2004. There were about 2.6 times as many arrests of nonwhite males as there were of white males for other violent crimes. Arrest rates for white males averaged 5.9 per 1,000 residents during this period.

Although the other violent crime arrest rate for white females remained low during the five-year period, the 2004 rate of 1.6 per 1,000 residents was up slightly from 2000. Arrest rates for nonwhite females declined through 2002 but increased to 4.1 by 2004. The other violent crime arrest rate for nonwhite females was on average 2.4 times greater than that for white females during the five-year period.

#### Arrest Rates by County

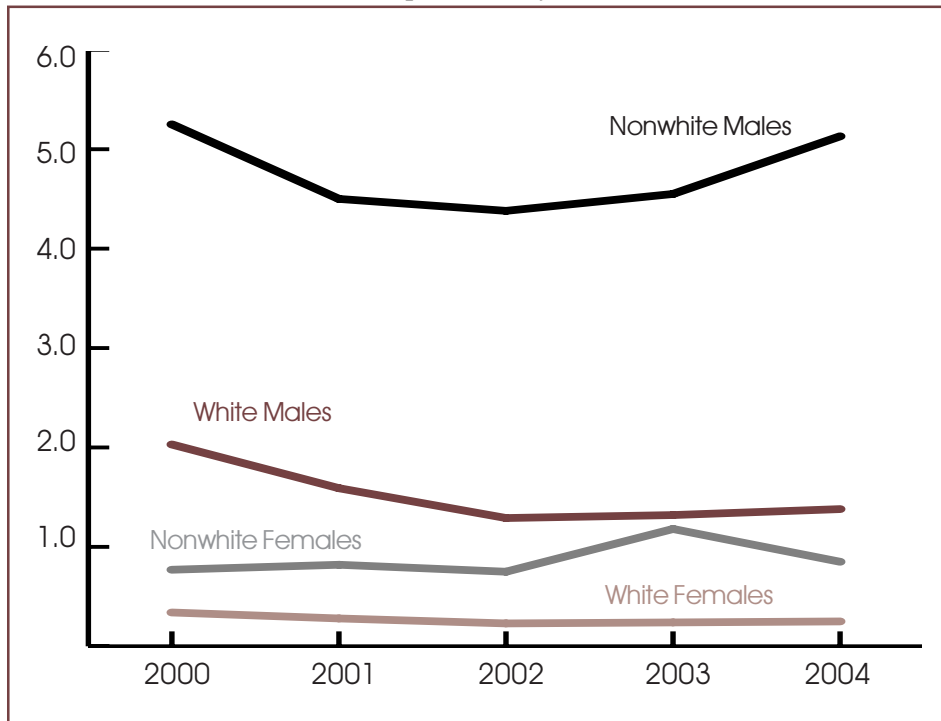
Table 6 displays the number of arrests in 2004 for both Violent Crime Index offenses and other violent crimes by county of the reporting agency. Arrest rates based on county population

Table 5  
Female Proportion of Violent Crime Arrests, 2004

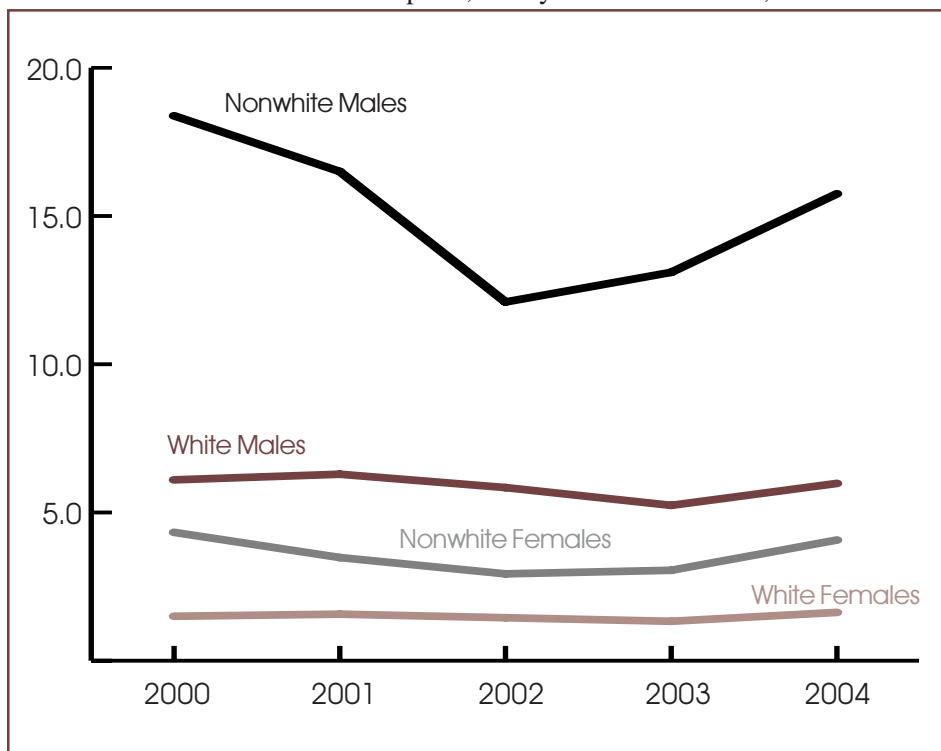
	# Arrests of Females	% of all Arrests
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,896</b>	<b>20.9%</b>
<b>Violent Crime Index</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>15.8%</b>
Murder	4	10.3%
Forcible rape	1	2.5%
Robbery	23	13.0%
Aggravated assault	234	16.7%
<b>Other Violent Crime</b>	<b>1,634</b>	<b>22.0%</b>
Simple assault	1,480	22.6%
Intimidation	137	20.0%
Forcible sodomy	1	4.3%
Sexual assault with an object	1	3.8%
Forcible fondling	2	3.2%
Incest	3	30.0%
Statutory rape	2	7.7%
Kidnapping/Abduction	8	18.6%

*Note: Percentages are based on 9,073 total arrests (1,657 Violent Crime Index, 7,416 other violent crime).*

Graph 7  
Violent Crime Index Arrest Rates per 1,000 by Gender and Race, 2000-2004



Graph 8  
Other Violent Crime Arrest Rates per 1,000 by Gender and Race, 2000-2004



are also shown for each crime category separately, as well as combined for a total violent crime rate.

Kanawha County had by far the greatest number of arrests in 2004 for both Violent Crime Index and other violent crimes. Nearly half of all arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses in 2004 were reported in just 6 counties (Kanawha, Mercer, Berkeley, Logan, Monongalia, and Raleigh).

Other violent crime arrests were most prevalent in some of these same counties. Over 300 arrests were reported in Kanawha (1,334), Mercer (524), Raleigh (495), Cabell (370), Wood (327), Berkeley (316), and Harrison (316) counties. Together these seven counties accounted for 49.6% of all other violent crime arrests in 2004.

For the entire state, a total of 1,657 Violent Crime Index arrests and 7,416 other violent crime arrests were made in 2004. Thus, there were roughly five violent crime arrests for every 1,000 residents in 2004. This corresponds to roughly one Violent Crime Index arrest and four arrests for other violent crimes per 1,000 residents.

The rate of violent crime arrests in WV was considerably less than national estimates in 2004. Nationwide, law enforcement agencies reported 200.4 arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses per 100,000 in population. WV's rate for Violent Crime Index arrests in 2004 was only 91.3 per 100,000 in population.

In terms of rate comparisons by county, Mercer experienced the highest total violent crime arrest rate at 10.4 arrests per 1,000 residents. In addition to Mercer County, 16 other counties had total violent crime arrest rates higher than the statewide average. Logan

Table 6  
Total Number of Violent Crime Arrests and Rates by County, 2004

	VC Index		Other VC		Total Rate		VC Index		Other VC		Total Rate
	VC Index	Rate	Other VC	Rate	per 1,000		VC Index	Rate	Other VC	Rate	per 1,000
Barbour	10	0.6	76	4.9	5.6	Mineral	32	1.2	126	4.6	5.8
Berkeley	112	1.3	316	3.5	4.8	Mingo	45	1.6	140	5.1	6.8
Boone	18	0.7	86	3.3	4.0	Monongalia	91	1.1	258	3.1	4.2
Braxton	12	0.8	34	2.3	3.1	Monroe	5	0.4	20	1.5	1.8
Brooke	9	0.4	44	1.8	2.1	Morgan	8	0.5	32	2.0	2.5
Cabell	57	0.6	370	3.9	4.5	Nicholas	15	0.6	99	3.8	4.3
Calhoun	1	0.1	6	0.8	0.9	Ohio	23	0.5	30	0.7	1.2
Clay	13	1.2	12	1.2	2.4	Pendleton	2	0.3	11	1.4	1.6
Doddridge	8	1.1	19	2.6	3.6	Pleasants	7	0.9	17	2.3	3.2
Fayette	22	0.5	88	1.9	2.3	Pocahontas	17	1.9	69	7.7	9.6
Gilmer	4	0.6	9	1.3	1.9	Preston	13	0.4	68	2.3	2.7
Grant	7	0.6	25	2.2	2.8	Putnam	21	0.4	211	3.9	4.3
Greenbrier	26	0.7	60	1.7	2.5	Raleigh	90	1.1	495	6.3	7.4
Hampshire	36	1.7	110	5.1	6.8	Randolph	42	1.5	143	5.0	6.5
Hancock	6	0.2	39	1.2	1.4	Ritchie	13	1.2	20	1.9	3.1
Hardy	16	1.2	60	4.5	5.8	Roane	19	1.2	54	3.5	4.8
Harrison	51	0.7	316	4.6	5.4	Summers	11	0.8	36	2.6	3.4
Jackson	15	0.5	83	2.9	3.4	Taylor	2	0.1	15	0.9	1.0
Jefferson	14	0.3	91	1.9	2.2	Tucker	9	1.3	29	4.1	5.4
Kanawha	300	1.5	1334	6.8	8.4	Tyler	6	0.6	20	2.1	2.8
Lewis	6	0.4	54	3.2	3.5	Upshur	10	0.4	118	4.9	5.3
Lincoln	23	1.0	152	6.7	7.8	Wayne	18	0.4	178	4.2	4.6
Logan	95	2.6	265	7.3	9.9	Webster	5	0.5	36	3.7	4.2
Marion	48	0.9	207	3.7	4.5	Wetzel	7	0.4	19	1.1	1.5
Marshall	27	0.8	171	4.9	5.7	Wirt	3	0.5	8	1.4	1.9
Mason	14	0.5	64	2.5	3.0	Wood	35	0.4	327	3.8	4.2
McDowell	21	0.8	189	7.6	8.5	Wyoming	13	0.5	33	1.3	1.9
Mercer	124	2.0	524	8.4	10.4	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,657</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>7,416</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>5.0</b>

Note: Arrests for Ohio County may be underreported, 2004 data for Wheeling Police Department were not available at the time of this report.

County experienced the highest Violent Crime Index arrest rate at 2.6 arrests per 1,000 residents, while Mercer County (8.4) had the highest arrest rate for other violent crimes.

A total of nineteen counties had Violent Crime Index arrest rates higher than the statewide average and 18

counties experienced higher other violent crime arrest rates. Taylor, Calhoun, and Hancock counties experienced the lowest rates of arrest for Violent Crime Index offenses in 2004. Arrest rates for other violent crimes in these three counties were also some of the lowest in addition to Wetzel and Clay counties.

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## Methodology

All data used in this report were obtained from the Incident-Based Reporting System (WVIBRS) collected and maintained by the West Virginia State Police, Uniform Crime Reporting Section. WV was the 16th state to receive certification from the FBI and began accepting data in the WVIBRS format in January of 1999. While WVIBRS data are estimated to represent 100.0% of the WV population, individual agency participation levels do vary across the state, as well as over time.

WVIBRS is a fluid data system which is updated with incident information reported by law enforcement agencies on a continuous basis. The data analyzed in this report represents offenses and arrests reported for each calendar year up to the date on which the data were extracted from the WVIBRS. Data files for 2000-2002 were obtained in December 2003, 2003 data were received in December 2004, and data for 2004 were received in June 2005. Statistics are reported both at the offense and the arrest level.

## Definitions

This report examines those offenses known to law enforcement that are considered to be the most violent in nature. Murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault have historically been defined as the Violent Crime Index by the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. According to the UCR Program's definition, violent crimes involve force or the threat of force. In addition to the Index offenses, other assaults, other sex offenses, and kidnapping/abduction are also included in this report in the category other violent crime.

*Violent Crime Index.* Includes the offenses of murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

*Murder.* The willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another.

*Forcible rape.* The carnal knowledge of a person, forcibly and/or against that person's will or not forcibly or against the person's will in instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

*Robbery.* The taking, or attempting to take, anything of value under confrontational circumstances from the control, custody, or care of another person by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear of immediate harm.

*Aggravated assault.* An unlawful attack by one person upon another wherein the offender uses a weapon or displays it in a threatening manner, or the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness.

*Other violent crime.* Includes other assaults (simple assault and intimidation), all other sex offenses (forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, forcible fondling, incest, and statutory rape), and kidnapping/abduction.

*Racial Categories.* Due to the limited diversity in WV's population, all racial backgrounds other than white are collapsed into the category of nonwhite for the purposes of this report. The majority (98.5% in 2004) of those included in the nonwhite category are African American.

*Weapon Type.* Information provided on weapon use includes all types of

firearms, knives, other dangerous weapons, and personal weapons. Examples of other dangerous weapons are blunt objects, poison, explosives, fire/incendiary devices, drugs, and asphyxiation (by drowning, strangulation, suffocation, or gas). Personal weapons or the use of strongarm tactics refers to situations where the offender's hands, fists, feet, or teeth are used against the victim as a weapon.

*Offense/Arrest rates.* Offense/arrest rates represent the number of offenses/arrests per 1,000 (or for the purpose of national comparisons, per 100,000) residents. Rates are calculated by dividing the number of reported offenses/arrests by the population estimate and multiplying by 1,000 (or 100,000).

*Arrests.* It is important to note that arrest statistics are a count of the number of arrests made by law enforcement agencies in a given year, not individuals arrested or crimes committed. An unknown number of individuals are arrested more than once in the year. Also, an individual may have committed multiple crimes resulting in a single arrest or a single crime may have resulted in the arrest of more than one individual.

## Population Estimates

State population distributions for gender, race, and age are based on population estimates for 2004, obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. 2004 county population estimates were used to calculate county offense and arrest rates.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In June 2004, the use of the Violent Crime Index in the UCR Program and its publications was discontinued. The

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FBI will now publish a violent crime total until a more viable index is developed. The term Violent Crime Index is used in this report simply as a title for the four offenses (murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) now referred to as violent crime by the FBI. The term is also used to distinguish these four offenses from other assaults, other sex offenses, and kidnapping/abduction which for the purposes of this report are categorized as other violent crime.

U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. *Crime in the United States 2004*. Available online at: [http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius\\_04/](http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius_04/).

U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. *National Incident-Based Reporting System Volume 1: Data Collection Guidelines, August 2000*. Available online at: <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/nibrs/manuals/v1all.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> A total of 23 counties comprise the southern federal judicial district. These counties include: Boone, Cabell, Clay, Fayette, Greenbrier, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, McDowell, Mercer, Mingo, Monroe, Nicholas, Putnam, Raleigh, Roane, Summers, Wayne, Wirt, Wood, and Wyoming.

### Data Sources

West Virginia State Police, Uniform Crime Reporting Section. *West Virginia Incident-Based Reporting System, 2000-2004*. Unpublished raw data.

U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, *Annual estimates of the population by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino origin for West Virginia: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2004*. Assessed online at: <http://www.census.gov/popest/states/asrh/tables/SC-EST2004-03-54.xls>.

U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, *Annual estimates of the population for counties of West Virginia: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2004*. Assessed online at: <http://www.census.gov/popest/counties/tables/CO-EST2004-01-54.xls>.

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