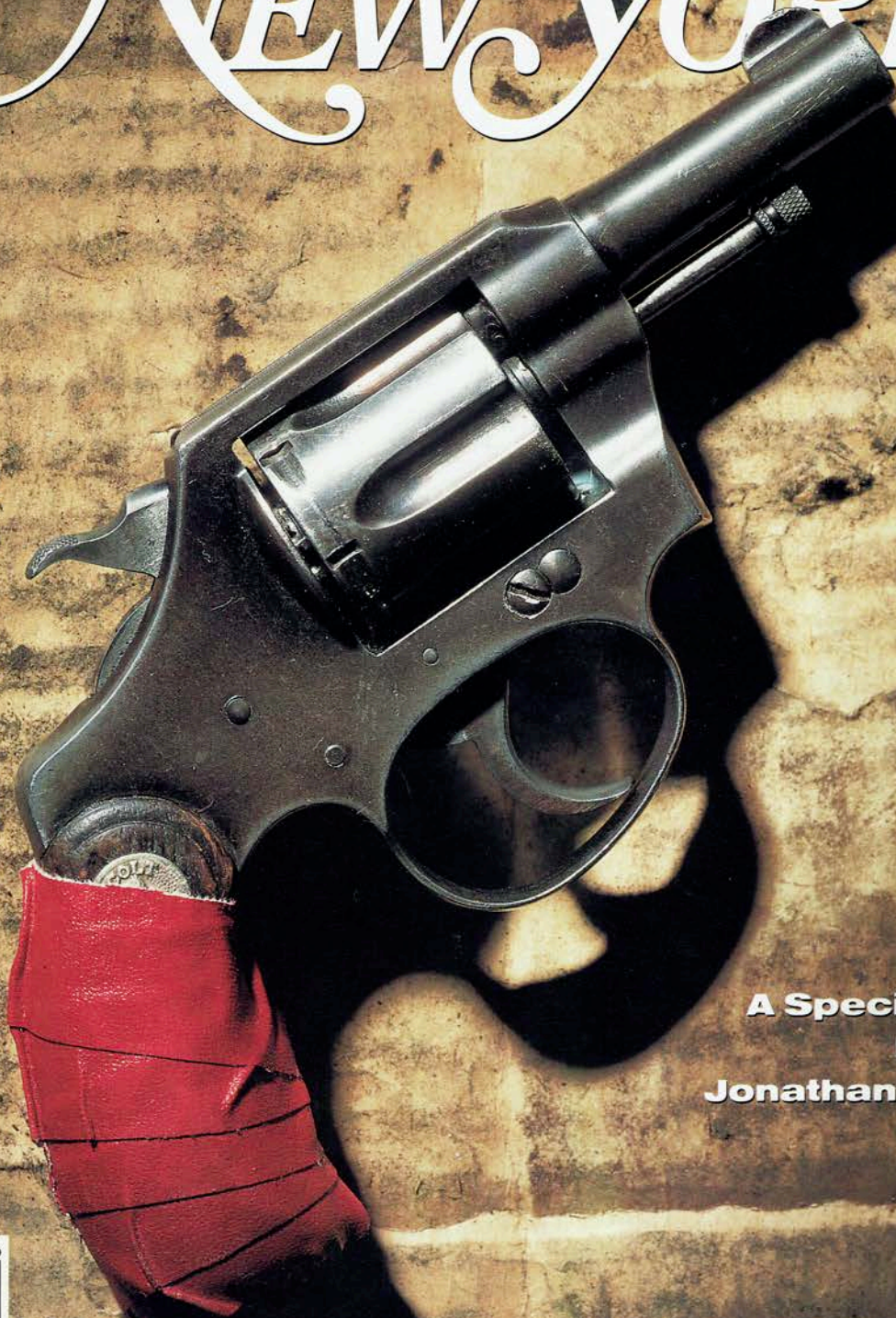


ALL ABOUT CRIME

Is It Worse Than Ever? How Safe Is Your Neighborhood?
Who Kills Whom • How New York Ranks • The Race Factor
The Drug Connection • The Most Dangerous Subway Stations

\$2.25 • SEPTEMBER 3, 1990

NEW YORK



A Special Report
By
Jonathan Greenberg



18225

ALL ABOUT CRIME

**Is It Worse Than Ever? How Safe Is Your Neighborhood?
Who Kills Whom • How New York Ranks • The Race Factor
The Drug Connection • The Most Dangerous Subway Stations**

BY JONATHAN GREENBERG

IN THE NEXT 24 HOURS, 5 NEW YORKERS WILL BE KILLED, 9 WILL BE raped, 256 will be robbed, 332 homes and stores will be burglarized, and 367 cars will disappear. That's if things don't go too badly.

A new tidal wave of crime has swept over New York, adding terrifying numbers and stories to a city already plagued by violence. The statistics keep piling up. Last year, 712,419 serious crimes were reported—about one for every ten New Yorkers. During the first half of 1990, homicides soared 25 percent, to a historic high of 1,051. For the first three months of the year, robberies jumped 11 percent, rapes increased 6 percent, and auto theft rose 14 percent.

Reflecting those harsh numbers, the news overflows with tales of violence. In the space of nine days, four children are killed by shots aimed at others. In Greenwich Village, a young man at a pay phone is murdered, allegedly for refusing to give money to a bum. A shooter who claims to be following the signs of the zodiac stalks the streets. A "Dartman" fires tiny darts at the backs of women.

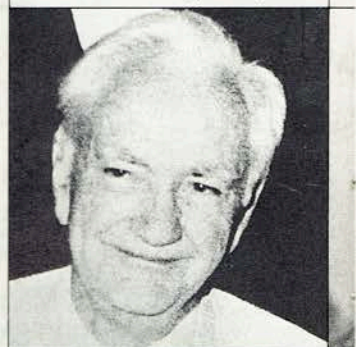
What's going on here? Are things worse than ever or just bad as usual and being hyped? Is it safe to walk the streets or ride the



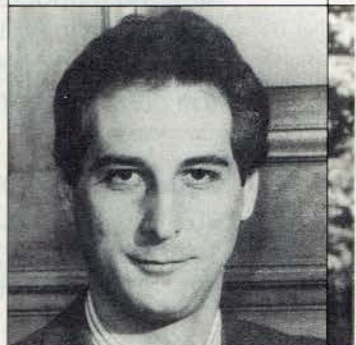
Chris Zacharopoulos, 26,
murdered, December 4, 1989.



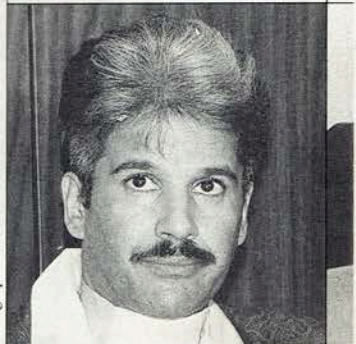
Lourdes Gonzalez, 24,
murdered, June 14, 1990.



Frank Bates, 68,
murdered, August 19, 1989.



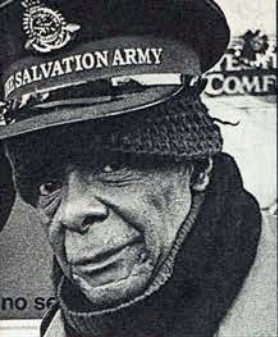
John Reisenbach, 33,
murdered, July 31, 1990.



Harry Ortiz, 43,
shot, May 1, 1990.

Photographs: the New York Post.

SPECIAL REPORT



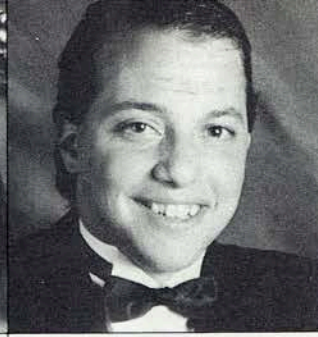
Cecil Dawson, 81,
mugged, November 27, 1989.



Thomas Ragin, 37,
murdered, November 15, 1989.



Amy Gelinos, 25,
beaten, July 30, 1990.



Phillip Mellea, 29,
beaten, July 30, 1990.



David Opont, 12,
burned, March 7, 1990.



Hassoun Tatum, 18,
murdered, July 24, 1990.



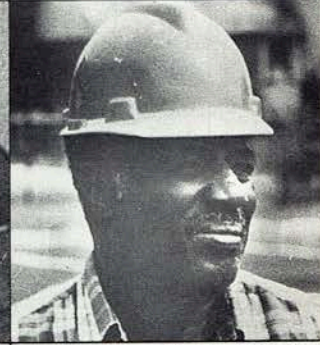
Milagros Aponte, 24,
murdered, June 8, 1990.



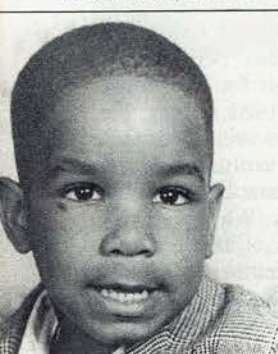
Eduardo Vidals, 20,
shot, July 4, 1990.



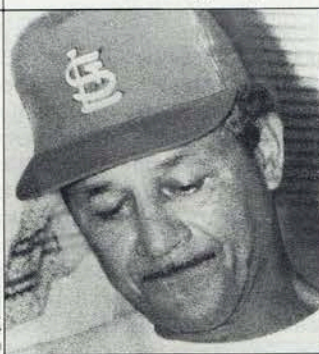
Shamel Knight, 14,
murdered, August 1, 1990.



Stephen Kelly, 61,
murdered, January 23, 1989.



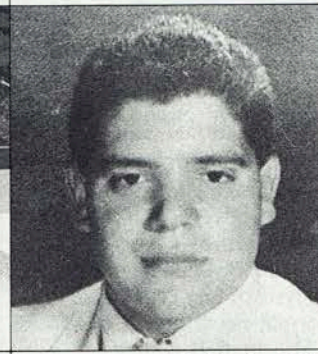
Ben Williams, 3,
murdered, July 26, 1990.



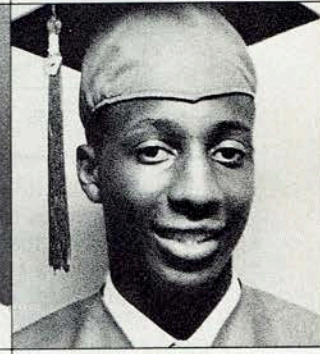
Mariano Cruz, 49,
murdered, July 25, 1990.



Amador Barry, 36,
mugged, August 1, 1990.



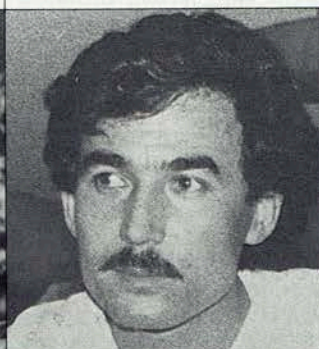
Vito Ruggiero, 18,
murdered, July 11, 1990.



Gregory Harley, 20,
murdered, January 1, 1990.



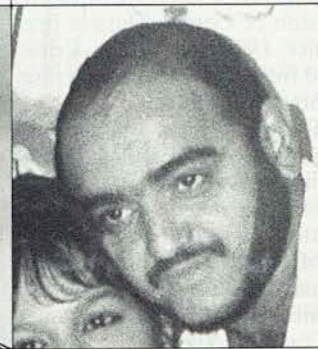
Octavia Brown, 3,
shot, August 21, 1990.



Hashim Gurvan, 33,
murdered, August 7, 1990.



Steven Morillo, 13,
shot, August 8, 1990.



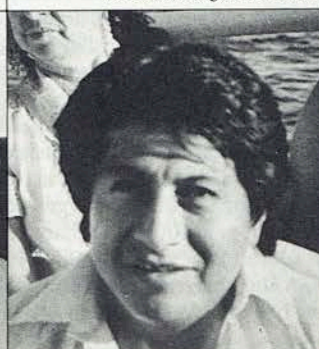
Abraham Hernandez, 33,
murdered, August 14, 1990.



Charles Plock, 45,
shot, April 15, 1990.



James Bishop, 60,
murdered, May 17, 1990.



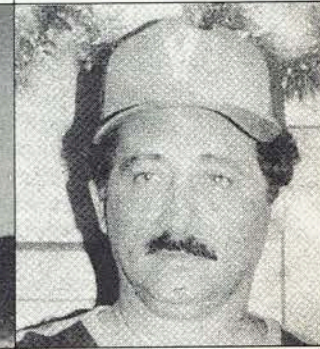
Leoncio Sanay Sr., 39,
murdered, July 15, 1990.



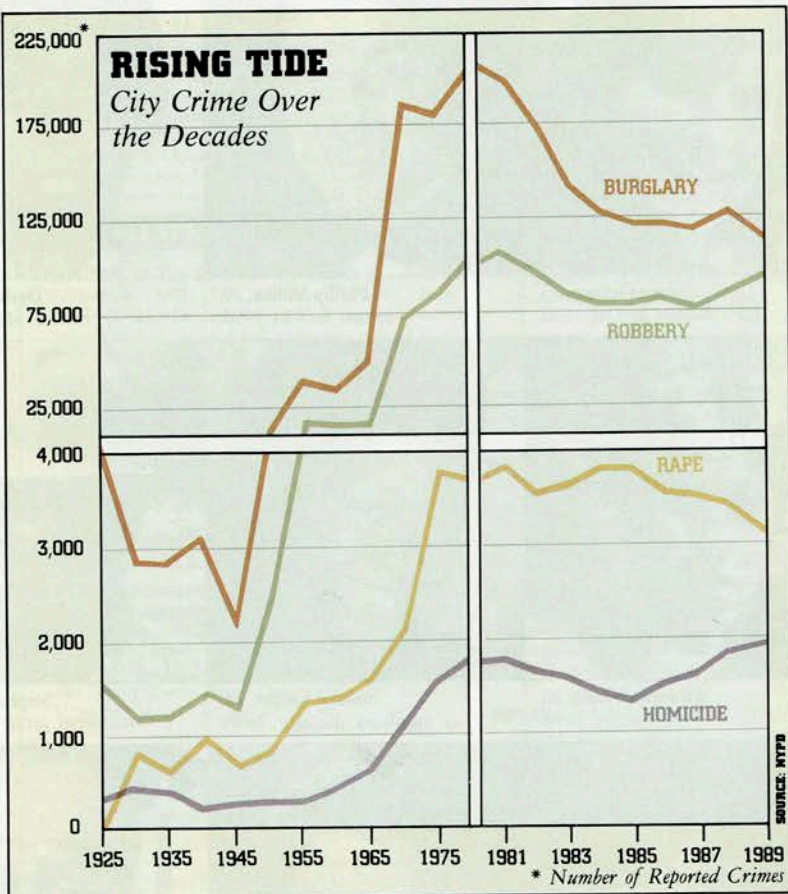
Veronica Corales, 9,
murdered, July 22, 1990.



Kevin Acevedo, 6,
shot, August 18, 1990.



Jose Lopez, 54,
murdered, July 30, 1990.

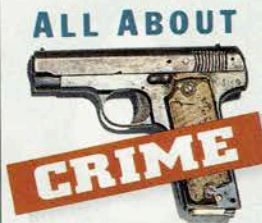


subway? Who's doing the killing and who's being killed? How does New York compare with other big cities? This special report by *New York* is an effort to get past the headlines and the numbers, to present a fresh analysis of city-crime statistics, many of them in a format never before compiled for the public. The information comes from reports, statistics, and records of the New York City Police Department, the FBI Uniform Crime Reports, the state Division of Criminal Justice Services, the U.S. Justice Department, the Crime Control Institute, and from interviews with crime experts and law-enforcement officials.

There's not much comfort here, but there is some context. Crime has always afflicted New York, rising and falling in spurts that experts are still trying to explain. That means things won't necessarily keep getting worse, though with a population bubble of children reaching adolescence, the situation may grow worse well into this decade. News accounts of the crime wave sometimes tilt reality. For example, though the terrible toll of murdered bystanders has captured attention this summer, murders by strangers actually seem to have declined somewhat relative to other killings—hardly a surprise given the proliferation of powerful handguns, now too readily available to settle an argument between family or friends. Similarly, though racially charged crimes are among the most publicized, the vast majority of crimes don't cross racial lines.

Drugs are probably an even greater factor in the crime wave than commonly imagined—the city's population of criminals overlaps overwhelmingly with its population of drug takers, and the advent of crack has apparently changed the nature of crime, raising the robbery rate while reducing the

Until recently, the most murderous year in city history was probably 1907, the peak of a crime wave, when police arrested 860 people for homicide and four cops were killed.



number of burglaries. Overall, the risk of falling victim to crime varies enormously from neighborhood to neighborhood. Manhattan has three of the five most dangerous precincts in the city, but none of its precincts ranks among the ten safest. By a wide margin, crime hits the city's poor, minority communities hardest.

For what it's worth, things could be grimmer: In part because of its high-rise homes and active street life, New York is actually less crime-ridden than many other big American cities. That's small consolation to the millions of New Yorkers whose lives have been changed by crime, but it does suggest that the troubles today are America's, not just New York's.

IS IT WORSE THAN EVER?

NEW YORK IS ONE OF THE MOST crime-haunted and dangerous cities in Christendom," wrote Walt Whitman 150 years ago while warning visitors not to wander in the city streets or parks at night. Many citizens of that era took to arming themselves with revolvers or sword canes. Others moved to the safety of the countryside.

The perception that crime is bad and getting worse is about as old as the city itself. Crime is a sporadic phenomenon that peaks periodically; 1864 was a particularly bad year for New York City, as were 1907, 1931, and 1981. Today, the city is in the grip of yet another wave, and if past form holds, this one, too, will eventually recede.

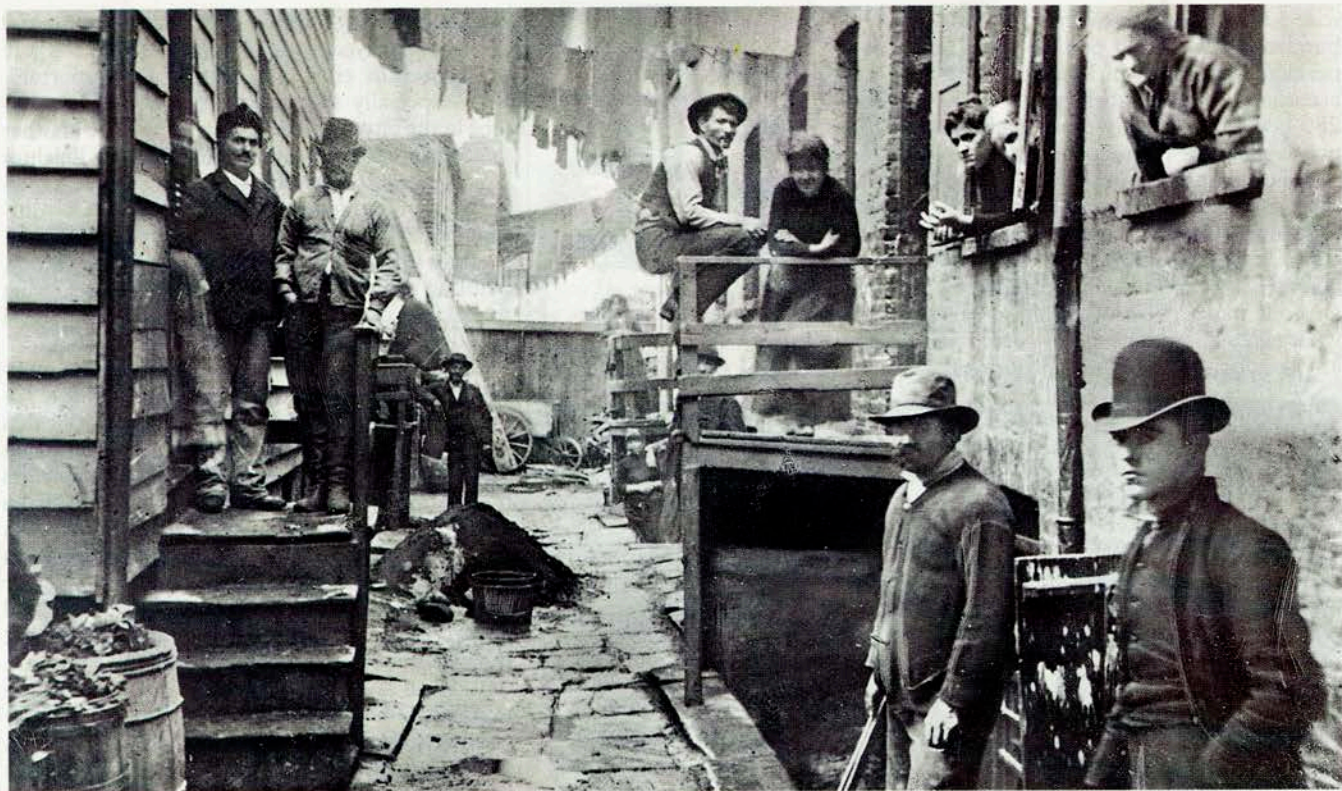
Crime experts can't agree on how today's crime rates compare with those of, say, Whitman's day or with the crime-ridden turn of the century. "Certainly it's not worse than a century ago," says Professor Robert Panzarella, who specializes in police science at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "As far as we know, crime rates nationally were ten times worse than they are today." Panzarella cites sketchy historical records; firm evidence is hard to come by, and his theory has detractors.

"People have this notion that things were worse in the old days," says James Q. Wilson, a crime expert who teaches at UCLA. "That's not true. Things are really bad today."

The problem with making comparisons is that city law-enforcement authorities didn't start keeping consistent records until three decades ago. Homicide is the only crime category that can be measured over the years with any reliability, and even in that case, there's a waffle. Until the mid-1920s, police records reported only *arrests*, not crimes. However, historical records show that in the past, the number of arrests for homicide about equaled the number of homicides.

The homicide-arrest figures give little evidence that homicide rates were ever greater than they are today. For example, in the eight-year period between 1845 and 1853—when the city's population was around 800,000, about a tenth of what it is today—160 people were arrested for murder in New York City. That suggests the homicide rate was 2.5 per 100,000 (that is, 2.5 people were murdered for every 100,000 residents)—a far cry from the current rate of 26 per 100,000. Professor Eric H. Monkmon, an urban historian at

Andrew Lauren provided research assistance for this article.



In the 1890s, lower Mulberry Street was one of the city's toughest spots.

UCLA, has culled newspaper accounts, coroners' reports, and police records to try to get more accurate homicide figures, and he argues that even during the crime waves of 1857 and 1864, the city's homicide rate didn't exceed 10 per 100,000.

On the other hand, assault was rampant a century and a half ago, probably due in large part to widespread drunkenness. Between 1845 and 1853, police arrested an average of 3,500 people a year for assault and battery—suggesting an assault rate that probably wasn't equaled until the mid-1970s. During that same eight-year period, cops ran in an average of 14,000 people a year for intoxication or intoxication and disorderly conduct. By way of comparison, last year, close to 95,000 people were locked up for felony or misdemeanor drug charges in a city nearly ten times larger.

Until recently, the most homicidal year of the city's history was probably 1907, the peak of a devastating crime wave, when the police arrested 860 people for homicide and 4 cops out of a force of fewer than 10,000 were murdered. Considering that the city's population was about half of what it is today, the homicide rate that year would have just about equaled the city's current high rate; the rate of cop killings was nearly double that of recent years.

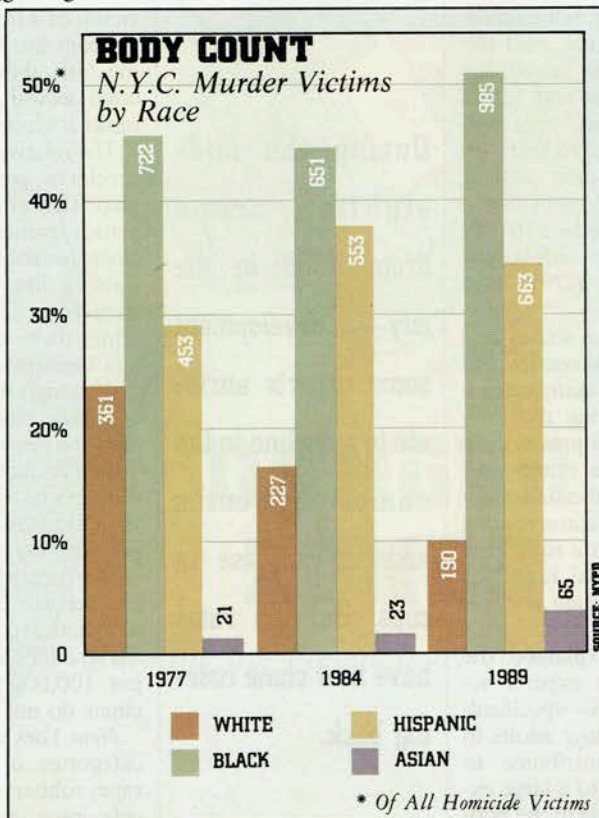
In 1908, the *New York Times* railed against the terror of street crime in an editorial: "If comparisons are of any worth, this city is in an even worse predicament because of its thieves and murderers

than were the old frontier towns of the West. . . . Here in Manhattan, a woman was 'held up' this week at night on Amsterdam Avenue, robbed within sight and hearing of four policemen of the West One Hundredth Street Station, and thrown screaming beneath the wheels of a passing trolley car, where she was ground to bits. The murderers escaped."

In a response evocative of the racial tensions gripping New York today, Police Commissioner Theo A. Bingham blamed the crime wave on immigrants, especially Jews. Writing in the *North American Review*, Bingham said, "It is not astonishing that with a million Hebrews, mostly Russian, in the city (one fourth of the population) perhaps half of the criminals should be of that race." Bingham also claimed that in the city's notorious Rogues' Gallery, 1,200 of 2,000 pictures were of Jews. Bingham's comments caused an uproar in the Jewish community. Pointing to statistics showing that Jews were responsible for only 16.4 percent of the city's crime, Jewish leaders pressured him to retract his statement.

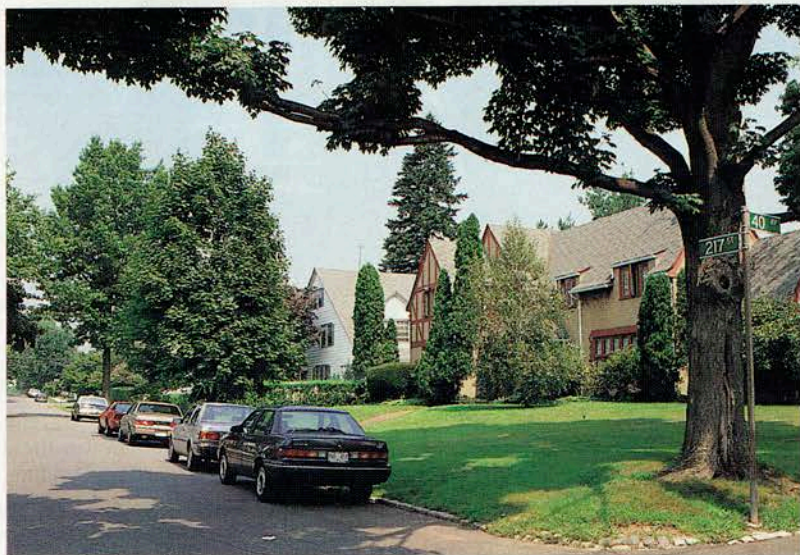
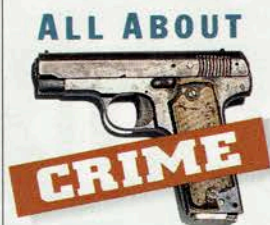
In fact, Wilbur R. Miller, a history professor at SUNY-Stony Brook, says the crime wave that year may have been largely the result of "a severe financial panic in New York—the biggest between the 1890s and the Depression."

Uniform and responsible crime reporting in New York did not begin until the 1950s and 1960s—a development that partially explains why reported robberies



rose 3,000 percent between 1950 and 1970, and burglaries rose 2,500 percent. During the same period, homicide—which had been reported fairly accurately since well before that time—rose only 280 percent. Certainly crime had increased, but not as much as the reporting of it.

"The older procedures may have discouraged the complete counting of all crimes," says Phil McGuire, director of crime analysis for the New York Police Department. "Undercounting was definitely a factor in the increase, but I don't think anybody has a ghost of a chance of knowing to what extent." Another factor, according to Richard Condon, a former police commissioner who's



now director of security for PaineWebber, is that more people began insuring their possessions, and insurance companies began demanding police reports for claims.

Even the earlier, sketchy reporting, however, illustrates a curious phenomenon: The post-Depression years were some of the most peaceful in the nation's history. "In the forties and fifties, crime rates were extraordinarily low," says Panzarella. "Today seems high compared to that. But compared to crime rates over the past century, they're not particularly high today." In 1938, for example, 583 homicides were reported—310 fewer than seven years earlier. Amid the terrible poverty, robberies dropped, too—to 1,297 from 1,434 in 1931.

Major crime exploded during the sixties and seventies, peaking during the late seventies and early eighties with numbers that—in many categories—have yet to be equaled. During the mid-eighties, crime dropped off—a development Condon attributes to a decline in the number of youths in the city and an increase in the size of the police force. But the rates have now come roaring back. This year, for the third year in a row, New York will easily surpass all historical highs for homicide. Robbery and auto theft may also set new records.

No one has ever adequately explained the sources of the crime cycles. Most experts acknowledge that demographic factors—specifically, the number of teenagers and young adults in the country—is an important contributor to crime, which seems to rise and fall, to a large extent, with the number of young people in the pop-

Bayside, Queens, is probably the city's safest neighborhood outside Staten Island.

During the mid-eighties, crime dropped off in the city—a development some experts attribute to a decline in the number of youths and an increase in cops. But the rates have now come roaring back.

ulation. Recently, drugs—particularly crack—and guns have played a major role. But that's where the consensus ends. The lack of job opportunities—especially the scarcity of good blue-collar jobs in the city—is believed by some to be another factor. And as far as State Senator Franz Leichter is concerned, the current crime rate reflects a 54 percent drop in federal aid to New York City during the past decade.

James Q. Wilson scoffs at the economic theory, pointing out that crime rose dramatically during the sixties, despite the huge rise in federal social spending.

Some criminologists don't even think the number of cops has much to do with crime rates. Today's NYPD force of 26,227 is nearly 400 men and women larger than five years ago, but that hasn't stopped the number of motor-vehicle thefts from jumping 68 percent during this period or the number of homicides and aggravated assaults from increasing 38 percent. One clear problem is that police are spending more and more of their time answering 911 calls, which have increased 48 percent in the past twenty years; during that time, the number of cops has dropped 18 percent. The police brass are trying to improve the situation with the so-called community-patrol program, putting cops out on the beat. But so far, only 750 officers citywide are part of this program.

HOW SAFE IS YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

SOMEONE LIVING IN THE 32ND PRECINCT, IN northeast Harlem, is 31 times more likely to be murdered than someone in Bayside, Queens. You're 21 times more likely to be raped in Bedford-Stuyvesant than in New Dorp, Staten Island. On the Upper West Side, the risk of being the victim of a major crime almost doubles when you go from the 20th Precinct, below 86th Street, to the 24th, above. Staten Island wins the safest-borough award by a mile—its violent-crime rate ranks it closer to a country town than to a city.

The relative dangers of 71 of the city's 75 police precincts are illustrated in the accompanying map. The ratings are based on the number of dangerous crimes and the population of each precinct. Neighborhoods visited by large numbers of tourists, like Greenwich Village, are slightly less dangerous than the figures indicate, because the crime there is spread among more people than just the area's residents.

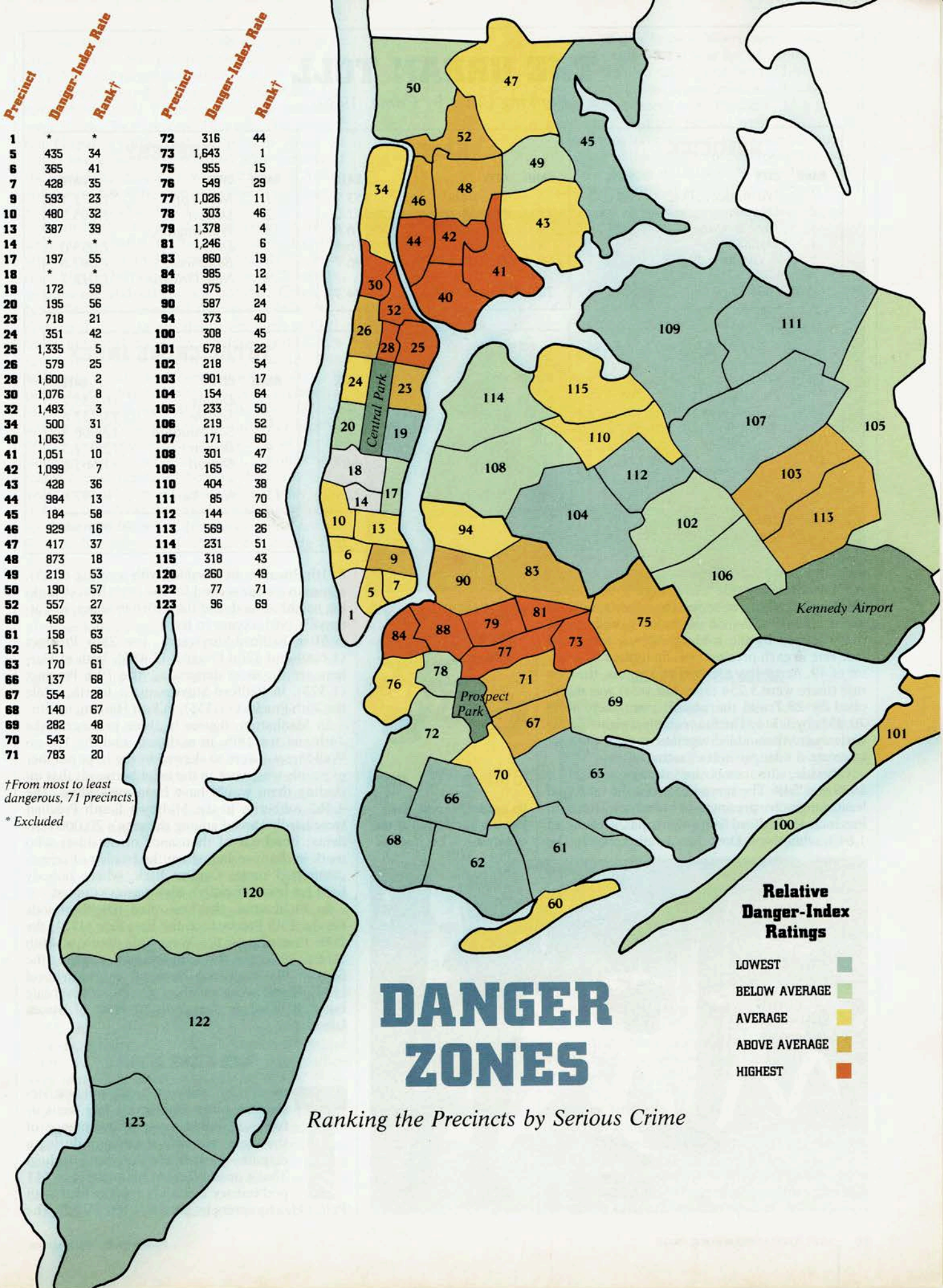
Although the ratings are not a perfect measure of danger, they provide a more accurate picture than the raw numbers of crimes. For example, the 34th Precinct, in Washington Heights, had 96 murders last year—the second-highest number in the city. However, the number of murders there per 100,000 residents (51) was less than half that of the nearby 32nd Precinct, which had fewer murders (68) but a third as many people. In other words, the risk of getting murdered was greater in the smaller 32nd Precinct (crime rates are figured per 100,000 residents, even though some precincts do not have that many people).

New York's index factors in the rates for four categories of crime against people: homicide, rape, robbery, and assault. The figures for homicide, rape, and assault were weighted to bring

Precinct	Danger-Index Rate	Rank†	Precinct	Danger-Index Rate	Rank†
1	*	*	72	316	44
5	435	34	73	1,643	1
6	365	41	75	955	15
7	428	35	76	549	29
9	593	23	77	1,026	11
10	480	32	78	303	46
13	387	39	79	1,378	4
14	*	*	81	1,246	6
17	197	55	83	860	19
18	*	*	84	985	12
19	172	59	88	975	14
20	195	56	90	587	24
23	718	21	94	373	40
24	351	42	100	308	45
25	1,335	5	101	678	22
26	579	25	102	218	54
28	1,600	2	103	901	17
30	1,076	8	104	154	64
32	1,483	3	105	233	50
34	500	31	106	219	52
40	1,063	9	107	171	60
41	1,051	10	108	301	47
42	1,099	7	109	165	62
43	428	36	110	404	38
44	984	13	111	85	70
45	184	58	112	144	66
46	929	16	113	569	26
47	417	37	114	231	51
48	873	18	115	318	43
49	219	53	120	260	49
50	190	57	122	77	71
52	557	27	123	96	69
60	458	33			
61	158	63			
62	151	65			
63	170	61			
66	137	68			
67	554	28			
68	140	67			
69	282	48			
70	543	30			
71	783	20			

†From most to least dangerous, 71 precincts.

* Excluded



Relative Danger-Index Ratings

- LOWEST
- BELOW AVERAGE
- AVERAGE
- ABOVE AVERAGE
- HIGHEST

DANGER ZONES

Ranking the Precincts by Serious Crime

THE URBAN TOLL

Ranking Cities by Crime, 1989

HOMICIDE

RANK*	CITY	RATE†
1	Washington, D.C.	70.0
2	Detroit	57.4
3	New Orleans	46.7
4	Dallas	34.5
5	Baltimore	34.3
9	New York	25.9

RAPE

RANK	CITY	RATE
1	Cleveland	153.7
2	Detroit	131.0
3	Memphis	116.8
4	Dallas	116.4
5	Jacksonville	96.7
22	New York	44.3

ROBBERY

RANK	CITY	RATE
1	New York	1,271.1
2	Detroit	1,095.2
3	Washington, D.C.	1,055.0
4	Baltimore	1,042.8
5	New Orleans	1,012.7

BURGLARY

RANK	CITY	RATE
1	Dallas	3,797.5
2	Jacksonville	3,128.8
3	San Antonio	3,042.2
4	Seattle	2,802.2
5	Houston	2,726.5
18	New York	1,651.5

MOTOR THEFT

RANK	CITY	RATE
1	Boston	2,829.4
2	Dallas	2,682.1
3	Detroit	2,587.9
4	San Diego	2,383.2
5	Houston	2,144.7
9	New York	1,822.1

TOTAL CRIME INDEX

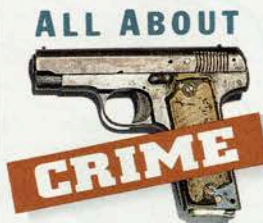
RANK	CITY	RATE
1	Dallas	16,353.7
2	Seattle	15,137.8
3	San Antonio	12,906.3
4	Boston	12,071.3
5	Detroit	11,565.8
13	New York	9,697.6

* Among the 25 biggest U.S. cities.

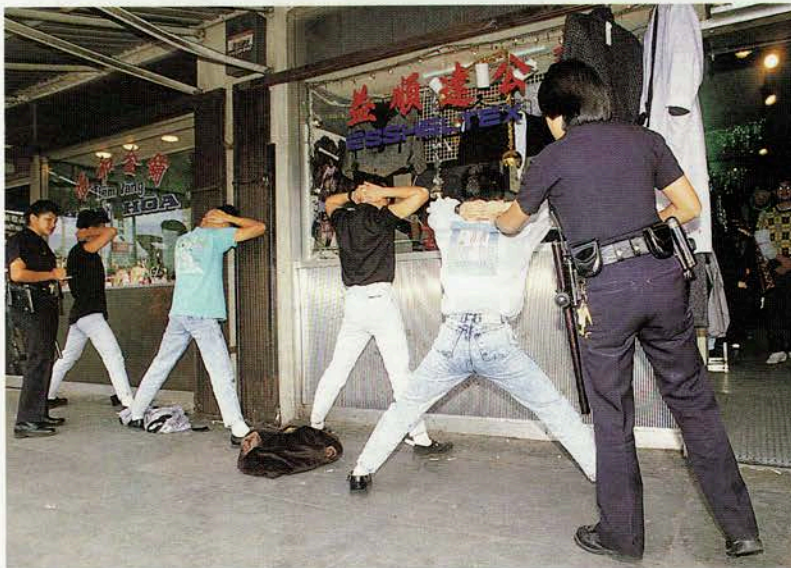
† per 100,000 residents.

them in line with the larger number of robberies. For instance, citywide there were 1,905 homicides and 93,377 robberies last year, a ratio of about 1 to 49. So that the index would not be overwhelmed by the robbery figures, the homicide rate in each precinct was multiplied by a factor of 49. According to a similar formula, the rape rate (there were 3,254 rapes last year) was multiplied by 28.7 and the assault rate (there were 70,951) by 1.316. The four equally weighted categories were then added together in each precinct to create a "danger index" rating.

Citywide, the composite average rating for 1989 was 549. The spread between the most and least dangerous precincts is immense. The 73rd Precinct, in Bedford-Stuyvesant, has a rating of 1,643, while New Dorp has a rating of 77. The



Up against the wall: Gang violence has pushed up the crime rates in Los Angeles.



111th Precinct, in Bayside (with a rating of 85), comes in a close second for the city's lowest-ranking neighborhood, and the 123rd Precinct, in Totenville (96), comes in third.

After Bedford-Stuyvesant, the 28th Precinct (1,600) and 32nd Precinct (1,483), both in Harlem, are the most dangerous. The 79th Precinct (1,378), in Bedford-Stuyvesant, is fourth, while the 25th Precinct (1,335), in East Harlem, is fifth.

In Manhattan, figures in three precincts—the 14th and the 18th, in midtown, and the 1st, on Wall Street—were so skewed by the large number of people who work in the neighborhoods that including them would have been misleading. The 4,462 robberies in the Midtown South Precinct were hardly spread among the area's 20,000 residents; hundreds of thousands of outsiders who work in that precinct share the burden of crimes committed there. Central Park, where nobody lives (at least officially), also wasn't counted.

In Manhattan, the best-rated neighborhoods are the 19th Precinct, on the East Side (172); the 20th Precinct, on the West Side south of 86th Street (195); and the 17th Precinct, covering the Sutton Place/United Nations neighborhood (197). These areas are about as safe as Riverdale but still twice as dangerous as most of Staten Island.

WHO KILLS WHOM

THE TYPICAL NEW YORK CITY MURDER VICTIM is a black man in his late teens or twenties, killed by an acquaintance of the same race with a handgun during a dispute—most likely over drug-dealing. That's one finding of an analysis of 111 preliminary homicide reports filed with Police Headquarters by precincts last March. The

analysis seems to confirm both the opinions of crime experts and the patterns evident in the NYPD's most recent statistics.

Last year, according to an unofficial Police Department tally, 51.7 percent of those murdered were black, 34.8 percent Hispanic, 10 percent non-Hispanic white, and 3.4 percent Asian. In 1977, black victims constituted 46.4 percent of the total, Hispanics 29.1, whites 23.2, and Asians and others 1.3. (The race of a small percentage of victims is not identified.)

According to the most recent estimate by the Department of City Planning, non-Hispanic whites make up 45.4 percent of the city's population, blacks 24 percent, Hispanics 23.7 percent, and Asians and others 6.9 percent. Given the NYPD's 1989 figures and the city's population, it appears that blacks are almost ten times as likely to be murdered in the city as whites, and Hispanics are nearly seven times as likely. Also, the homicide rate for all black New Yorkers is about 56 per 100,000, five times the national average for all races of 10.5 per 100,000. The homicide rate among white New Yorkers, on the other hand, is only 5.7, around 50 percent lower than the national average for all races. In fact, although homicides are up nearly 25 percent since 1977, last year about 47 percent fewer whites were murdered in New York than twelve years ago—a drop to about 190 from 361 (the city's white population declined by about 15 percent during that time).

The analysis of March murders confirmed a number of other patterns. Overall, men are far more likely to be killed than women. In March, 85 of those killed were men, 22 were women. More than twice as many people were killed at night than during the day. More people between the ages of 18 and 30 were killed in March than all other age groups combined.

The concentration of murder victims among black youths is even more pronounced. Two thirds of blacks killed in New York last March were 30 or under. This phenomenon is not limited to New York. Homicide has become the leading cause of death in the United States for black men between 15 and 24, creating a murder rate for them that is nearly ten times that of Americans in general.

Most victims are killed by members of their own race (see "The Race Factor," page 29). While murders during robberies are among the most feared crimes, they apparently represent a relatively small proportion of the city's total homicides (see "Deadly Strangers," below).

By all estimates, drugs account for a large fraction of the city's murders. Police Commissioner Lee Brown estimates that more than 30 percent of the city's 1,905 homicides last year were drug-related. That means at least 570 people were killed over drugs—and that's considered a conservative estimate. Manhattan D.A. Robert Morgenthau says that in northern Manhattan, where drug-dealing is rampant, drug killings account for more than two thirds of all slayings. According to police officials, most victims of these drug-related homicides are drug-dealers themselves, as opposed to buyers or users. Overall, drug-dealing is almost certainly the most dangerous occupation in the city.

Murder is largely a man's pursuit; in 1984, 93

percent of the known killers were male. That year—the most recent year for which the city has made a detailed analysis of homicides—52 percent of the killers whose race was known were black, 35.5 percent were Hispanic, 11.6 percent were white, and one percent were Asian.

Handguns have become the chosen instruments of murder in the city, far surpassing knives, which had held the lead until 1969. As recently as 1959, knives were used in three times as many homi-



Capital trouble: Washington leads the nation by far in murders per capita.

cides as guns—and there were a fifth as many killings as today. In 1989, 68 percent of the city's homicides were by gun.

DEADLY STRANGERS

THE BRUTAL SHOOTING OF BYSTANDER CHILDREN and the murder of a young advertising executive in Greenwich Village earlier this summer highlighted a frightening aspect of New York crime: attacks by strangers. The randomness of this kind of crime—often associated with robberies—strikes a particular note of terror and seems to epitomize the senseless cruelty of the city.

Certainly, territorial disputes among drug-dealers armed with high-powered guns have led to an increase in bystander fatalities (the dealers call these victims "mushrooms" because they pop up in the line of fire). Yet some statistical evidence in the last decade suggests that stranger-to-stranger homicides have declined as a percentage of overall murders.

In a study of 1977 homicides in which the relationship between the killer and the victim was known, the Police Department estimated that 35 percent of the killings involved encounters between complete strangers. By 1984, while the total number of homicides had dropped from 1,557 to 1,450, the proportion of stranger killings had fallen to 19 percent. (The 1984 report listed the killer as a friend or acquaintance in 63 percent of the known cases, a lover or spouse in 11 percent, and a family member in 7 percent.)

Similarly, in the March homicides, *New York* found that of the 47 murders in which the killer/victim relationship was known, only 23 per-

From 1977 to 1979, 34 bystanders were shot in New York, according to one study. From 1986 to 1988, the number totaled 128 shootings. Since then, the problem has almost certainly grown worse.

cent of the killers and victims were strangers to each other. During that month, apparently, none of the eleven whites killed in the city died at the hands of a stranger. (Three were killed during arguments, three during lover or family disputes, one in a drug incident, and four under unknown circumstances, but with none of the attending evidence—emptied pockets suggesting a robbery, for example—to indicate the killer was a stranger.) In other murder cases in which the killer/victim relationship was known, three of the sixteen blacks and four of the twenty Hispanics were killed by strangers. At least four of the five Asians slain in March, however, were killed by strangers; three of these murders came in the course of robberies.

Perhaps the fastest-growing form of stranger homicide is the slaying of bystanders. From 1977 to 1979, 34 bystanders were shot in New York, according to a study by the Crime Control Institute, a Washington research group. From 1986 to 1988, the number totaled 128 shootings, 32 of them fatal.

HOW NEW YORK RANKS

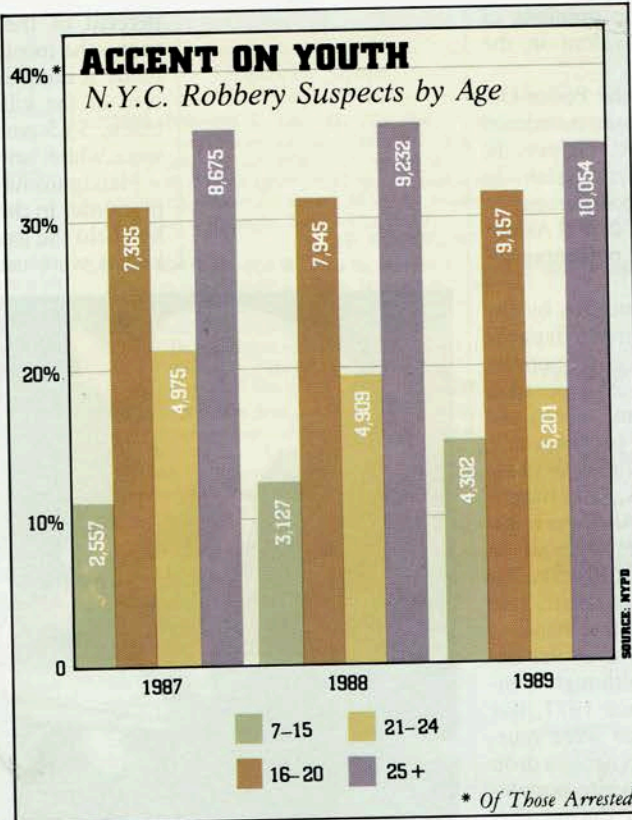
ALTHOUGH NEW YORK'S SIZE GIVES IT THE greatest number of crimes of any city in the country, the crime rate per citizen is comparatively moderate. The robbery rate here is the highest among the 25 biggest U.S. cities, and since robbery can be terrifying, the city has a justifiable reputation for danger. But in other major crime categories—especially rape and burglary—New York is nowhere near the top. "People have this perception of New York being the crime capital of the world," says the NYPD's Phil McGuire. "But based on statistics, New York City has a lot of competition."

Among the seven major categories of crime reported to the FBI in 1989, New York's robbery rate of 1,271 per 100,000 citizens placed it ahead of all other cities, although Detroit, Washington, and Baltimore were not far behind.

The city's homicide rate—25.9 per 100,000—ranked ninth, far behind that of Washington, where the homicide rate is 70 per 100,000. Detroit's homicide rate is more than double New York's.

In terms of forcible rape, New York is one of the safest big cities in America. The rape rate of 44.3 per 100,000 is almost a fourth that of Cleveland (153.7 rapes per 100,000). Detroit, Memphis, and Dallas have about triple New York's rape rate. Even Boston and Seattle—perceived as far safer cities than New York—have rape rates that are roughly double New York's.

New York places eighteenth on the list for both burglary and larceny theft. Residents of Dallas are twice as likely as New Yorkers to be victims of such crimes. In fact, the only category other than



Yusef Salaam, sixteen, convicted in the jogger attack.

Felony arrests of suspects under sixteen rose 16 percent here last year over 1988—a development that's being duplicated in cities around the country.

robbery for which New York rates near the top is aggravated assault, in which the city places fifth, after Los Angeles, Boston, Detroit, and Dallas. When all categories of crime are combined, Dallas wins the award for the most dangerous city in America, while New York winds up in the middle—thirteenth out of the nation's 25 largest cities.

The patterns of crime here have a lot to do with the style of the city. "Many southern and western cities are different than the high-rise nature of New York," says McGuire. "They're more auto cities than New York; they don't have our density, mass transit, or interaction at all hours of the night that lead to the type of criminal activity we have in New York."

Richard Condon adds, "New York presents more opportunities for robberies; a person driving in a car is less subject to being robbed than a person walking to a subway or to work." On the other hand, Condon argues, New York life discourages crimes like burglary and rape, which depend on isolation.

Overall, cities are far more dangerous than suburban and rural areas. New York's rape rate might be lower than that of 21 other large cities, but it is 18 percent higher than the national average. The city's homicide rate is nearly three times as high as the national average, its robbery rate six times. If we look abroad, comparisons become far worse: New York's robbery rate is estimated to be roughly 160 times higher than Tokyo's. The city's homicide rate is 30 times higher than Tokyo's, 10 times higher than London's, 13 times higher than Buenos Aires's, and 15 times higher than Toronto's.

YOUNG GUNS

CRIME IS A YOUNG MAN'S GAME. THE nation's last big crime wave, which peaked in 1980, coincided with a booming population of teenagers and young adults. Given demographic trends, the current crime wave is unlikely to abate soon.

The city's population is growing younger; the Planning Department estimates that city birth rates grew by more than 20 percent through the eighties, and those babies will be coming of crime-prone age in the next decade or so. "Troublesome people quiet down as they get older," says James Q. Wilson. "Many of us predict that in the early 1990s, with more children of the baby boom being born, the crime rate will continue to rise no matter what the government does."

As a corollary to the baby-boom phenomenon, experts point out that when crime rates go up, the average age of offenders goes down. That is exactly what has been happening in New York, where the number of felony arrests of suspects under sixteen rose 16 percent in 1989, to 11,658 from

10,059 in 1988. The number of criminal cases involving juveniles in New York City Family Court jumped to more than 14,000 last year from 7,647 in 1986.

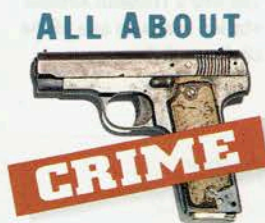
What's happening in New York is happening around the country. The Crime Control Institute reports that between 1980 and 1989 the rate of ten-to-eighteen-year-olds arrested for homicide jumped 65 percent, to 8.9 per 100,000 from 5.4. "I think the only plausible explanation is the greater availability of guns and the greater firepower of those guns," says Lawrence W. Sherman, president of the institute. "Arguments once settled with fists are increasingly settled with semi-automatics."

New York's criminals are considerably younger than the national average. In 1987, the Department of Justice estimated that 25 percent of the robberies nationwide were committed by people under 21. That year, 42 percent of the city's robberies were committed by under-21-year-olds, according to NYPD records.

Curiously, that figure was higher 30 years ago. In the *West Side Story* days of 1959, youths under 21 accounted for 52 percent of the city's robberies, according to the Police Department. The difference today is the level of violence. Younger children are turning violent, sometimes on their own initiative, sometimes to perform the dirty work of older gang members and criminals, who know that the toughest initial penalty the state



More than 90 percent of the inmates on Rikers Island are black or Hispanic.



can exact from a juvenile delinquent in Family Court in most cases is eighteen months in custody—even for first-degree murder.

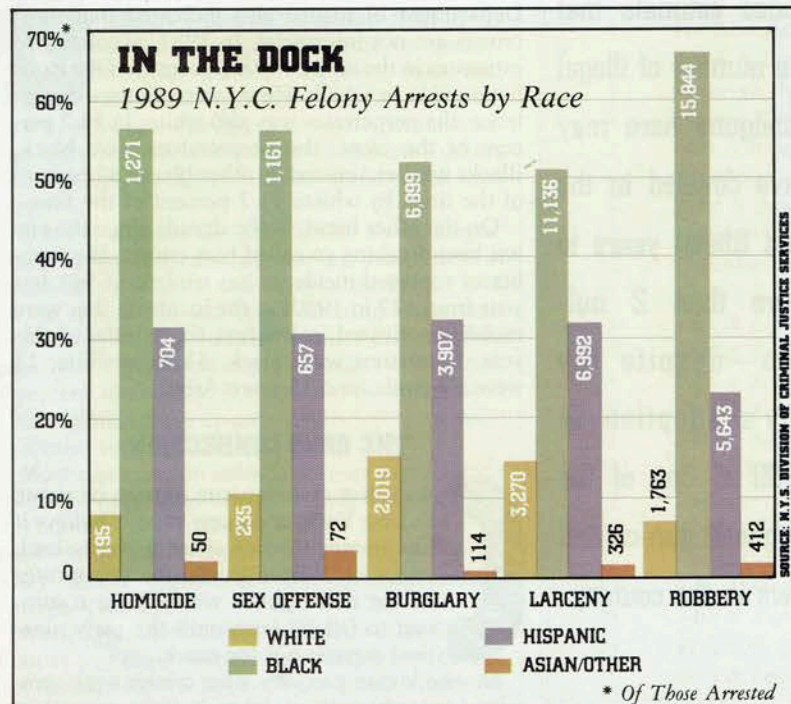
Another measure of juvenile crime comes from the classroom. The United Federation of Teachers reported that during the first half of 1989, the number of reported crimes against teachers and school employees in elementary schools around the city jumped 54 percent over the year earlier. For all levels of public school, crime increased 25 percent, while robbery rose 87 percent.

THE RACE FACTOR

THE BURDEN OF CRIME FALLS HEAVIEST ON the city's poor blacks and Hispanics. Of the city's police precincts, the ten most dangerous (see map) are in predominantly black and Hispanic neighborhoods. Overall, the murder rate for minority-group members in New York City is far higher than that for non-Hispanic whites, and within the city's precincts, the pattern holds for other crimes. For example, the robbery rate in the predominantly black 28th Precinct, in central Harlem, is 3,268 per 100,000 residents; in the predominantly black 73rd Precinct, in Bedford-Stuyvesant, it is 3,775; in the largely Hispanic 40th Precinct, in the South Bronx, it is 2,490. By way of contrast, in the predominantly white and affluent 19th Precinct, on the East Side, the robbery rate is 897 per 100,000 residents; in the 62nd Precinct, covering largely white Bensonhurst, the rate is 520.

The pain of crime isn't limited to its direct victims. Many people in high-crime neighborhoods are forced to live restricted, cautious lives. They can't go out at night, and their daytime activities are circumscribed by fear. "It's become a safe environment to commit crime in black communities," says Roy Innis, the national chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality.

All evidence suggests that these conditions also breed criminals. The overwhelming majority of adults arrested for serious crimes in New York City





The IND's Tremont Avenue station ranks as one of the city's most dangerous.

are black or Hispanic, according to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. (The city and state do not analyze convictions according to race.) Blacks make up 24 percent of the city's population, but they accounted for 67 percent of those arrested for robbery, 53 percent of those arrested for burglary, and 57 percent of those arrested for homicide last year. Hispanics make up 24 percent of the population and accounted for 24 percent of those arrested for robbery, 30 percent of those arrested for burglary, and 32 percent of those arrested for homicide. Forty-five percent of the population is white, and last year 7.5 percent of those arrested for robberies, 15.6 percent of those arrested for burglaries, and 8.8 percent of those arrested for homicide were white.

Overall, a black New Yorker in 1989 was ten times more likely to be arrested for a serious felony than a white, a Hispanic nearly eight times more likely. (Many blacks and Hispanics argue that they are unfairly singled out by the police.) At Rikers Island, 92 percent of the inmates are black or Hispanic.

Arrests in most other crime categories, including drugs and weapons charges, followed a similar racial pattern. The exception was total arrests for driving while intoxicated; there, whites constituted 30 percent of the total, blacks 21 percent, and Hispanics 44 percent.

Though it is impossible to say what portion of crimes are interracial—that information is rarely broken down by the Police Department—evidence suggests that most crimes don't cross racial lines. The 1984 homicide analysis found that a majority of victims were the same race as their killers: "Blacks were victimized by blacks in 88.3 percent of the cases involving black victims. Hispanics were victimized by Hispanics in 75.1 percent of the cases involving Hispanic victims and whites were victimized by whites in 55.3 percent

Police estimate that the number of illegal handguns here may have doubled in the past fifteen years to more than 2 million—despite the city's adoption in 1980 of one of the toughest gun-control laws in the country.

of the cases involving white victims."

In *New York's* analysis of homicides in March, that trend has continued. For that month, the killer's race was known in 45 of the 107 cases in which the victim's race was known. Of those 45, only 9, or 20 percent, were interracial. Four of the victims of interracial crimes were Asians, three killed by blacks, one by a Hispanic. Two blacks were killed by Hispanics; one Hispanic was killed by a black. Two whites were killed by blacks. The other 36 murders were committed by members of the same race as the victim.

The most recent study of victims by the U.S. Department of Justice also indicated that most crimes are not interracial. In 1987, according to estimates in the study, in 78.5 percent of the cases nationwide in which whites were victims of violence, the perpetrator was also white; in 15.2 percent of the cases, the perpetrators were black. Blacks were victimized by other blacks 82 percent of the time, by whites 11.7 percent of the time.

On the other hand, in the decade since the city has been tracking so-called bias crimes, the number of reported incidents has tripled, to 541 last year from 177 in 1980. In the incidents that were racially motivated in the first six months of this year, 67 victims were black, 53 were white, 13 were Hispanic, and 13 were Asian.

THE DRUG CONNECTION



CRACK HAS CHANGED THE NATURE OF CRIME in New York, and many experts believe it has created its own crime wave. Indeed, James Q. Wilson thinks the crime rates of the mid-eighties would have continued to fall (at least until the early nineties) were it not for crack.

No one knows precisely what crimes were committed for or because of drugs. In 1989, more than

80 percent of the men arrested for crimes in Manhattan tested positive for cocaine. A quarterly study covering 1988 and 1989 found that as many as 90 percent of those arrested in New York for serious non-drug crimes tested positive for one kind of drug or another—more than in any other city in the country. Police surveyed in 1987 classified more than a third of the murders and two thirds of the robberies and burglaries in the city as drug-related, according to a report in the *New York Times*. Last year, 49,533 of the city's 163,387 felony arrests were for drug possession or sale; half of these involved crack. The costs to the criminal-justice system of these prosecutions are enormous.

In the past, when heroin was popular, burglary was the crime of choice. Crack addicts, with their desperate need, are more likely to commit the simpler, and oftentimes more impulsive, crime of robbery. For the same reason, crack houses make terrible neighbors. "Heroin depressed the system, so addicts were unlikely to commit crimes near the place they did the drug," says Lieutenant Joseph Prunier, of the 24th Precinct. "Crack addicts are hyper, so they tend to commit crimes sooner and therefore geographically closer to the narcotic."

The heroin-era crime wave probably crested in the late seventies, when burglaries were nearly 50 percent higher than they are today. Robberies and homicides were about 10 percent lower than today, and aggravated assaults were only half as high as today. The spread of crack may explain why, during the first three months of this crime-plagued year, robbery increased 11 percent, while burglary dropped 2.7 percent.

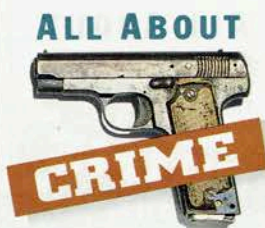
THE MOST DANGEROUS SUBWAY STATIONS

BOOSTERS FOR THE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT Authority like to point out that New Yorkers are more likely to be victimized by crime in the streets than in the subway. Robert Valentino, a spokesman for the transit police, notes that less than 3 percent of all city crime occurs in subways. The figure is somewhat misleading, since only about a quarter of all New Yorkers ride the subway daily, and few spend much time there.

Subway stations are statistically more dangerous than the trains themselves; last year, 9,860 of the system's felonies occurred in stations, 7,042 on the trains. Subway crime is rising faster than overall city crime. Subway felonies increased 18 percent in 1989, while reported major crimes rose 4 percent in the city. For the first five months of 1990, felonies were up another 18.5 percent, with robberies up 22 percent.

Most reporting on subway-station crime simply states the number of crimes at each station. When the number of crimes is related to the number of people who pay to enter at the station, a somewhat clearer picture of each station's danger emerges (see chart).

Although more crimes occur at Times Square than at any other station, the crime rate there is not the highest—7.2 people per 1,000 who enter the system there are victimized. Among the



The most recent study of victims by the U.S. Department of Justice indicates that most crimes are not interracial. Statistics from New York City suggest the same pattern here.

city's 25 subway stations with the highest number of crimes, Tremont Avenue, in the Bronx, has the highest crime rate, with 16.8 victims per 1,000 riders.

Seventy-Second Street and Broadway is about as dangerous as Times Square, with a rate of 6.4. Penn Station is far safer, with a rate of 2.35—if you enter on 34th and Eighth Avenue. From 34th and Seventh Avenue, the victimization rate is 4.1. The 96th and Broadway stop, though it ranks after Penn Station for the number of crimes committed there, has a crime rate—5.3—more than twice as high.

This subway-crime analysis should be considered with several caveats: Stations that are transfer points, like West 4th Street, will have more people passing through them than are recorded as riders originating at that station; as a result, the true crime rate at those stations may be lower than reported here. Also, some smaller stations in the system where there are relatively few crimes reported may have—because of the low ridership—higher crime rates than reported.

ARMED CITY

IN 1980, NEW YORK ENACTED ONE OF THE toughest gun-possession laws in the nation, requiring a one-year sentence for anyone carrying an illegal handgun. The law has not done much good. A 1974 state study estimated that there were 1 million illegal handguns in the city. That study hasn't been repeated, but police today say the number may run higher than 2 million. Last year, police took

TROUBLE UNDERGROUND

The Most Dangerous Subway Stations

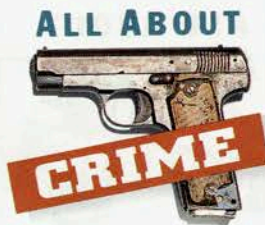
Rank	Station	Felonies In 1989	Crimes Per 1,000 Riders
1	Tremont Ave.	83	16.8
2	125th & St. Nicholas Ave.	121	14.1
3	Fordham Rd. (C,D)	88	13.9
4	125th & Lexington Ave.	112	13.7
5	Roosevelt Ave./Jackson Heights*	135	11.2
6	Queens Plaza*	87	8.1
7	66th & Broadway	89	7.3
8	Times Sq.*	825	7.2
9	72nd & Broadway	154	6.4
10	West 4th*	160	6.3
11	Columbus Circle	220	6.25
12	Jay St.	85	5.5
13	14th & Eighth Ave.	84	5.4
14	96th & Broadway	141	5.3
15	14th & Sixth/Seventh Aves.	189	5.3
16	59th & Lexington	214	4.6
17	34th & Seventh Ave.	301	4.1
18	Union Sq.*	209	4.0
19	Chambers/Park Pl./W.T.C.	208	3.9
20	42nd & Sixth Ave.	149	3.5
21	Grand Central	329	2.6
22	34th & Sixth Ave.	189	2.6
23	34th & Eighth Ave.	141	2.35
24	47th/50th St.	110	2.35
25	86th & Lexington Ave.	89	2.25

* Major transfer point

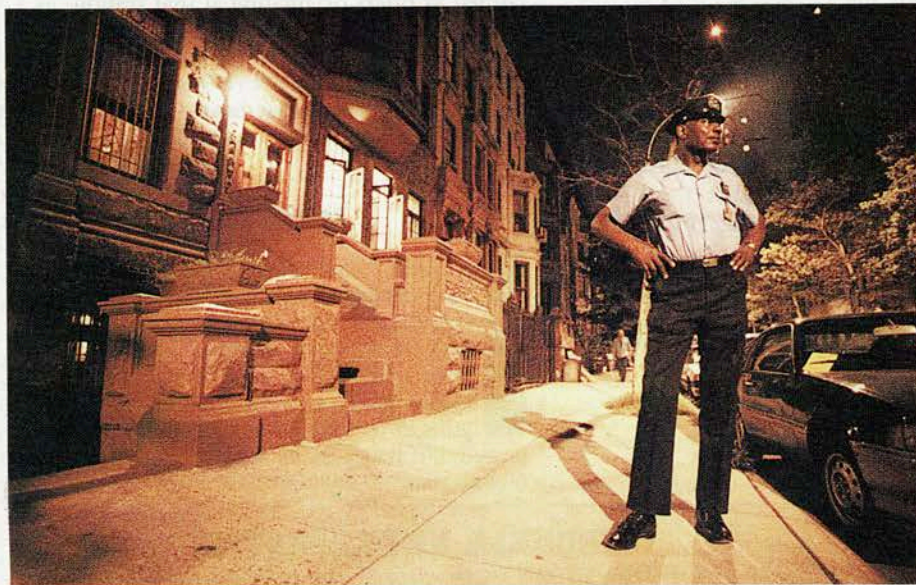
16,214 illegal handguns off the streets; 5,408 of them were powerful, semi-automatic pistols, like the 9-mm. handguns responsible for some of this summer's bystander slayings.

"We thought a tough gun law would scare people," says State Senator Leichter, a sponsor of the bill. "But that just hasn't happened. It shows how difficult it is for one state to change national behavior with something like guns, which cross so easily over our state boundaries."

Mayor Dinkins's recent "amnesty program" allowing owners of illegal guns to turn them in has been a major flop. Professor Panzarella of John Jay College argues that if the city really wanted to go after illegal guns, it could create special squads of gunpowder-sniffing dogs to single out people carrying firearms. He concedes that the dogs' han-



West 75th Street: Security guards help people feel safer on their streets.



dlers—who'd have to search the suspects—would have a dangerous assignment.

Since the early part of the century, New York City has required people who want to own handguns but are not law officials to register for permits. In 1907, 920 residents were granted pistol permits. By 1930, the Police Department was granting 2,183 permits a year. That year, 28,295 people had "carry" permits allowing them to keep a firearm with them at all times, and 6,383 had "premises" permits, which restrict the gun to a specific place, like a store. Although officially there is no established quota for the number of permits, the 1930 figures are surprisingly close to today's: 27,094 carry permits and 7,646 premise permits. Fewer than 30 percent of all carry-permit applications are approved by the police, but that does not stop people from trying. From 1987 to 1989, applications for carry permits have increased 30 percent, to 6,400 per year.

DO SECURITY GUARDS HELP?

IN THE FACE OF DWINDLING POLICE SERVICES, many block associations and community groups have hired or formed their own security patrols. Whether they actually deter crime or simply displace it—and their effectiveness in general—is a subject of much debate.

Statistics suggest that large-scale patrols are

Private guards, argues one crime expert, redistribute the problem. "It's not crime prevention," he says, "it's victimization prevention, deflecting the crime to someone else who's less protected."

quite effective. The Grand Central Partnership, a community organization formed by businesses, has put together a force of 31 guards equipped with walkie-talkies to patrol a 50-square-block area in midtown. For the first three months of 1990, while crime was rising dramatically around the city, crime in the patrol district fell 18 percent.

The results are less evident on blocks with much smaller patrols in the 24th Precinct, on the Upper West Side, where *New York* traced the effects of private guards and community safety patrols. Statistics there show that those blocks that hired guards or started patrols had slightly better crime rates after the programs started.

One crime-prevention officer at the 24th Precinct says that private guards can deter crime, but "it depends on the guard."

Another veteran officer from the 24th Precinct, Joseph Prunier, points out that guards can have a ripple effect: If residents see a guard and feel safer, they are more likely to walk their local streets. "People in the streets are the best help to crime reduction," he says.

Of the blocks studied by *New York*, West 95th Street experienced some of the most visible improvement. There, a block association didn't hire a private guard but joined a whistle-blowing campaign—volunteers were supplied with whistles and instructed to blow them if they saw a suspected crime in progress. In a year, robberies declined from 6 to 2 and burglaries dropped from 22 to 10.

Other evidence suggests that participation by residents in general is the most positive aspect of community patrols. A 1988 dissertation by John Jay Rouse at the City University of New York gauged the effect of six citizen crime patrols on diverse middle-class neighborhoods in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn. Rouse found that while crime was rising in the city in general, five of the six patrol areas he studied experienced an overall decline in robberies.

Victor Cohen, who lives on West 90th Street, pays \$5 a month toward his block's private security guard and is glad to participate. "It makes a difference just in your perception walking down the street," he says. "The drug pushers that used to be on the corner of 90th and Columbus aren't there. They're not disappearing. Now they're on 92nd and Columbus."

Likewise, Andrew Karmen, a professor at John Jay College, maintains that private security patrols basically displace crime, rather than stop it. "It's a spatial issue," he says. "We move the crime and redistribute it, but it's not really a solution to the problem. It's not crime prevention—it's victimization prevention, deflecting the crime to someone else who's less privileged, less guarded, less protected."

James Q. Wilson disagrees. "There's no question that some crime is displaced—but not all of it," he says. "A great deal of crime is committed by young people very close to where they live. If the momentary opportunity isn't there, the crime doesn't occur."