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Women's Firearm Network

Women have expanded their interest in firearms since the early 1990s. Traditionally, women were either passive or antigun, with the firearms in a home belonging to and primarily used by a male family member, e.g., the husband, father, brother, or son. However, during the last few decades, women in increasing numbers (though not in increasing proportions) have begun to shift toward a more active relationship with firearms. The General Social Survey (National Opinion Research Center 2011) reveals that the percentage of U.S. women reporting that they personally own a firearm that is kept in the home has risen from 24.0 percent in 1980 to 32.1 percent in 2010 ("rowngun"); however, the percentage of households reporting having a gun on the premises fell during the same period from 54.9 to 37.3, so the actual percentage of women owning guns has varied very little (13.2% in 1980 versus 12.0% in 2010). The primary motivation for female gun owners is self-protection, followed by recreation, sports, and hunting.

Women have always taken part in many of the predominantly male gun-advocacy groups; however, due to the growing number of female gun owners, new women's gun rights organizations have been founded. These organizations are tailored to promote the need for women to use firearms—not only through the individualist interpretation of the Second Amendment (which supports an individual's right to keep and bear arms), but also through feminist rhetoric. The Internet is a powerful and potentially cost-effective tool for women's organizations. The Women's Firearm Network is a female-friendly web forum for gun enthusiasts featuring general gun-related political and legislative news as well as specially written articles on the importance of female gun ownership. The Women's Firearm Network is closely tied to *Women & Guns* magazine.

Tiia Rajala

See also: Second Amendment Sisters (SAS); Women and Guns; *Women & Guns* Magazine; Women Against Gun Control (WAGC)

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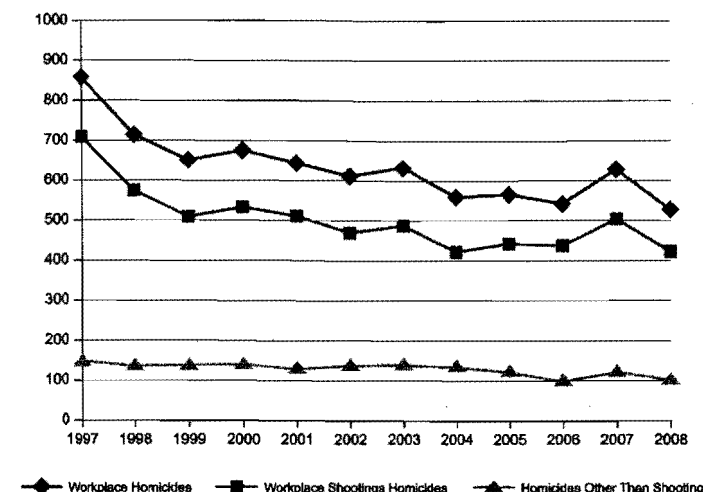
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Workplace Shootings

Letter carrier Patrick Henry Sherrill killed 14 coworkers and himself at the Edmond, Oklahoma, post office on August 20, 1986 (USPS 2000). This remains the single most deadly workplace violence shooting incident in the United States. Second on the list was when an army psychiatrist, Major Nidal Malik Hasan, shot 13 people to death and wounded 32 others at Fort Hood in Texas on November 5, 2009 (CNN.com).

National news coverage of workplace homicides usually covers incidents—such as these two—that involve multiple victims and/or hostage situations. Although these multiple-victim incidents do occur, they are rare and overshadow the fact that on an average day in the United States, two people are victims of homicides while at work or

Figure 1   Firearm, Nonfirearm, and Total Workplace Homicide Frequencies, 1997–2008

on duty. Shootings are the leading event or exposure resulting in workplace homicides, with stabbings, and hitting, kicking, and beating incidents as the second- and third-leading events, respectively (BLS 2009b).

A total of 526 people were victims of workplace homicides in 2008 (BLS 2009b). Being shot was the event leading to death for 421, or 80 percent, of these victims. According to a July 2010 BLS report, "In 2008 there were 30 multiple-fatality workplace homicide incidents, accounting for 67 homicides and 7 suicides. On average, about two people died in each of these incidents." These multiple-fatality incidents accounted for 16 percent of all workplace homicides in 2008. The typical workplace shooting involves one assailant and one victim (BLS 2010; Hartley, Biddle, and Jenkins 2005; Hendricks, Jenkins, and Anderson 2007).

The Extent of the Problem

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) database recorded 7,606 workplace homicides for the 1997–2008 time period (BLS 2009). Seventy-nine percent, or 6,011, of these homicides resulted from shooting incidents. Stabbings accounted for 680 of the homicides and hitting, kicking, and beating accounted for 479 (BLS 2009b). Figure 1 illustrates the correlation between workpace homicides and fatal workplace shootings. Non-firearm-related workplace homicides remained fairly constant over the 12-year period. Workplace homicides and workplace shooting homicides follow relatively the same trend.

For incidents in which the victim-perpetrator association was known, the perpetrators in these fatal workplace shootings were mostly robbers and other assailants (78.6 percent). Work associates were responsible for 14.1 percent of the fatal

Table 1 Occupational Homicides by Selected Characteristics, 1997–2008

| | | Assailant | | | | |
| | | Robbers and other assailants | | Work associates | | |
Characteristics	Total	Total	Robber	Total	Co-worker, former co-worker	Customer, client
Assaults and violent acts	7,606	5,804	3,001	1,257	758	499
Homicides	7,606	5,804	3,001	1,257	758	499
Hitting, kicking, beating	479	321	164	145	75	70
Shooting	6,011	4,725	2,516	848	533	315
Stabbing	680	425	188	187	106	81
Assaults and violent acts by person(s), n.e.c.	382	292	125	72	41	31

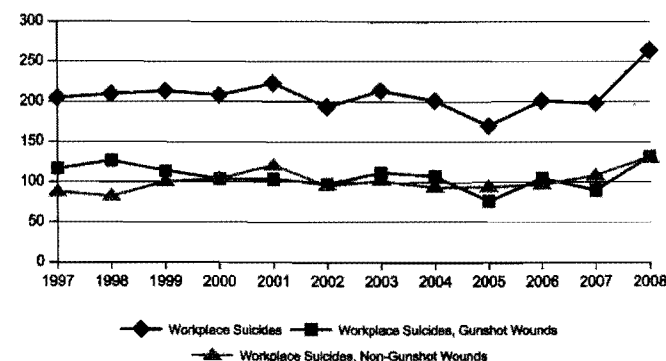| | | Assailant | | | | |
| | | Relatives | | Other personal acquaintances | | |
Characteristics	Total	Total	Spouse	Other relative	Total	Boyfriend, ex-boyfriend, girlfriend, ex-girlfriend	Other acquaintance
Assaults and violent acts	7,606	268	196	72	268	134	134
Homicides	7,606	268	196	72	268	134	134
Hitting, kicking, beating	479	7	—	—	6	—	—
Shooting	6,011	217	162	55	221	107	114
Stabbing	680	37	26	11	31	19	12
Assaults and violent acts by person(s), n.e.c.	382	7	—	—	11	6	5

workplace shootings. Spouses and other relatives accounted for 3.6 percent, while other personal acquaintances accounted for 3.7 percent (Table 1).

For the 1997–2008 time period, tending a retail establishment was the most common activity (40 percent) listed for workplace homicide victims immediately preceding their deaths. Protective service activities (16 percent) had the next-highest frequency, followed by vehicular and transportation operations (10 percent; BLS 2009b). The following provides a partial listing of risk factors associated with these activities that have been identified in the literature as factors that may increase a worker's risk for workplace homicide (NIOSH 1996; OSHA 2009).

- Contact with the public
- Exchange of money
- Delivery of passengers, goods, or services
- Having a mobile workplace such as a taxicab or police cruiser
- Working with unstable or volatile persons in healthcare, social service, or criminal justice settings
- Working alone, in small numbers, or in isolated situations

Figure 2 Firearm, Nonfirearm, and Total Workplace Suicide Frequencies, 1997–2008

- Working late at night or during early morning hours
- Working in high-crime areas
- Guarding valuable property or possessions
- Working in community-based settings
- The sale of alcohol
- Poorly lit stores and parking areas

Another situation in which firearms may be present in the workplace is during workplace suicides (see Figure 2). The nature of the injury for 34 percent of the workplace suicides for 1997 through 2008 was gunshot wounds. The next two most common nature of injury classifications were suffocations or asphyxiations/strangulations, which accounted for 20 percent of the suicides and poisonings, with toxic effects accounting for 6 percent (BLS 2009b). Men accounted for 93 percent of the workplace suicides. The CFOI counts may not be a complete census of workplace suicides, because inclusion is determined by a very specific definition of workplace suicide. The definition's main restriction is that the suicide occurred at the work site. In very rare instances, the CFOI program will include suicides occurring outside the work site, if a definitive work relationship is established (BLS 2009c).

Nonfatal assaults and violent acts by persons accounted for just over 16,000 of the approximately 1.1 million workplace injuries that resulted in days away from work in the private sector during 2008. Gunshot wounds accounted for 510 of these cases (BLS 2009a).

Victim Demographics and Workplace Shootings Circumstances

For the 1997–2008 time period, the majority (83 percent) of workplace shooting homicide victims were males. Just under three-fourths of the victims were between the ages of 25 and 54. More specifically, the 35–44 age group accounted for just over one-fourth (27 percent) of the workplace shooting homicides, while the 45–54 and 25–34 age groups each accounted for just over 22 percent of the victims. Just over half (54 percent) of the shooting victims were white, while black workers accounted for 21 percent, Hispanic employees 15 percent, and Asian victims 11 percent (BLS 2009b). Sales and related occupations were listed

for 30 percent of the victims, while 16 percent of the victims were employed in protective service occupations. Additionally, both the transportation and material moving occupations and management occupations accounted for 13 percent of the workplace shooting victims (BLS 2009b).

For the 1997–2008 time period, 93 percent of the workplace suicides involved male victims. Almost 28 percent of the workplace suicide victims were between the ages of 45 and 54. Workers between the ages of 35 and 44 accounted for 24 percent, which was the next-highest proportion. Just under 80 percent of the victims' race or ethnic origin was listed as white. The next three highest percentages were in the Hispanic (9 percent), Asian (5 percent), and black (5 percent) groups. Wage and salary workers accounted for 71 percent of the suicides, while 29 percent of the victims were self-employed. Management occupations accounted for the highest percentage of suicide victims, with 21 percent. Other occupations that each accounted for between 7 and 12 percent of the suicides were sales and related occupations (12 percent), transportation and material moving occupations (8 percent), and protective service occupations (7 percent; BLS 2009b).

Three-fourths of the workplace shooting victims during the 1997–2008 time period with injuries that required days away from work were males. The reported age for 35 percent of the victims was 20 to 24 years of age, while the 25–34 age group accounted for 34 percent. The age groups with the next-highest percentage of victims were the 35–44 and 45–54 age groups, which experienced 12 percent and 14 percent of the gunshot wound injuries, respectively. The race or ethnic origin of these victims was predominantly white (40 percent). Black workers accounted for 16 percent of the

victims, and Hispanic workers experienced 14 percent of these nonfatal gunshot injuries. The majority (51 percent) of these victims were employed in the service occupations. Just over 79 percent of the victims had less than five years of service with the employer. More specifically, 43 percent had less than one year experience, and 36 percent had one to five years' experience with the employer (BLS 2009a).

Proactive Prevention Program

The following list is a synthesis of elements of a written workplace violence prevention program as outlined in OSHA's 2009 publication "Recommendations for Workplace Violence Prevention Programs in Late-Night Retail Establishments" and NIOSH's 2006 publication "Workplace Violence Prevention Strategies and Research Needs."

- Management commitment and worker involvement—to ensure an effective program, management and frontline workers must work together
- Worksite analysis—a step-by-step assessment to identify environmental and operational risks for violence
- Hazard prevention and control—based on the worksite analysis data, engineering, procedural, and/or administrative measures should be developed to reduce or eliminate the likelihood of violent incidents
- Safety and health training—to ensure that all staff members are aware of potential security hazards and how to protect themselves and their coworkers through established policies and procedures

These components can be incorporated into an existing injury prevention program, or

they can become the basis for a comprehensive workplace violence prevention program.

Reactive Planning

Although workplace homicides have decreased from a high of 1,080 in 1994 to 526 in 2008, homicides remain one of the top four events leading to death in the workplace (BLS 2009b). With an average of 80 percent of the workplace homicides annually resulting from shootings, it is important to include a response plan as part of an effective workplace violence prevention program.

Procedures for reacting to workplace shootings should be outlined in the workplace violence prevention program, and periodic drills should be held to practice a safe response. If possible, include local law enforcement in these drills. Training with scenarios that use different options to implement during an active shooter situation is best. Options to include in the training include evacuation if it is safe to do so, sheltering in designated areas, barricading in your current location, or, as a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger, make an attempt to incapacitate the shooter (DHS 2008).

Conclusion

Workplace shootings are a serious concern for any workplace. In the United States, the majority of workplace shootings occur in the retail industry, making implementation of OSHA's "Recommendations for Workplace Violence Prevention Programs in Late-Night Retail Establishments" an important consideration for preventing many of these incidents annually. For all workplaces, having a proactive prevention program in place is the first step toward

eliminating or reducing these tragic events (NIOSH 2006).

Daniel Hartley

See also: Gun Violence as a Public Health Problem; Homicides, Gun; Suicide, Guns and; Victimization from Gun Violence

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Wound Ballistics. *See* Gunshot Wounds (Wound Ballistics)

Wright, James D. (1947–)

The author of three major books on the sociology of firearms, James D. Wright has played a significant role in bringing serious techniques of social science to bear on the firearm controversy.

During the Ford administration, Attorney General Edward Levi called for banning handguns in cities that had crime rates above a certain level. Gun rights activist Neal Knox responded by filing a Freedom of Information Act request with the Department of Justice, asking what research the department had that supported handgun bans. The department had none. At about the same time, Philip Cook and Mark Moore submitted research-grant proposals to the Justice Department suggesting that the main reason why more stringent gun control laws had not been enacted was that advocates had failed to make a serious scholarly case for them.

Like the Ford administration, the Carter administration supported gun control. Accordingly, President Jimmy Carter's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) offered research grants for teams of scholars to study the firearm issue. (The LEAA was later abolished, and the National Institute of Justice [NIJ] took over as administrator of most federal criminal justice research grants.) The grants yielded several reports: "Weapons Policies: A Survey of Police Department Practices Concerning Weapons and Related Issues," by Eleanor Weber-Burdin, Peter Rossi, James D. Wright, and Kathleen Daly; "Effects of Weapons Use on Felony Case Disposition: An Analysis of Evidence from the Los Angeles PROMIS System," by Rossi, Weber-Burdin, and Huey-tsyh Chen; an "Annotated Bibliography," by Wright, Chen, Joseph Pereira, Daly, and Rossi; and an "Executive Summary," by Wright and Rossi. But the report that reshaped the American firearm debate was "Weapons, Crime, and Violence in America: A Literature Review and Research Agenda," which was eventually revised and published as the book *Under the Gun: Weapons, Crime, and Violence in America*, by Wright, Rossi, and Daly. Until the publication of Gary Kleck's *Point Blank* in 1991, *Under the Gun* was the most complete source of social science research about firearms policy.

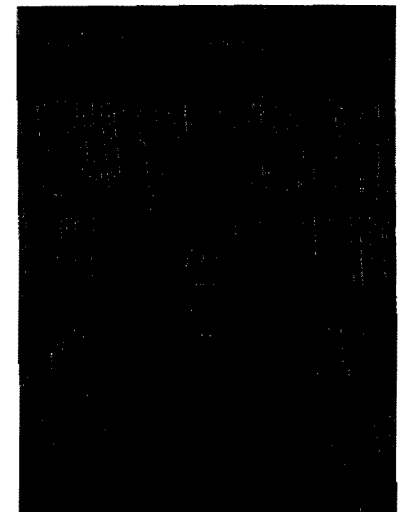Who were the Wright and Rossi who would become such familiar names for people who cared about gun policy? James D. Wright was a professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts. He had previously coauthored an antigun paper titled "The Ownership of the Means of Destruction: Weapons in the United States," analyzing National Opinion Research Center data about gun ownership (Wright and Marston 1975). He had also written a major newspaper opinion piece in favor of strict gun control. Wright was already well established as an important sociology scholar and was serving as director of the Social and Demographic Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts. Wright's colleague, Peter Rossi, would later become president of the American Sociology Association.

When Wright, Rossi, and Daly produced their report for the NIJ in 1982, they delivered a document quite different from the one they had expected to write. Carefully reviewing all existing research to date, the three scholars found no persuasive evidence that U.S. gun control laws had reduced criminal violence. For example, the federal Gun Control Act of 1968, which banned most interstate gun sales, had no discernible impact on the criminal acquisition of guns from other states. Washington, D.C.'s 1976 ban on acquiring new handguns was not linked to any reduction in gun crime in the District of Columbia. Even Detroit's law providing mandatory sentences for felonies committed with a gun was found to have no effect on gun-crime patterns, in part because judges would often reduce the sentence for the underlying offense to balance out the mandatory two-year-extra sentence for use of a gun.

The authors discussed the data showing that gun owners—rather than being a violent, aberrant group of nuts—were at least as psychologically stable and morally sound as the rest of the population. Polls claiming to show that a large majority of the population favored "more gun control" were critiqued as the product of biased questions and of the fact that most people had no idea how strict gun laws already were. As Wright, Rossi, and Daly frankly admitted, they had started out their research as gun control advocates and had been forced to change their minds by their review of the evidence.

In 1981, the NIJ awarded Wright and Rossi (this time, without Daly) a new grant to investigate the gun habits of felons in the United States. Studying felony prisoners in 11 prisons in 10 state correctional systems in 1981, Wright and Rossi found that gun control laws had no discernible effect on criminals obtaining guns. Only 12 percent of criminals, and only 7 percent of "handgun predators," had acquired their last crime handgun at a gun store. Of those, about a quarter had stolen the gun from a store; a large number of the rest, Wright and Rossi

James D. Wright. (Courtesy of author)