The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) released this report (press release https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/tpfv9323_pr.pdf; full report: https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/tpfv9323.pdf) about a month ago. I had some time recently to go through it. I recommend everyone read the report. I'm going to discuss items that I found "interesting."

1. The Press Release

1.1 Headline

PRESS RELEASE

In recent years, 90% of all firearm violence involved a handgun

It is interesting that they lead with this headline mainly because of how uninteresting it is. Firearms are lethal weapons. Firearms are also distance weapons which minimize the physical abilities and dexterity the user must possess (compared to knives and blunt objects for instance) to use. Handguns are concealable firearms. It makes sense that 90% of all firearm violence would involve a handgun. Walking around with a rifle or shotgun is a bit suspicious. It would be far more surprising if 10% of firearm violence involved a handgun.

1.2 Nonfatal Firearm Violence

> WASHINGTON — In 2023, the rate of nonfatal firearm violence was 2.0 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, down 72% from 7.3 per 1,000 in 1993, according to *Trends and Patterns in Firearm Violence, 1993–2023*, a new report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in collaboration with colleagues from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nonfatal firearm violence includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault victimizations in which the offender had, showed or used a firearm. Fatal firearm violence includes fatal firearm-involved injuries inflicted by another person with intent to injure or kill and excludes firearm homicides due to legal intervention and operations of war.

The term "nonfatal firearm violence" is wordy and must be clarified as the press release does. It could be excused if the reader believed that "nonfatal firearm violence" is really "injurious firearm violence." However, it is not as it includes victims who are not injured. "Violence" is also a bit general with 'Violent Crime" being preferred as Violent Crime traditionally is Aggravated Assault, Robbery, Rape, and Murder/Non-negligent Homicide.

Unfortunately, the way the data is examined hides more than it enlightens. As readers of my book know, there is a better way to categorize violent crime and firearms that provide additional clarity.

- It is useful to understand what violent crime entails in terms of percentages. In my study using the years 2015-2019, violent crime is broken down as follows: Murder non-negligent Homicide, around 2%, Rape around 10%, Robbery & Aggravated Assault around 89%.
- Almost all Violent Crime is Aggravated Assault, Robbery, and Rape because Murder, contrary to news reports, is quite rare in comparison.
- Aggravated Assault and Robbery historically are around 85% of all violent crime. 67% of the time, the victim is not injured for both of these crimes.
- *For Aggravated Assault and Robbery, firearms are a common weapon **when the victim is not injured**. For Aggravated Assault, Robbery, and Rape, firearms are not a common weapon **when the victim is injured**.*

My biggest problem with violent crime statistics is that the last two points are not acknowledged, studied, or advertised. To put the point bluntly: why are firearms so common when the victim is not injured but so uncommon when the victim is injured? That one of the important questions that need to be addressed.

2. The CDC

Trends and Patterns in Firearm Violence, 1993–2023

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Data sources and measures

Nonfatal firearm violence findings are based on the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The NCVS is a self-report survey administered annually from January 1 to December 31. Annual NCVS estimates are based on the number and characteristics of crimes that respondents experienced during the prior 6 months, excluding the month in which they were interviewed. Therefore, the 2023 survey covers crimes experienced from July 1, 2022 to November 30, 2023, with March 15, 2023, as the middle of the reference period. Crimes are classified by the year of the survey and not by the year of the crime. Other data sources in this report include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Vital Statistics System, National Violent Death Reporting System, National Syndromic Surveillance Program, and Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The report is organized to present findings from each data source in separate sections.

First and foremost, I have concerns about the CDC being involved. I've critiqued them before in this blog (https://clayeolsen.com/archives/280). I certainly get an anti-firearm vibe from them. I would have preferred using the Uniform Crime Reports and their data than the CDC. I feel the CDC's unrelenting focus on firearms and the way they present statistics around firearms seem to be leading to the Intentional Measurement Swindle (https://clayeolsen.com/archives/513). I can only hope that I am wrong.

Secondly, the title is misleading. Only a few of the tables are for 1993-2023. Most of the tables are from 2018-2022, which means COVID-19 and government responses to COVID-19 are included in the dataset. Whether this causes variances in the dataset compared to other years, I do not know.

3. Confusion around violence, violent crime.

FINDINGS FROM THE NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY

Nonfatal firearm violence victimization data in this report are from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Victimizations reflect the total number of times that persons were victims of crime. During the aggregate 5-year period of 2018–2022, the annual average percentage of nonfatal violence that involved an offender with a firearm was 8% **(table 1)**. In the same period, firearms were involved in an annual average of 22% of nonfatal violence excluding simple assault, 20% of robberies, and 32% of aggravated assaults.[1]

TABLE 1

Percent of nonfatal violence involving a firearm, by type of crime, 2018–2022

Year	Nonfatal violence[a]	Nonfatal violence excluding simple assault[b]	Robbery	Aggravated assault
Average annual percentage, 2018–2022	8.1%	22.1%	20.0%	31.8%
2018	7.4 ‡	19.9	16.8 †	31.9
2019	8.3	23.9	21.1	35.9
2020	7.7	22.3	18.8	32.8
2021	7.1 †	21.0	12.2 †	31.3
2022*	9.7	23.2	27.7	28.6

Note: Includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault victimizations of persons age 12 or older in which the offender had, showed, or used a firearm. Estimates on rape/sexual assault victimizations involving firearms are not shown separately due to small sample sizes. See appendix table 2 for standard errors.

*Comparison year.

†Difference with comparison year is significant at the 95% confidence level.

‡Difference with comparison year is significant at the 90% confidence level.

[a]Includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault victimizations.

[b]Includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault victimizations. This category was called serious violence in previous years.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018–2022.

The NCVS has a habit of including Simple Assault in "Violent Crime" or "Violence," while the UCR only looks at Aggravated Assault, Robbery, Rape, and Murder/Non-Negligent homicide.

What is Simple Assault? Well, it is when the offender puts the victim in fear or hurts the victim but doesn't have a weapon and the victim suffers no injury or a minor injury. In my experience, there are two types of Simple Assault – one with criminal intent and one without criminal intent. For the first, the context is usually around other offenses. For example, two strangers are breaking into your outside shed and you confront them saying you will call the police unless they leave. Unfortunately, they double-down, and tell you that they are going to hurt you so badly that you

won't be able to call the police. They put you in reasonable fear of being injured or even killed. If they are not holding a weapon, then it is a Simple Assault. If they are holding a weapon, then it is Aggravated Assault. As for the second type, I'm 55 years old and have seen several Simple Assaults in my lifetime, most of them being in public places. In most cases, it is people who have lost their temper, are frustrated or emotional, intoxicated, or some combination thereof (and police are rarely called). Both sides are usually to blame because there was ample opportunity to de-escalate the situation. Sometimes the situation does spiral out of control, but other times it ends without incident. I think the point that I'm trying to make is that these situations don't begin with criminal intent.

The UCR is probably the best place to see Simple Assaults with criminal intent as the crime is only known to the UCR if someone called the police. Here are the 2023 data for Aggravated Assault with "Offense Linked to Another Offense."

Here are the 2023 data for Simple Assault

You can see the similarity. Keep in mind that some of the offenses may be the cause of the assault (such as being confronted about Shoplifting), others may be tacked on after the police get there (such as Weapon Law Violations).

The NCVS probably has a mixture of both types of Simple Assault because it includes victimizations where the police are not called.

To get back to Table 1 of the report, I think not including Rape in the table is a mistake. The footnote says that it is due to small sample sizes. However, it isn't because the sample size is statistically problematic or must be interpreted with caution. After all, it is included in Nonfatal Violence Excluding Simple Assault column. I don't know why it isn't shown because *women need to know this, and it unfortunately is hidden from them*.

Also, I think including a column with Simple Assault is a mistake as well. Simple Assault can never be a firearm crime, and traditionally, Simple Assault is not considered a Violent Crime, and this report is about firearm violence. Aggravated Assault, Robbery, and Rape can all have instances where the offender does or doesn't have a firearm.

4. Location

42% of nonfatal firearm violence occurred in or near the victim's home during 2018–2022

During 2018–2022, there were 2.3 million nonfatal firearm victimizations (table 4). Forty-two percent of nonfatal firearm violence occurred in or near the victim's home. A greater percentage of nonfatal violence involving a firearm (22%) than nonfirearm violence (13%) occurred near the victim's home. However, a lower percentage of firearm violence (20%) than nonfirearm violence (28%) occurred in the victim's home. Additionally, a greater percentage of nonfatal violence involving a firearm (27%) than nonfirearm violence (18%) occurred in an open area, on the street, or on public transportation.

TABLE 4
Nonfatal firearm and nonfirearm violence, by location of crime, 2018–2022

	Total		Firearm violence[a]*		Nonfirearm violence[b]	
Location	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Any	10,269,800	100%	2,270,800	100%	7,999,000 †	100%
Victim's home or lodging	2,735,900	26.6	465,100	20.5	2,270,800 †	28.4 †
Near victim's home	1,518,500	14.8	489,700	21.6	1,028,800 †	12.9 †
In/at/near friend's/neighbor's/ relative's home	978,100	9.5	146,800	6.5	831,300 †	10.4 †
Commercial place	938,600	9.1	197,800	8.7	740,900 †	9.3
Parking lot/garage	762,200	7.4	213,300	9.4	549,000 †	6.9 ‡
School[c]	542,600	5.3	7,300 !	0.3 !	535,300 †	6.7 †
Open area/on street/ public transportation	2,037,100	19.8	619,500	27.3	1,417,600 †	17.7 †
Other	756,800	7.4	131,400	5.8	625,400 †	7.8

Note: Includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault victimizations of persons age 12 or older. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding. See appendix table 5 for standard errors.
*Comparison group.
†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.
‡Difference with comparison group is significant at the 90% confidence level.
! Interpret with caution. Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.
[a]Includes victimizations in which the offender had, showed, or used a firearm.
[b]Includes victimizations in which the offender did not have, show, or use a firearm.
[c]Inside a school building or on school property.
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018–2022.

The text around table 4 emphasizes "42% of nonfatal firearm violence occurs in or near the home." However, if we say "a place where the victim feels comfortable" and add "in/at/near friend's/neighbor's/relative's home," we get 51%. Looking at non-firearm violence, we get about 52% (footnotes indicate rounding errors are possible). In short, it is about 50/50. Further, it is essential to remember that in this table, nonfirearm victimizations are 3.5 times larger in size than firearm victimizations. The table uses relative percentages to make comparisons, which is fine, but the text should highlight this disparity.

In general, I find Commercial Place and Parking/Lot Garage to be pretty much equivalent between firearm violence and non-firearm violence. The big difference is in Open area/on street/public transportation, which is 10% difference at a 95%

confidence level. This is a common location for non-injurious Aggravated Assault (e.g., road rage displaying a firearm) and non-injurious Robbery (e.g., using a firearm for intimidation to obtain property).

5. Injury

During 2018–2022, about 19% of nonfatal firearm victimizations resulted in physical injury

A total of 19% of all nonfatal firearm victimizations resulted in physical injury during 2018–2022 **(table 6)**.[3] Nine percent of nonfatal firearm victimizations resulted in serious injury (e.g., gunshot wounds, broken bones, or internal injuries), while 10% resulted in minor injury (e.g., bruises or cuts). Victims received medical treatment in 59% of these victimizations. Among the victimizations in which victims received treatment, 68% did so in a hospital or doctor's office.

In comparison, 39% of all nonfirearm violent victimizations resulted in physical injury, including 23% that resulted in serious injury and 16% that resulted in minor injury. Victims received medical treatment in 46% of these victimizations, which was a smaller percentage than those injured due to nonfatal firearm violence (59%).

TABLE 6

Nonfatal firearm and nonfirearm violence, by injury and treatment received, 2018–2022

	Total		Firearm violence[a]*		Nonfirearm violence[b]	
Injury and treatment	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Any	10,269,800	100%	2,270,800	100%	7,999,000 †	100%
Not injured	6,762,400	65.8%	1,847,500	81.4%	4,915,000 †	61.4% †
Injured	3,507,400	34.2%	423,400	18.6%	3,084,000 †	38.6% †
Serious injuries[c]	2,032,200	19.8	196,600	8.7	1,835,600 †	22.9 †
Gunshot	74,600	0.7	74,600	3.3	~	~
Minor injuries[d]	1,472,000	14.3	226,800	10.0	1,245,200 †	15.6 †
Treatment for injury[e]	3,507,400	100%	423,400	100%	3,084,000 †	100%
No treatment	1,830,200	52.2	173,400	41.0	1,656,800 †	53.7 †
Any treatment	1,662,100	47.4	248,600	58.7	1,413,600 †	45.8 †
Treatment setting[f]	1,662,100	100%	248,600	100%	1,413,600 †	100%
Medical facility[g]	1,000,400	60.2	168,200	67.7	832,200 †	58.9 †
Non-medical location[h]	661,700	39.8	80,400	32.3	581,300 †	41.1 †

Note: Includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault victimizations of persons age 12 or older. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding and because data on unknown injury type and unknown treatment are not shown. See appendix table 8 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

~Not applicable.

[a]Includes victimizations in which the offender had, showed, or used a firearm.

[b]Includes victimizations in which the offender did not have, show, or use a firearm.

[c]Includes gunshot wounds, knife wounds, sexual violence injuries, internal injuries, unconsciousness, and broken bones.

[d]Includes bruises, cuts, and other minor injuries.

[e]Includes only victims who were injured.

[f]Includes only victims who were injured and received treatment.

[g]Includes doctor's office, hospital emergency room, and overnight at a hospital.

[h]Includes at the scene, at the victim's/friend's/neighbor's home, or at another location.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018–2022.

This section is in the running for the most misleading section in the entire report.

Here are the points the section *should* have made.

- 81% of nonfatal firearm victimization did not result in an injured victim.
- Of the 18.6% of nonfatal firearm victimizations that did result in an injured victim, *3.3% were due to a gunshot wounds*, 10% were due to minor injuries, and 8.7% were serious injuries. *Gunshot wounds are listed separately but are already included in the 8.7% of serious injuries (you need to do the math or read the footnote)*. Also, serious injuries include things like knife wounds and beatings, so the injuries are not firearm specific. In other cases, it appears that the firearm may have been used as a blunt instrument to inflict injury rather than being discharged.

Instead, this section chooses to emphasize that 19% resulted in physical injury and that those that were injured chose to seek medical treatment more so than non-firearm injuries. I don't really see the point. Furthermore, as an example, if you were looking at "nonfatal knife violence" and saw in the footnotes that some victims

could be shot or beaten rather than cut by a knife, wouldn't you wonder if "nonfatal knife violence" was the appropriate category for these types of injuries? To be clear, if an offender has a firearm but chooses to beat someone with their fists into unconsciousness, this report will classify it as "nonfatal firearm violence."

What is a better categorization? For starters, here is what I would call "Firearms: Deadly Intent." Here is how I would define it:

- The offender discharged a firearm.
- The offender discharged a firearm with an intent to harm the victim (i.e., was aiming at the victim's body).
- If the above two items are true, it does not matter if the victim is injured are not.

The second category I would define is "Firearms: Intimidation Intent."

- The offender has a firearm.
- The firearm is not discharged.
- The firearm is used to intimate the victim so they can be victimized (e.g., robbed).

The third category I would define is "Firearm: Malicious Intimidation."

- The offender has a firearm.
- The firearm is discharged, but not to harm the victim, but to further intimidate them (e.g., shoots in the air or by the victim's feet).

A good prosecutor will make these distinctions when it comes to criminal charges. The first will likely have an attempted murder charge on it. The latter, a maximum felony aggravated assault. The middle will likely be a midrange aggravated assault felony, depending on the offender's previous criminal record and their position in society.

6. Theft

About 125,500 victimizations involved the theft of a firearm in 2022

Violent and property victimizations involving the theft of at least one firearm declined from 277,700 in 1993 to 125,500 in 2022 **(figure 2)**. The number of victimizations involving the theft of items excluding firearms decreased during this period, from 32.3 million to 12.3 million (not shown). In addition, an annual average of 1% of all theft victimizations from 1993 to 2022 involved the theft of firearms (not shown).

From 2018 to 2022, about 688,400 victimizations (an annual average of 137,700) involved the theft of at least one firearm. About 917,000 firearms (an annual average of 183,400) were stolen during violent, property, and personal larceny victimizations during this 5-year period (not shown).

In line for another misleading section, or sidebar I should say, is the one with the title "125,500 Victimizations Involved the Theft of a Firearm." Up to this point, we have only been talking about personal victimization. In this sidebar, property victimizations are included. Also, we have been discussing percentages, but then in this sidebar, absolute values are put up. Keep in mind property victimizations number far more than personal victimization.

I've highlighted the significant finding, which is the only percentage listed*: Less than 1% of all theft victimizations involved the theft of firearms*.

Ultimately, why do you include both property and personal victimizations? I'm curious how many firearms are taken from a victim in something like an Aggravated Assault, Robbery, or Rape. Furthermore, are there any other items besides firearms that have maintained a constant percentage even though all theft victimizations dropped over 50% from 1993 to 2022? You know, things like pawn shops carry – jewelry, firearms, and so forth.

7. Self-Defense

A firearm was used for self-defense in 2% of nonfatal violence excluding simple assault

The NCVS collects data on victims' reactions and any actions they may have taken during the incident. During 2018–2022, the victim either took no action against the offender or kept still in 36% of all nonfatal violence excluding simple assault (table 9). Victims used other self-protective behaviors such as noncombative tactics (34%) (e.g., yelling, running away, or trying to attract attention) and threatening or attacking the offender without a weapon (23%). Victims used a firearm to threaten or attack the offender in 2% (184,300) of all nonfatal violence excluding simple assault; the offender had a firearm in 45% of these victimizations (82,300, not shown).

In 1% (96,500) of property victimizations during which the victim was present, the victim threatened or attacked the offender with a firearm. Property victimization includes burglary or trespassing, motor vehicle theft, and other types of household theft. However, the victim was not present during the majority (84%) of property crimes captured by the NCVS.

TABLE 9
Self-protective behaviors of victims, by type of crime, 2018–2022

	Nonfatal violence excluding simple assault[a]		Property victimization[b]	
Self-protective behavior	Number	Percent	Number	Percent[c]
Total	10,270,300	100%	63,461,400	100%
Victim was present	10,270,300	100%	9,842,300	15.5%
Took no action/kept still*	3,728,500	36.3	6,641,600	67.5
Threatened/attacked with a firearm	184,300 †	1.8 †	96,500 †	1.0 †
Threatened/attacked with other weapon	193,700 †	1.9 †	73,900 †	0.8 †
Threatened/attacked without a weapon	2,405,600 †	23.4 †	424,900 †	4.3 †
Noncombative tactics[d]	3,450,500	33.6	1,373,900 †	14.0 †
Other	294,500 †	2.9 †	176,200 †	1.8 †
Unknown	13,200 !	0.1 !	1,055,200 †	10.7 †
Victim was not present	~	~	53,619,100 †	84.5% †

Note: Victims were, by definition, present during violent victimizations but may not have been during property victimizations. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding. See appendix table 11 for standard errors.
*Comparison group.
†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.
~Not applicable.
! Interpret with caution. Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.
[a]Includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault victimizations of persons age 12 or older.
[b]Includes burglary or trespassing, motor vehicle theft, and other types of household theft.
[c]Denominator includes both property victimizations for which the victim was present and those for which the victim was not present.
[d]Includes yelling, cooperating, running away, arguing or reasoning, calling police, or trying to attract attention or warn others.
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018–2022.

Here appears to be the CDC's rejoinder to Defensive Gun Use (DGU) statistics (https://clayeolsen.com/archives/268). As I've blogged about previously, the CDC doesn't like DGUs and seems to try and find any study to provide a lower number. The latest study, the National Firearm Survey by William English in 2021 (https://clayeolsen.com/archives/304), estimated DGUs happen about 1.67 million times a year. Furthermore, around 80% of the time they happen at or near the home and around 80% of the time, the firearm is not discharged.

The first issue I have is why Simple Assault is excluded. Here is an example: You discover three men vandalizing a shed on your property. You confront them, ask them to leave, and threaten to call the police if they don't. They are unarmed but

tell you that you won't be able to call the police because they are going to beat you up. They put you in fear of injury or death. These men have just committed a Simple Assault. As they move toward you, you pull out a handgun and they run off. You don't bother calling the police. This is a classic DGU.

The second issue I have is *nowhere does it say how often the victim has access to a firearm*. For example, if a firearm was used in self-defense 2% of the time and the victim had access to a firearm 2% of the time, well that is why it was only used 2% of the time! According to these statistics, the offender has a firearm 45% of the time and the victim threatens/attacks the offender 23.4% of the time or engages in noncombative tactics (which includes cooperating?) 33.6% of the time for a total of 57%. If the victim had a firearm, this would be a bit odd. This section really doesn't pass the sniff test. In short, the authors owe us explanations on these two issues.

8. NSSP

FINDINGS FROM THE NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP) data are the source for nonfatal firearm injury-related emergency department (ED) visits. The NSSP is a collaboration between CDC; state and local health departments; and federal, academic, and private sector partners. The NSSP collects electronic patient data from EDs, urgent and ambulatory care centers, inpatient health care settings, and laboratories. However, data included in this report are derived only from EDs. Although the NSSP is not nationally representative and coverage varies by state, at the time of this report, the NSSP covered approximately 80% of EDs in the United States. To reduce the impact of NSSP reporting pattern changes, which can vary across jurisdictions, analyses were restricted to facilities with a coefficient of variation of less than 40% for total visit volume and with more than 75% complete information on discharge diagnoses during 2018–2023, with the final sample representing 1,794 facilities (approximately 43% of total facilities that contribute data to the NSSP).

Firearm injury-related emergency department visits increased from 2018 to 2020, then decreased from 2020 to 2023

The NSSP captured over 425 million ED visits from January 2018 to December 2023 (not shown). During this period, 338,390 ED visits involved a firearm injury resulting in an average annual rate of 81.2 per 100,000 ED visits (appendix table 15). The average monthly counts of firearm injury ED visits ranged from 3,754 in 2018 to 5,559 in 2020 **(table 15)**. Firearm injury visit rates increased from 2018 to 2019 (Visit Ratio (VR)=1.04) and again from 2019 to 2020 (VR=1.75).[6] Since their peak in 2020, firearm injury-related ED visit rates have decreased year over year ($VR_{2020–2021}$=0.82; $VR_{2021–2022}$=0.87; $VR_{2022–2023}$=0.92) but have not yet returned to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.

[6]Visit Ratios (VR) were calculated as [ED visits for firearm injury during the surveillance period / all ED visits during the surveillance period] / [ED visits for firearm injury during the comparison period / all ED visits during the comparison period.] Ratios greater than 1 indicate a higher proportion of ED visits for firearm injury during the surveillance period than the comparison period.

There have been concerns around the NSSP program and the reliability of the data it uses. You can see the attempts to address these in the text. However, I'm more concerned about something else.

I've talked about how we must distinguish between violence where it is (1) criminals vs criminals, violence between (2) criminals vs. civilians, and (3) civilians vs. civilians. In my view, most violence in the USA is between (1) criminals vs. criminals and (3) civilians vs. civilians. This has significant ramifications on self-defense because most self-defense training for civilians focuses on (2) criminals vs. civilians (primarily due to civilians training being based on law enforcement training). While valuable, most ordinary civilians train far too much for this possibility and train very little for dealing with civilians, specifically, people they know who may become violent.

If we care about victimization we need to diagnose violent crimes properly. I don't think the NCVS will detect criminal vs. criminal violence reliably. I believe the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which the UCR is moving to, will help. A key factor will be to "profile" a victim of firearm violence in the Emergency Department (ED) by an experienced Law Enforcement Officer (LEO).

For example, a person with a gunshot injury is admitted to the ED. Doctors must report this to the police. When a LEO shows up and questions the victim, they are not going to get any valid information if the victim was engaged in criminal activity (e.g., drug dealing). They are more likely to be led astray. For example, the "victim" could say they were simply walking down the street when they were shot (instead of saying they shortchanged a buyer on a drug deal). They probably won't identify the offender even if they knew who it was. This behavior would be in stark contrast to a civilian who, for example, was a victim of road rage and would provide as many details as humanly possible. A reasonably experienced LEO will have a good idea about someone engaging in normal everyday activities who was impacted by violence versus someone who may have been engaging in criminal activity at the time of the injury. Some more checks could be done for someone suspected of engaging in criminal activity.

Some of these additional checks will include things like:

1. Does the victim have gunpowder residue on their hands?
2. Does the victim have gang-related clothing or tattoos?
3. Does the victim have a criminal record?
4. Does the victim have valid identification?

5. Does the victim have assets (e.g., a car, a house, and so forth)?

6. Does the victim have legitimate debt (e.g., mortgage, car loan)?

7. Has the victim's parents or siblings ever been incarcerated? Do they have a criminal record?

8. Is the victim employed? If so, do they have a W2?

Assuming the law enforcement officer can answer (or get answers to) some of these questions, they can indicate in their NIBRS report something like "victim suspected of engaging in criminal activity when the offense occurred." This step is essential to distinguishing criminal versus criminal violence from other types of violence. A classic example would be a pimp beating up his prostitute with brass knuckles. Yep, that is Aggravated Assault, but it isn't something ordinary civilians need to worry about because they don't engage in that activity.

To further the example, assume that most aggravated assaults were due to pimps beating up prostitutes. If all you had were statistics about men beating up women, without knowing that it was pimps beating up prostitutes, you may pass laws that would impact ordinary civilians without conferring any benefits. Our inability or unwillingness to detect criminal versus criminal crime leads us to pass a lot of ineffective laws. To be blunt, that is what is happening with firearm rights.

NIBRS would also be better at identifying known criminals versus civilians. The same tests for the victims described above could also be done for the offender. If the victim is considered an ordinary civilian and the offender is suspected to be a prior criminal, an additional field in NIBRS could be added around "offender suspected of previous criminal activity."

9. Rape

When browsing through this document, I was surprised to find this:

Classification of rape and sexual assault in the National Crime Victimization Survey

Measure	Element of sexual violence
Completed rape	Type of attack = rape
	Type of injury = rape
Attempted rape	Type of attack = attempted rape
	Type of injury = attempted rape
	Type of threat = verbal threat of rape with weapon
Threatened rape	Type of attempted attack/threat = verbal threat of rape
Sexual assault	Type of attack = sexual assault other than rape or attempted rape
	Type of injury = sexual assault other than rape or attempted rape
	Type of attempted attack/threat = unwanted sexual contact with force
	Type of attempted attack/threat = unwanted sexual contact without force
	Type of attempted attack/threat = verbal threat of sexual assault other than rape

Note: Victim is determined to be present in all measures of rape and sexual assault.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2023.

I'm not a fan of how the NCVS handles rape/sexual assault. It appears a lot more information is being logged. Unfortunately, N-DASH, which is the front-end to the NCVS data, doesn't allow you to query these details. You would have to pull the files and be a statistics guy to run an appropriate report. Also, unfortunately, the NCVS doesn't ask whether the victim of rape was voluntarily intoxicated or involuntary intoxicated prior to the rape. Hopefully, the NCVS will work on these items in the future. However, capturing the additional details shown above is a good start. The more valid information the NCVS can get around rape, the more women can be helped.

10. Summary

Overall, I think this report has some good information, but it emphasizes things that are not important. In particular, I feel it is misleading about firearm injuries, firearm thefts, and DGUs. As such, it feels like the report has an anti-firearm bias. Unfortunately, as it was released, I feel this report is more likely to lead an ordinary civilian astray.