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RELEASE OUTCOME:

REPEAT OFFENDERS

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NCJRS

DEC 4 1987

May 1986

ACQUISITIONS

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Release Outcome: Repeat Offenders

Introduction:

A question frequently asked about recidivism involves repeat offenders. How many burglars burglarize again? How many murderers murder again? Definitive responses to these questions are often clouded by measurement issues. For instance, many repeat burglars may not be caught, or if caught, some may not be convicted. Reduced charges in a plea bargain may also mask measures of repeat offenders.

Data currently available allows for a very limited examination of the repeat offender question. Data available allows for examining what percent of inmates released from prison are returned to prison for similar crimes.

This report will examine repeat offenders utilizing a narrow operational definition of repeat offenders as described above.

Methodology:

A sample of 2,081 cases released from the Texas Department of Corrections in 1983 were followed for one year to determine release outcome. The instant offenses of inmates released in 1983 were cross-tabulated with new offenses committed during the follow-up year that resulted in a return to the Texas Department of Corrections. Eight major offenses are examined. Returns to prison for technical violations, misdemeanor offenses, or other offenses are not included in the tabulations.

Data Analysis:

Table 1 details the percent of cases returned to T.D.C. by new offense, one year after release from prison, by the offense that they were released for in 1983. For example, 88% of cases released in 1983, whose instant offense was assault, had not returned to T.D.C. in the one year follow-up period. However, 4% of assault cases were returned to T.D.C. for another assault offense, 3% of assault cases were returned for burglary, and 1% returned for rape.

The data in Table 1 appear to support two general perceptions about repeat offenders. In general, assaultive offenders, who do commit new offenses, commit new assaultive offenses. While murder and rape have low return to prison rates, the offenses committed resulting in their return to prison are assaultive. To a lesser extent, this appears to be true for robbery and assault. A second general perception is that property offenders have the highest repeat offense rates. Table 1 also appears to support this perception. The highest rates of repeat offenses are burglary and theft.

The attached graphs describe the distribution of new offenses resulting in a return to T.D.C. for each instant offense. The "other" category consists of all other felony offenses and violations resulting in a return to T.D.C., besides the eight major offense categories being examined. In the

first graph, assault and other offenses are the primary offenses resulting in a return to T.D.C. for cases released for assault in 1983. The graph for burglary shows burglary to be the primary offense for return. However, it also indicates that burglars who return to crime commit a variety of offenses, from theft to murder. The graphs for other property crimes report similar findings.

Conclusions:

The data in this report appear to support common perceptions about repeat offenders. While the narrow definition of repeat offenders prohibits examination of the magnitude of repeat offenders, property offenders represent the most common repeat offenders, while repeat assaultive offenders, although small in number, are most likely to commit another assaultive offense.

This data again underscores a common dilemma in parole decision-making and parole supervision. The least serious offenders are the most likely to recidivate, while assaultive offenders, who are the least likely to recidivate, have a high probability of committing a new assaultive offense for those few who do recidivate. Unfortunately, this report can do little other than to empirically detail and confirm the dilemma.

TABLE 1

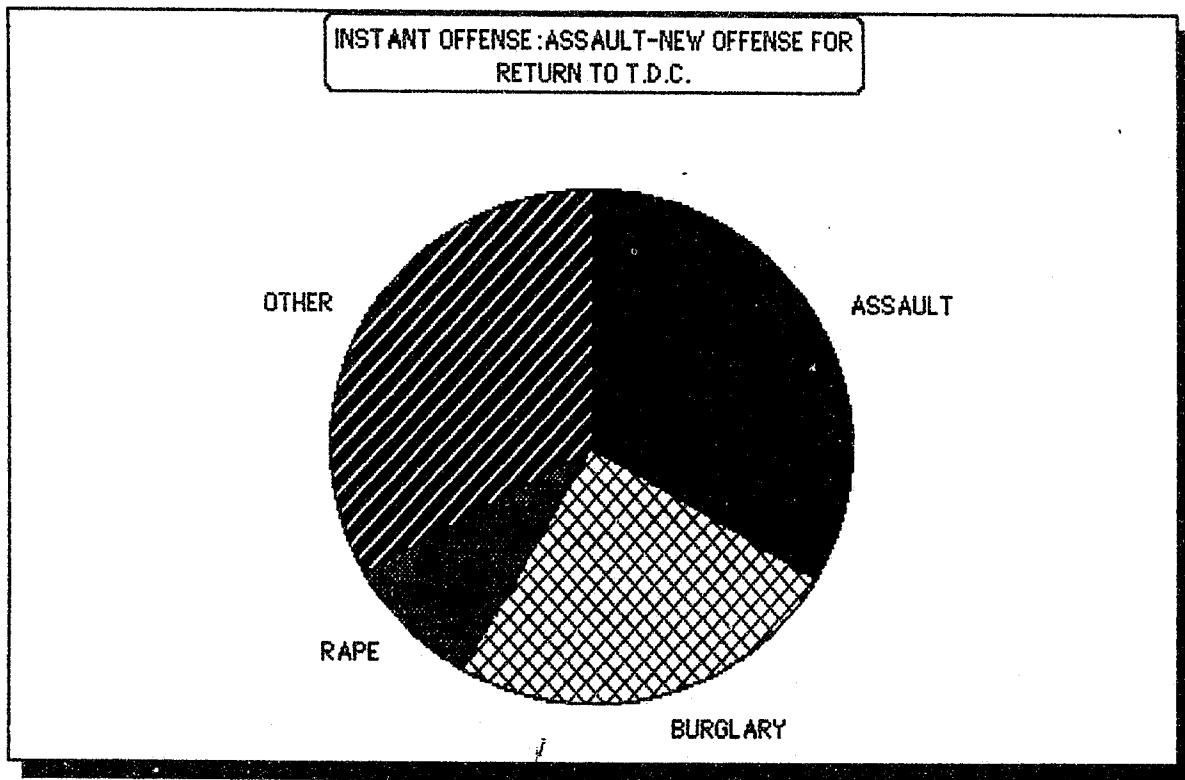
Repeat Offenders: Return to T.D.C.
Instant Offense by New Offense

Percent Returned to T.D.C.
for New Offense:

Instant Offense	None	Aslt.	Burg.	Drugs	Forg.	Murder	Rape	Rob.	Theft
Assault	88%	4%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Burglary	83%	1%	7%	.6%	1%	.3%	.6%	2%	2%
Drugs	97%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	.6%	0%	.6%
Forgery	84%	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	3%
Murder	96%	.8%	0%	0%	0%	2%	.8%	.8%	0%
Rape	98%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Robbery	90%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	.3%	3%	1%
Theft	84%	.2%	5%	1%	1%	.7%	.7%	2%	5%

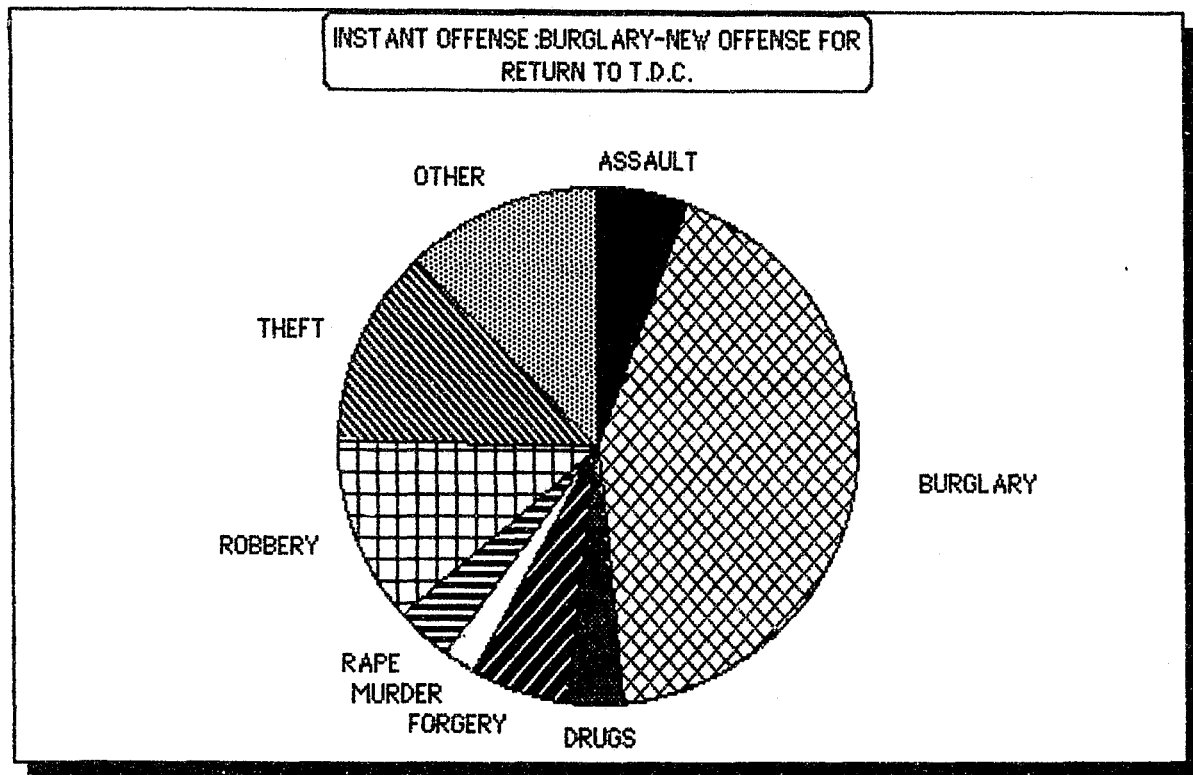
DISTRIBUTION OF CASES RETURNED TO T.D.C.
BY NEW OFFENSE COMMITTED AFTER 1983 RELEASE:

INSTANT OFFENSE FOR 1983 RELEASE: ASSAULT



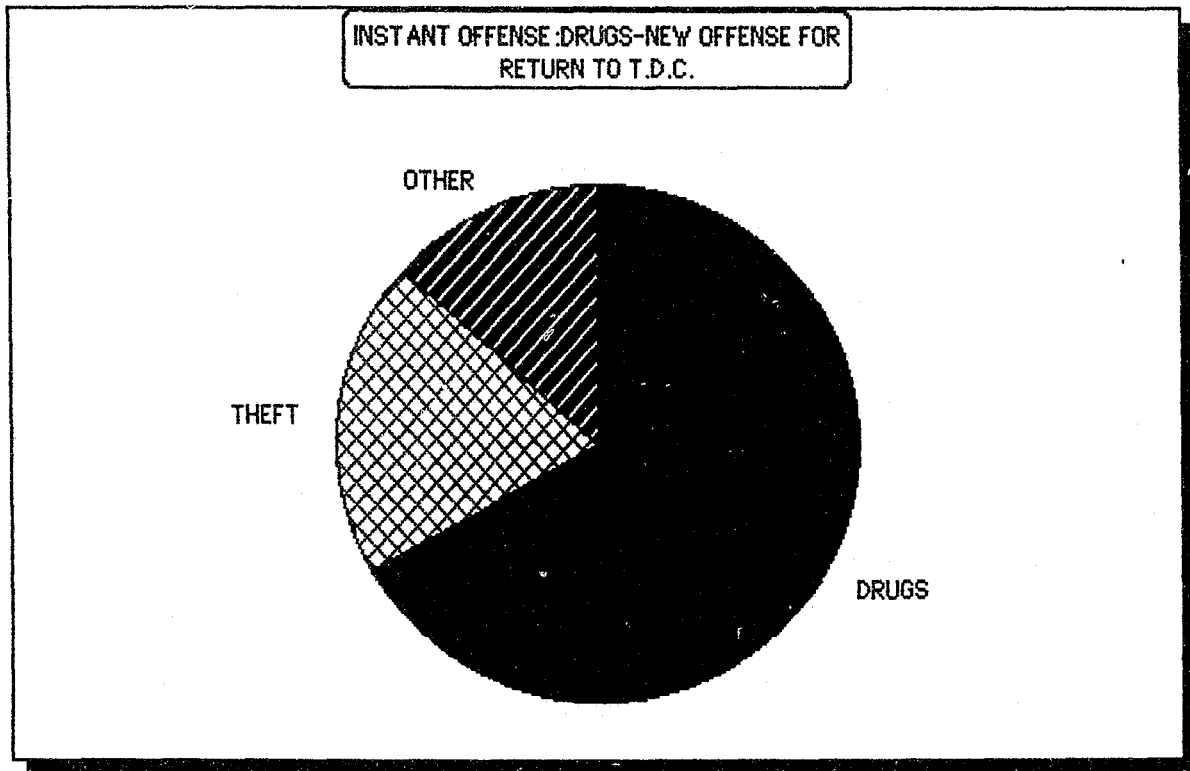
DISTRIBUTION OF CASES RETURNED TO T.D.C.
BY NEW OFFENSE COMMITTED AFTER 1983 RELEASE:

INSTANT OFFENSE FOR 1983 RELEASE: BURGLARY



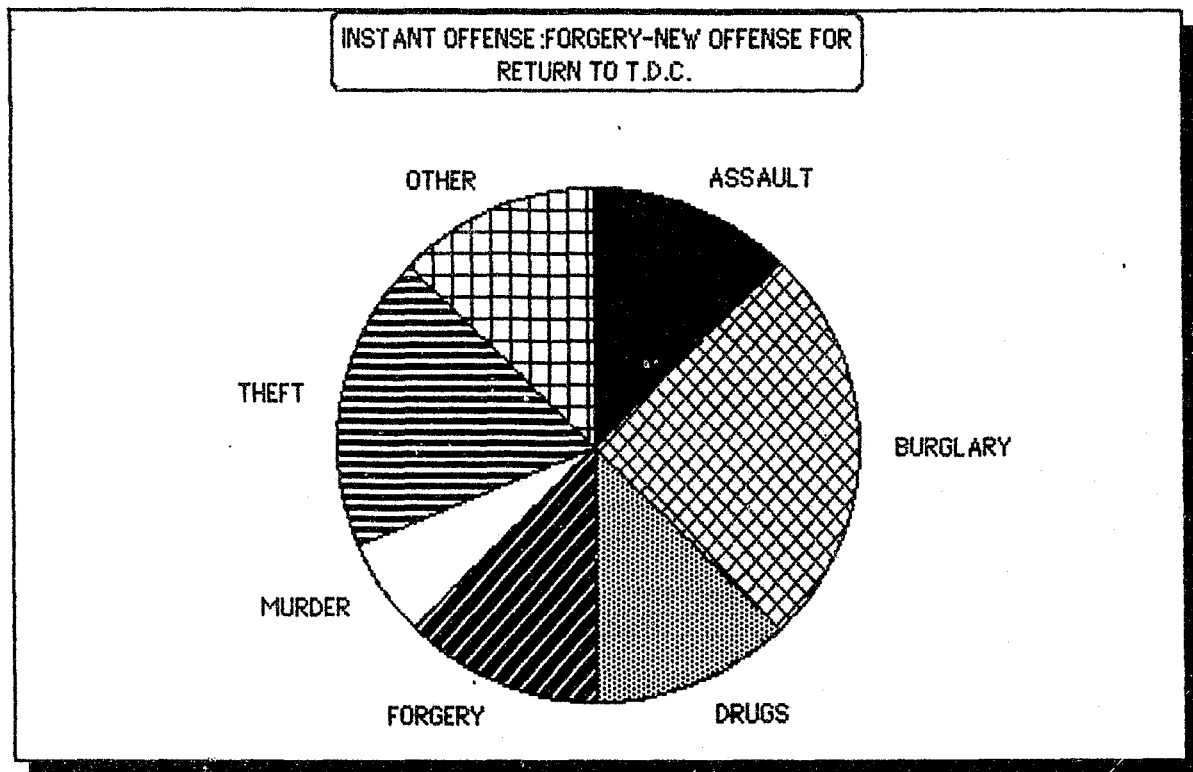
DISTRIBUTION OF CASES RETURNED TO T.D.C.
BY NEW OFFENSE COMMITTED AFTER 1983 RELEASE:

INSTANT OFFENSE FOR 1983 RELEASE: DRUGS



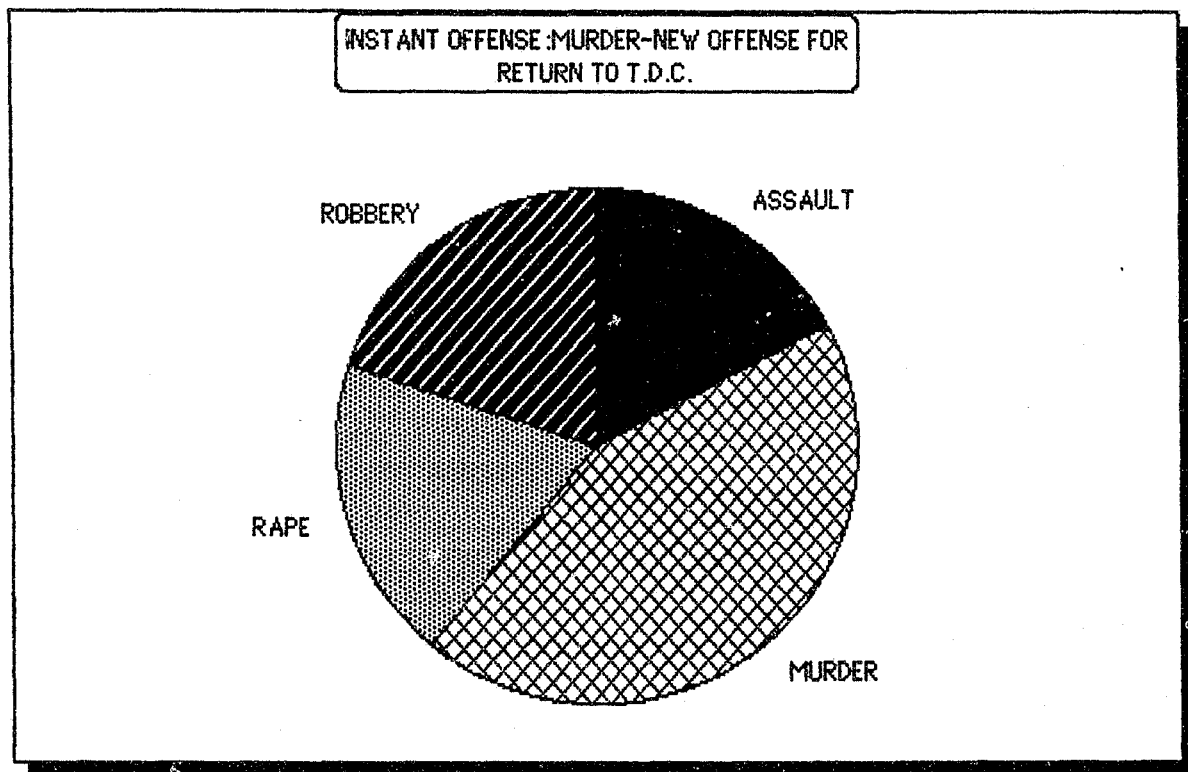
DISTRIBUTION OF CASES RETURNED TO T.D.C.
BY NEW OFFENSE COMMITTED AFTER 1983 RELEASE:

INSTANT OFFENSE FOR 1983 RELEASE: FORGERY



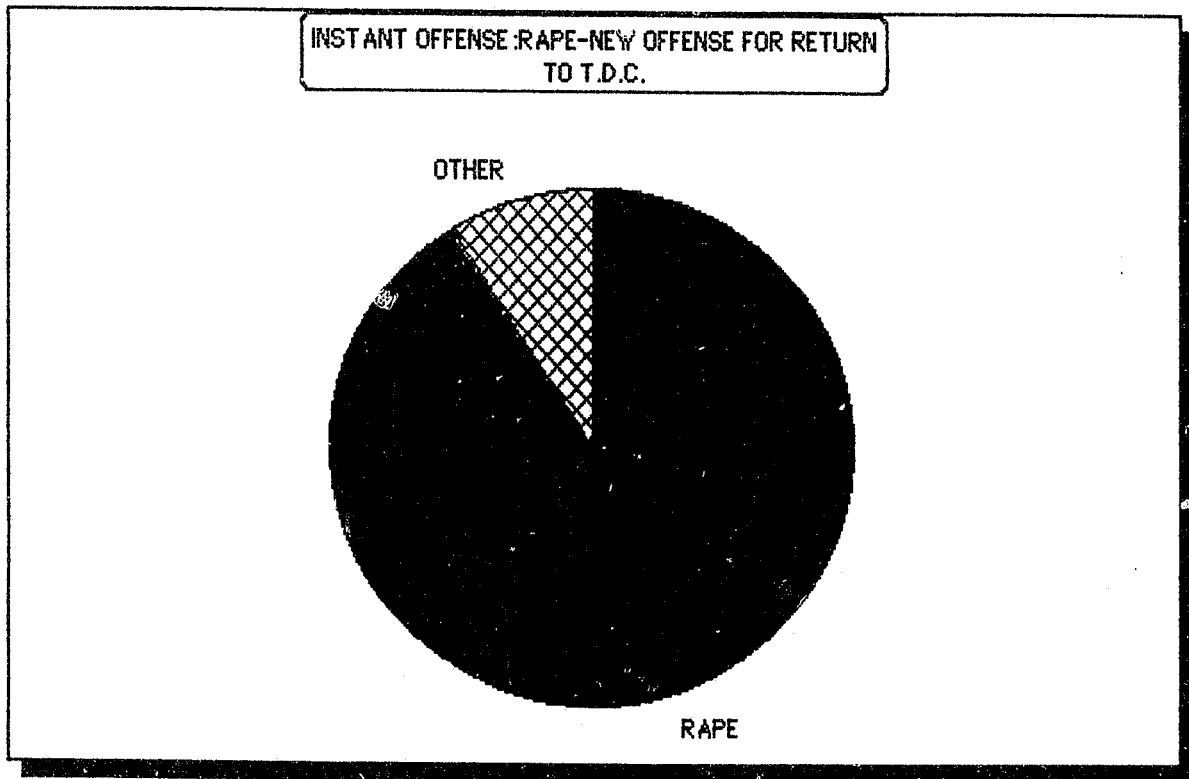
DISTRIBUTION OF CASES RETURNED TO T.D.C.
BY NEW OFFENSE COMMITTED AFTER 1983 RELEASE:

INSTANT OFFENSE FOR 1983 RELEASE: MURDER



DISTRIBUTION OF CASES RETURNED TO T.D.C.
BY NEW OFFENSE COMMITTED AFTER 1983 RELEASE:

INSTANT OFFENSE FOR 1983 RELEASE: RAPE



DISTRIBUTION OF CASES RETURNED TO T.D.C.
BY NEW OFFENSE COMMITTED AFTER 1983 RELEASE:

INSTANT OFFENSE FOR 1983 RELEASE: ROBBERY

