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**CRIME TREND SERIES**

ACQUISITIONS

Uniform Crime Reporting Program in Hawaii

Department of the Attorney General, Crime Prevention Division

Robert A. Marks, Attorney General  
Ruth I. Tsujimura, First Deputy

Alan T. Shimabukuro, Administrator

**Crimes Committed with Firearms in the State of Hawaii, 1983-1992**By Thomas M. Green, James B.  
Richmond, JoAnn E. Taira

**F**rom 1983 to 1992, 35 percent of all homicide victims were killed with a firearm, 71 percent of whom were killed with a handgun. While the total number of homicides in Hawaii has remained relatively stable and low during the past 10 years, the proportion of those homicides committed with a firearm is increasing. In 1983, 32 percent of Hawaii murder victims were killed with firearms, while 40 percent died by this method in 1992.

Other major findings of this report include:

**State**

- The total number of robberies and the number of robberies committed with a firearms generally declined from 1983 to 1991; however, from 1991 to 1992, the total number of robberies increased 17 percent and the number of robberies committed with a firearm increased 64 percent.

- From 1983 to 1992, the number of aggravated assaults increased 53 percent and the number committed with a firearm increased 12 percent. The percentage of aggravated assaults committed with a firearm was smaller in 1992 than in 1983.

- Arrests for weapons violations increased 83 percent from 1983 to 1992.

**City & County of Honolulu**

- From 1988 to 1992, there were 59 firearm-related homicides in the City and County of Honolulu, of which 41 were male and 18 were female.

- Forty-eight of the 59 homicides were committed with a handgun, 8 with a rifle, and 3 with a shotgun. Fourteen of those victims were killed with a registered firearm, 7 with a gun which had been reported stolen, 18 with an unregistered firearm, and 19 with a firearm that was not recovered.

- Most homicide victims had no record of any prior convictions.

- Twenty-four of the 55 persons suspected of or charged with killing those 59 victims had no record of any prior convictions, 16 had petty misdemeanor or misdemeanor convictions only, and 15 had a record of felony convictions.

**HOMICIDE**

During the 10 year period from 1983 to 1992, 464 persons were reported murdered in the State of Hawaii, 163 (35 percent) of whom were killed with a firearm. Of those killed with a firearm, 116 (71 percent) were killed with a handgun.

The average annual number of murders in Hawaii during the 10 year period 1983 to 1992 was 46.4 and ranged from a high of 57 in 1983 to a low of 34 in 1984. The 42 homicides in 1992 was 9 percent below the 10 year average. Figure 1 (see page 8)

shows the relationship between total number of homicides, the number of homicides committed with all firearms, and the number of homicides committed with handguns for the State of Hawaii for 1983 to 1992.

Nationally, the number of homicides has increased steadily since 1987. From 1983 to 1992, the average annual number of murders in the United States was 19,200. The 1992 homicide total, 22,540, was 17 percent higher than the 10 year average. From 1983 to 1992, 62 percent of those reported murdered in the United States were killed with a firearm, 76 percent of which involved a handgun. Figure 2 (page 8) shows the relationship among the total number of homicides, the number of homicides committed with all firearms, and the number of homicides committed with handguns for the United States for 1983 to 1992.

Over the 10 year period from 1983 to 1992, the use of firearms in homicides has become much more prevalent in the United States as a whole than in Hawaii. In 1983, 32 percent of the homicides in Hawaii were firearm-related and 23 percent involved a handgun; in 1992, those figures were 41 percent and 29 percent, respectively. Nationally, 61 percent of the homicides in 1983 were firearm-related and 45 percent involved a handgun. In 1992, 68 percent of the homicides nationally were firearm-related and 55 percent involved a handgun. The number of homicides in Hawaii is relatively low; as such, annual fluctuations appear dramatic. However, the overall trend for the state shows that firearms are accounting for a greater percentage of all homicides. Figure 3

(page 8) illustrates the changing role firearms have played in homicides in the United States and Hawaii from 1983 to 1992.

## ROBBERY

From 1983 to 1992, there were 10,758 reported robberies in the State of Hawaii, 13 percent of which (1,359) involved a firearm.<sup>1</sup> In 1992, the 1,151 reported robberies were 7 percent higher than the 10 year average of 1,075.8 robberies per year but 13 percent lower than the 1983 robbery total of 1,330. During the 10 year period, both the total number of robberies and the number of robberies committed with a firearm generally declined, until 1992, when the total number of robberies increased 17 percent and the number of robberies committed with a firearm increased 64 percent over the previous year.

The total number of robberies in the United States declined during the 1980s, but then increased in the early 1990s. From 1983 to 1992, the number of reported robberies increased 39 percent, while the percentage of robberies committed with firearms grew from 37 percent in 1983 to 40 percent in 1992. In 1983, 17 percent of the robberies committed in Hawaii involved a firearm. In 1992, 10 percent of the robberies in Hawaii involved a firearm, up from 7 percent in 1991. Figure 4 (page 9) shows a 10-year trend in the number of robberies reported nationally and in Hawaii from 1983 to 1992. Figure 5 (page 9) illustrates the percentage of robberies committed with firearms in the United States and Hawaii from 1983 to 1992.

## AGGRAVATED ASSAULT

Of the 12,538 reported aggravated assaults reported in the State of Hawaii between 1983 and 1992, 20 percent (2,540) involved a firearm. In 1983, there were 891 reported aggravated assaults, 189 of which involved a firearm (21 percent). In 1992, there were 1,365 reported aggravated

assaults (an increase of 53 percent from 1983), of which 211 involved a firearm (a 12 percent increase). Overall, a smaller proportion of all aggravated assaults involved a firearm in 1992 than in 1983.

Nationally, the number of reported aggravated assaults has steadily increased from 1983 to 1992, including the number and percentage involving a firearm. In 1983, 21 percent of the reported aggravated assaults involved a firearm. In 1992, there was a 73 percent increase in the number of reported aggravated assaults, a 102 percent increase in the number of aggravated assaults which involved a firearm, and an increase from 21 percent to 25 percent in the proportion of all aggravated assaults involving firearms. Figure 6 (page 9) illustrates the changes in the number of reported aggravated assaults nationally and in Hawaii; Figure 7 (page 10) shows the percentage of aggravated assaults committed with firearms.

## WEAPONS VIOLATIONS

The Uniform Crime Reporting Program collects arrest data for one other group of offenses involving firearms, collectively referred to as "weapons violations", described in Chapter 134 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes. These offenses include failing to register a firearm, possessing a firearm without a permit, improperly carrying or storing a firearm, and possessing illegal firearms. In addition to weapons violations involving a firearm, Chapter 134 also prohibits electric guns, switchblade knives, and carrying other dangerous weapons such as a blackjack and metal knuckles in a concealed fashion.<sup>2</sup>

From 1983 to 1992, the number of arrests for weapons violations increased 83 percent, from 506 to 924. During that period, adult arrests increased 84 percent (from 450 to 827) while juvenile arrests increased 73 percent (from 56 to 97). In 1983, 89 percent of the arrests for weapons

violations involved adults; in 1992, 90 percent involved adults. Figure 8 (page 10) summarizes these changes.

Nationally, the number of arrests for weapons violations increased 27 percent from 1983 to 1992. During that same period, the number of adult arrests increased 14 percent, while juvenile arrests increased 106 percent. The 10 year trend for weapons violations arrests appears in Figure 9 (page 10).

## HOMICIDE 1988-1992: City and County of Honolulu

From 1988 to 1992, there were 87 homicide victims killed with firearms in Hawaii, 68 percent (59) of which occurred in the City and County of Honolulu. A more detailed analysis of the firearm-related homicides in Honolulu reveals important information concerning the weapons used and the criminal records of the victims and offenders. This analysis involved reviewing each of the 59 homicide case files, checking the registration of firearms used in the homicides, and conducting a criminal history check of each victim and offender.<sup>3</sup>

### Victim Characteristics

Of the 59 homicide victims killed with a firearm, 41 were male and 18 were female. Eighty-three percent of the males (34) and 78 percent of the females were killed with a handgun. The youngest homicide victim was 11, the oldest 68, and the average victim's age was 29.9 years. Forty-two of the homicides involved a single victim and a single offender; 5 victims were killed by more than one offender; 7 victims were killed in circumstances which involved multiple victims of a single offender (2 cases involved 2 victims with one offender, one case involved 3 victims with one offender); and for 5 of the victims, the number of offenders was unknown. Ten of the victims were related to their killer, including 4 spouses; 16 were friends; 19 were acquaintances; 8 were

strangers; and for 6 of the victims, their relationship with their killer(s) was unknown to the police.<sup>4</sup>

Thirty-one of the 59 homicide victims had no record of convictions; 1 victim had a conviction for a petty misdemeanor only; 16 victims had records for convictions of only misdemeanors; and 4 had conviction records for only petty misdemeanors and misdemeanors. Only 7 of the 59 homicide victims had a record of any felony conviction: 5 had felony convictions for property crimes, and 2 had convictions for property, drug, and violent crimes.

Seven of the 59 homicide victims had a record of petty misdemeanor convictions; the median number of convictions was 1, the average 2. Of the 27 victims who had convictions for misdemeanors, the median number of convictions was 2, the average 3.5. Seven victims had convictions for felony property crimes, with a median of 1 and an average of 1.9 convictions per person. Two victims had one conviction each for a felony drug offense, and the same 2 victims had one conviction each for a violent felony offense (assault 2 and robbery).

### Offender Characteristics

From 1988 to 1992, 55 individuals were known to be or suspected of being responsible for the deaths of the 59 victims (not all of the cases have been resolved). Of the 55 suspects/offenders, 51 were male and 4 were female. Forty-two of the suspects/offenders acted alone, killing a single victim; 3 suspects/offenders acted alone, killing multiple victims (in 2 cases killing 2 persons, in 1 case killing 3); and 5 suspects/offenders had one accomplice each, killing a single victim. Four of the suspects/offenders committed suicide after killing their victim(s).

Forty of the suspects/offenders had no record of felony convictions: 24 of the suspects/offenders had no record of convictions, 14 had misdemeanor

convictions only, and 2 had only petty misdemeanor and misdemeanor convictions. Of the 15 suspects/offenders who had a record of felony convictions, 7 had convictions for property crimes only, 2 had convictions for drug crimes only, and 6 had convictions for violent felonies.

Of the 7 suspects/offenders who had convictions for petty misdemeanors, the median number of convictions was 1, the average 1.1. Twenty-eight suspects/offenders had a record of misdemeanor convictions with a median value of 3 and an average of 3.8 convictions per person. Eleven of the suspects/offenders had a record of felony property crimes, a median of 1 and an average of 3.8 per person (one person had 18 gambling convictions; 6 of the 11 had only 1 conviction). For the 3 suspects/offenders with felony drug convictions, the median number of convictions was 1, the average 2. The 6 suspects/offenders with a record of violent felony convictions had a total of 9 convictions, a median and an average of 1.5 each.

### Circumstances - Relationships

As stated above under Victim Characteristics, most of the homicide victims knew their killer. By circumstances, the greatest number of victims were killed during, or as the result of, a domestic argument or break-up: 19. In addition, 3 victims were killed as a result of a love-triangle. Sixteen of the victims were killed during a non-domestic argument, 12 were killed as the result of gang- or drug-related violence, 3 were killed while "playing around" with a gun (e.g. "Russian Roulette"), 1 was killed in the commission of a robbery, and 5 of the victims were killed under unknown circumstances.

By relationship, all 8 victims who were family members with the suspect/offender, including spouses, were killed (almost by definition) during domestic arguments and/or break-ups. Half (8) of the 16 victims killed by their friend(s) also died in a domestic

dispute or break-up. The 3 victims killed while "playing around" with a gun were friends with the person holding the gun, 2 friends were killed in a love-triangle, 2 friends died in a drug-related killing, and 1 friend was killed in a non-domestic argument.

Persons who were acquainted with their killer constituted the largest single group of firearm-related homicide victims by relationship: 19. The degree of intimacy between acquaintances is less than that for friends, but greater than for strangers. Some examples of the 19 acquaintances included the mother and father of the killer's former girlfriend (who was also killed), the boyfriend of the killer's mother, 1 person in a love triangle, a business competitor, and 7 persons who used and/or sold drugs with the suspect/offender(s).

Five of the 8 (63 percent) homicide victims who were shot by a stranger were killed during an argument. One of the strangers was killed while giving chase following a drug rip-off, one stranger was shot from across the street by a rival gang member, and one stranger was killed during a robbery.

All five of the victims killed under unknown circumstances were male. Of the 36 males killed where the circumstances were known, 33 (92 percent) were killed by other males, 3 by females. Seventeen of the 18 (94 percent) female victims were killed by males, 1 by another female.

Males were most likely to be killed by an acquaintance (42 percent of all males killed), a stranger (20 percent), a friend (15 percent), or where the relationship was unknown (15 percent). Three males were shot and killed by a family member (including an eleven year old boy killed by his father, who then strangled his wife and smothered his daughter) and 1 male was shot by his wife.

One-third of the female victims (6) were killed by a spouse or other family member, 10 were killed by a friend (9

of whom were boyfriends or former boyfriends), and 2 were acquaintances. No females were killed with a firearm by a stranger or under unknown circumstances.

Handguns were used in 67 percent of the firearms-related murders involving a family member, 75 percent of spouses, 100 percent of friends, 68 percent of acquaintances, 88 percent of strangers, and in 83 percent of the cases where the relationship between victim and offender was unknown.

Handguns were used in 89 percent of the domestic/break-up related-homicides, 67 percent of those related to a love-triangle, 75 percent of nondomestic arguments, 83 percent of gang/drug-related murders, 100 percent of the cases where the victim and suspect/offender were "playing around," and in 80 percent of the cases where the circumstances were unknown. A shotgun was used in the 1 case involving a robbery.

### **FIREARMS USED IN HOMICIDE**

Of the 59 firearm-related homicides in the City and County of Honolulu, 48 were committed with a handgun and 11 were committed with a long gun (8 involving a rifle and 3 with a shotgun). Five (9 percent) of the firearms used in a homicide were registered to the victim or the suspect/offender, 9 (15 percent) were registered to a family member or friend, 1 (2 percent) was registered to someone not involved in the homicide but was not reported stolen, 7 (12 percent) had been reported stolen, 18 (31 percent) were unregistered, and 19 (32 percent) were not recovered.

Of the 48 handguns used in homicides, one-third of the handguns (16) were not recovered during the course of the homicide investigation,<sup>5</sup> 25 percent (12) were unregistered, 17 percent (8) were registered to a family member or friend of the suspect/offender, 15 percent (7) had been reported stolen,

and 10 percent (5) were registered to the victim or suspect/offender.

The most popular calibers for handguns used in homicides from 1988 to 1992 were 9mm (11), .357 (10), and .38 (10). Other calibers of handguns used include .45 (4), .22 (5), .25 (1), and .32 (1).<sup>6</sup>

Over half of the 11 long guns (6) used in a homicide from 1988 to 1992 were unregistered, of which at least four were purchased legally in Hawaii (current Hawaii law does not require the registration of long guns). In three of the homicides (27 percent), the long gun was not recovered; in one case (9 percent), the gun was registered to someone not involved in the homicide but was not reported stolen; and in one other case (9 percent), the gun was registered to a family member of the suspect/offender.

Of the nine long guns identified as the murder weapon, six were rifles and three were shotguns. Four of the rifles were .22 caliber and two were .30 caliber. All three of the shotguns were 12 gauge.

Of the 5 guns registered to the suspect/offender or the victim, 2 were used to kill a spouse, 2 a friend, and 1 a stranger. The 9 guns registered to other family members or friends of the suspect/offender were involved in the murder of 4 friends, 3 acquaintances, and 2 strangers. The 1 gun that was registered to someone not directly involved in the homicide but who had not reported the gun stolen was used to kill an acquaintance of the suspect/offender. The 7 guns that had been reported stolen were used to kill 1 family member, 2 friends, 3 acquaintances, and 1 stranger. Eighteen of the guns recovered in homicides were not registered; 4 were involved in the death of a family member, 2 spouses, 5 friends, 4 acquaintances, and 3 strangers. Nineteen victims were killed with firearms which were not recovered, including 1 family member, 3 friends, 8 acquaintances, 1 stranger, and 6 persons where the relationship

between victim and offender was unknown.

Eight of the nineteen persons killed in a domestic argument or during the break-up of a relationship were killed with an unregistered firearm, 5 with a stolen gun, 5 with a registered gun, and 1 with a gun which was not recovered. Of the 16 people killed in nondomestic arguments, 5 were killed with an unregistered gun, 5 with guns which were not recovered, 5 with a registered gun, and 1 with a stolen gun. Those killed in circumstances that were drug- or gang-related (12) were most likely to be killed with a weapon which was not recovered (7); 3 were killed with an unregistered gun, 1 with a stolen gun, and 1 with a gun that was registered to someone not directly involved in the homicide but who had not reported the gun as stolen. The 1 shotgun that was used in the commission of a robbery was unregistered. Three people were killed while "playing around" with a gun, 2 of which were registered to either the victim, suspect/offender, or a family member or friend, and 1 was unregistered. Not surprisingly, the 5 persons killed under unknown circumstances were killed with a gun which was not recovered.

There were 24 suspects/offenders who had no record of any convictions. Five of those suspects/offenders used a firearm which was registered to either the victim or the suspect/offender, 2 suspects/offenders used a firearm registered to a family member or a friend, 4 used a firearm which had been reported stolen, 9 used an unregistered firearm, and 4 used a firearm which was not recovered in the course of the homicide investigation.

Of the 16 suspects/offenders who had a record of petty misdemeanor or misdemeanor convictions only, none used a firearm that was registered to them or the victim. Five of this group of suspects/offenders obtained their murder weapon from a family member or friend, 1 used a gun that was registered to someone not directly

involved with the homicide but that was not reported stolen (the investigation was unable to determine how the suspect/offender came into possession of the firearm), 2 used a weapon which had been reported stolen, 3 used an unregistered gun, and 5 used a weapon which was not recovered.

Fifteen of the suspects/offenders had a record of some type of felony (property, drug-related, or violent). None of those 15 used a gun which was registered to them or their victim and 1 used a gun registered to a friend (the suspect had given the gun to his friend as a gift, then borrowed it to kill his victim; the gun was reported stolen 10 days after the homicide). None of the 15 suspects/offenders used a gun which had been reported stolen. Fourteen of the 15 used a gun which was either unregistered (6) or not recovered (8).

## DISCUSSION

Violent crimes are not common in Hawaii. In 1992, Hawaii had the eleventh lowest homicide rate in the United States, the fifteenth lowest robbery rate, and the sixth lowest aggravated assault rate. For two of those offenses, the proportion committed with a firearm are below the national average: from 1983 to 1992, 35 percent of the homicides in Hawaii were committed with a firearm, compared with 62 percent in the United States overall; and 13 percent of the robberies in Hawaii were committed with a firearm, compared with 36 percent in the United States overall. From 1983 to 1992, 20 percent of the aggravated assaults in Hawaii were committed with a firearm; during that same period, 22 percent of the aggravated assaults nationwide involved a firearm. Arrests for weapons violations have increased at a greater rate in Hawaii than the mainland United States for the period 1983 to 1992 (83 percent versus 27 percent, respectively); however, some of that difference in the rate of increase is explained by the

relatively low numbers of arrests in Hawaii.

Is firearm-related violence a problem in Hawaii? No, and yes. No, because Hawaii certainly has not fallen prey to the handgun violence evidenced in numerous mainland United States cities. Many of the elements which contribute to a high violent crime rate are not currently present in Hawaii. The interrelationship between drugs, gangs, and guns has not developed at the same rate in Hawaii as in other states.

There are several areas of concern when considering the future of firearm-related violence in Hawaii. First, Hawaii is not immune to the conditions which contribute to increasing crime. Trends on the mainland United States can take years to emerge in Hawaii. Rapid urbanization, rising unemployment, especially among minorities, the emergence of more sophisticated gangs, and the lucrative drug trade are examples of what Hawaii's future may hold. On the positive side, the lessons of the mainland United States need not be lost on Hawaii. Hawaii's handling of youth gangs is a good example: through the proactive efforts of both public and private agencies, youth gangs have not evolved as feared into Los Angeles-type organizations.

During the past 10 years in Hawaii, the percentage of firearm-related homicides has remained relatively stable, and the percentage of firearm-related robberies and aggravated assaults has generally declined. However, the sharp upturns in all three categories from 1991 to 1992 bear close watching. Also, the recent United States total homicide and firearm-related homicide trends are increasing, the latter more steeply, providing a more disturbing background for our basic observation of no decrease in firearm-related homicides in Hawaii.

The weapons violation arrests for the United States are another indicator of

concern for Hawaii's future. While Hawaii arrests for weapons violations have increased in rough equality among the juvenile and adult populations, juvenile arrests for these violations nationwide have more than doubled in the last 10 years, while adult arrests have increased less than 15 percent.

It is important to note that the nature of firearm-related violence is different in Hawaii than many mainland locales. The analysis of homicides in the City and County of Honolulu from 1988 to 1992 contained in this report illustrates some of the differences. First of all, Honolulu's homicides are not random acts of violence, nor are they significantly linked to drug trafficking. In 1976, Washington, D.C. adopted a law that banned the purchase, sale, transfer, or possession of handguns by civilians. The city experienced a slight decline in the number of homicides annually until 1985. From 1985 to 1992, the number of homicides doubled (U.S. Department of Justice 1974-1992).

The rapid increase in the number of homicides in Washington, D.C. is largely the result of drug-related violence, specifically crimes involving crack cocaine. From 1987 to 1990, 58 percent of the increase in the number of homicides was due to the increase in crime-related homicides. This increase is attributable to homicides related to drug dealing, the number of which nearly doubled during those years, and robbery. From 1987 to 1990, 48 percent of all homicides in Washington, D.C. were drug related. The drug-related violence generally did not spill over to those outside the "business" (Office of Criminal Justice Plans and Analysis 1991).

The twelve gang- or drug-related homicides involving firearms in the City and County of Honolulu from 1988 to 1992 (20 percent of the firearm-related homicides) did not involve turf disputes over drug trafficking or large-scale rip-offs. Most of the drug-related homicides

involved situations where the victim owed money to his dealer or the theft of a small amount of drugs.

Those who were arrested for, or suspected of, committing homicide with a firearm in Honolulu appear to be different from their counterparts on the continental United States. A recent newsletter from the Attorney General of the State of California (Lungren 1994) cited a statistic from "Homicide in California, 1992" which revealed that 77.3 percent of those arrested for a firearm-related homicide had been convicted of homicide or some other offense.

From 1988 to 1992, 44 percent (24) of the suspects/offenders in firearm-related homicides had no record on any convictions; 73 percent (40) had either no record or a record of convictions for petty misdemeanors and/or misdemeanors only. Twenty-seven percent (15) of the suspects/offenders had a record of any felony conviction(s), of which 60 percent (9) had prior convictions for nonviolent felonies.

An important question not completely answered by this report is how those who committed murder with a firearm came into possession of that firearm. At least 14 (24 percent) of the victims were killed with weapons that were legally registered and that their killer, or suspected killer, had ready access to.

Only 7 of the firearms used in a homicide had been reported stolen. This is somewhat surprising, given the number of firearms stolen annually<sup>7</sup> and the role they can play in the firearms black market. On the other hand, since most of the homicide suspects/offenders were not deeply involved in crime and may not have had ready access to firearms on the black market,<sup>8</sup> the small number of stolen firearms used in homicides is less surprising. In fact, none of the suspects/offenders who used a stolen gun had a felony record, and only 2 suspects/offenders had any record of

convictions at all (both involved misdemeanors).

All of the 18 unregistered firearms which were recovered from a homicide investigation in the City and County of Honolulu from 1988 to 1992 were legal at the time of manufacture. During the course of several homicide investigations, an effort was made to track down the origin of the recovered firearms through the National Crime Information Center, always without success. The guns may have been purchased legally on the mainland United States, brought into Hawaii and not registered. Some of the unregistered firearms may then have been stolen and not reported, and sold on the black market.

It is not possible to determine the origin of the majority of the 19 firearms which were not recovered. During the course of the homicide investigations, some of the suspects told the police that they had received the gun from a friend, or that they had purchased the gun from someone (who they could/would not identify). A review of the firearms registration records revealed that there were no weapons registered to either the victim or the offender in the 19 cases where the murder weapon was not recovered.

Legislation at the federal and state levels concerning violent crime has sparked a great deal of discussion in recent months. In general, most efforts to restrict firearms and the role they play in violent crimes has taken place at the state and local levels. This is certainly true of Hawaii: President Clinton recently signed into law the "Brady Bill" requiring a 5-day waiting period for the purchase of firearms; Hawaii has had a 10-day waiting period since 1981 and a 14-day waiting period since 1992. Since 1986, Hawaii has enacted laws which increase penalties for crimes committed with firearms, prohibit automatic weapons and converting a firearm to an automatic firearm, prohibit assault pistols and detachable ammunition magazines with a capacity in excess of

10 rounds, require safe storage of firearms where a minor is likely to gain access to the firearm, increase penalties for theft of a firearm, and prohibit possession of a firearm while under a protective order of any court.

Two important questions concerning firearm-related violence in Hawaii are: 1) what factors are responsible for the state's relatively low rate of firearm-related violence; and 2) how can those rates be kept low? The first question requires a complex answer, but contains some elements mentioned earlier in this report: urbanization, unemployment, gangs, and drugs. Factors such as migration and mobility, cohesiveness of neighborhoods, educational achievement, and cultural traditions of nonviolence surely influence the rate of violent crimes in Hawaii.

Hawaii also has fewer guns per capita than the mainland United States: an estimated 1 gun for every 3 persons versus 1 gun for every 1.3 persons, respectively. However, the number of firearms registered in the State of Hawaii totaled approximately 16,000 in 1992, an 11 percent increase in 3 years (Honolulu Police Department 1991, 1993; Hawaii County Police Department 1993; Kauai County Police Department 1993; Maui County Police Department 1993). During the same period, the state's de facto population increased only 3 percent (The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism 1993).

The second question - how to keep Hawaii's firearm-related violence rate low - is no less complex. There is a growing body of evidence that links the availability of firearms with gun-related crimes (e.g. Loftin et al. 1991, Sloan et al. 1988, Zimring 1991) and the presence of firearms in the home with an increase in gun-related homicide and suicide (e.g. Kellermann et al. 1993, Kellermann and Reay 1986, Brent et al. 1991). There is compelling evidence that many of Honolulu's 59 firearm-related homi-

cides from 1987 to 1992 would not have occurred had a gun not been readily available.

The problems before the citizens of Hawaii and their elected representatives is how to restrict gun ownership to those who will not use them to kill, rob, and assault, and how to restrict, and ultimately reduce, the number of firearms available through illegal means.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Uniform Crime Reporting Program does not differentiate between handguns and long guns (rifles and shotguns) for the offenses of robbery and aggravated assault committed with a firearm.

<sup>2</sup> Arrest data for weapons violations includes all offenses covered under HRS Chapter 134. A review of the computerized records management system of the police department for the City and County of Honolulu for 1992 revealed that approximately 90 percent of the offenses related to firearms and 10 percent of weapons violations involved carrying a concealed deadly weapon (which may include a firearm) or possessing a switchblade; however, not all of the records listed the specific section of HRS Chapter 134 which was violated. In order to disaggregate the data by specific type of offense (e.g. those involving a firearm), it would require an examination of the actual police reports.

<sup>3</sup> The Crime Prevention Division would like to express its appreciation to the staff of the Honolulu Police Department's Research and Development Division, Records Division, Firearms Registration Division, and the Hawaii Criminal Justice Data Center of the Department of the Attorney General for their assistance in compiling the data in this section of the report.

<sup>4</sup> In 5 of the 6 cases, the victim's body

was found and there was no evidence to connect a suspect to the homicide. In 1 case, a suspect was apprehended, but there was no indication in either the Supplemental Homicide Report, used in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, or in the homicide investigation report concerning the relationship between the victim and the offender.

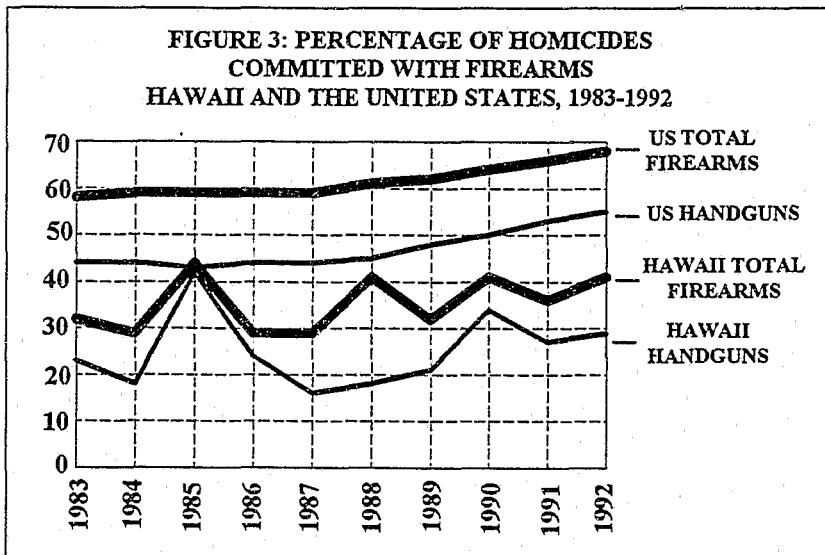
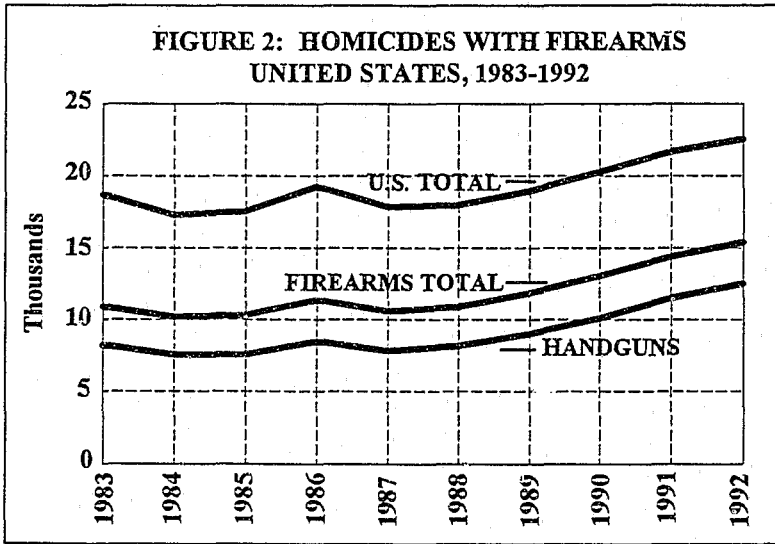
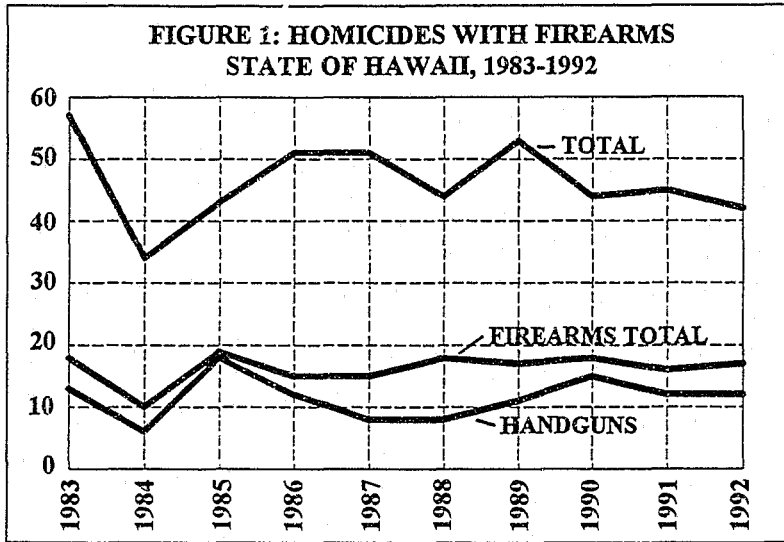
<sup>5</sup> A common scenario involved the suspect/offender disposing of the weapon. The police were often able to identify the specific type of weapon but were unable to locate it.

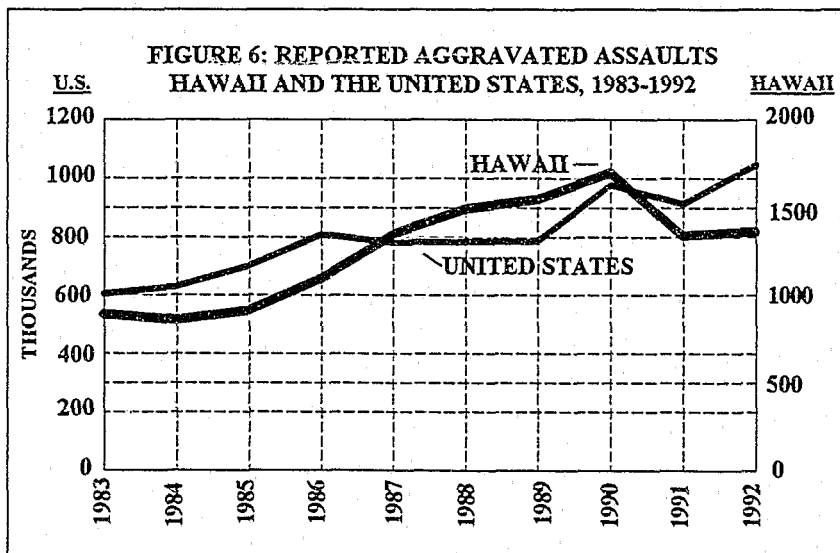
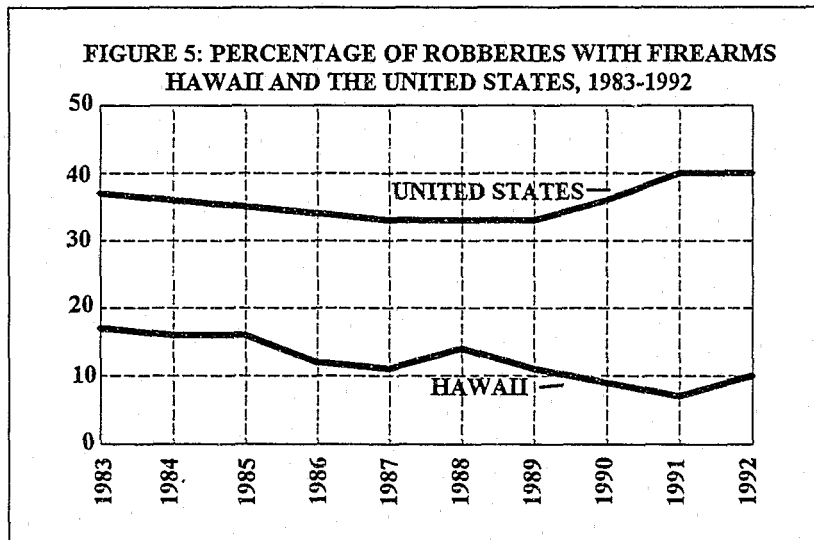
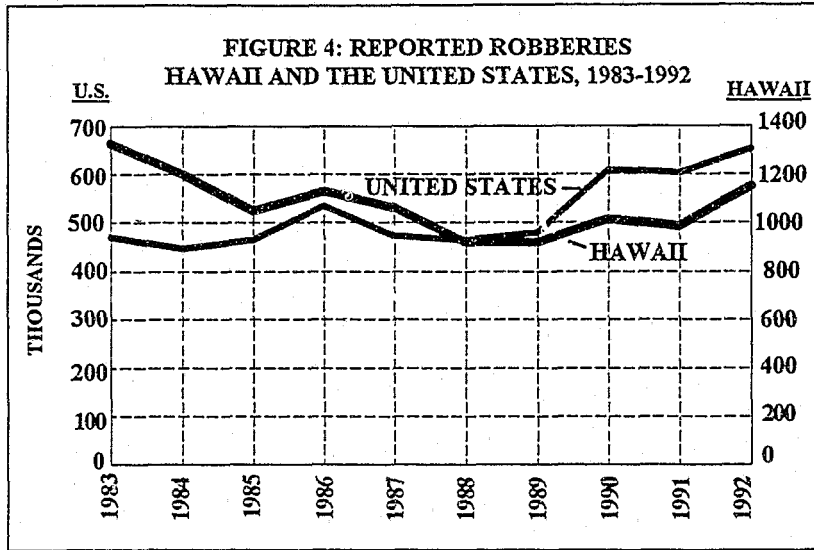
<sup>6</sup> Not all the handguns identified by either the suspect/offender or witnesses were recovered.

<sup>7</sup> In the 4 years from 1989 to 1992, 1,546 firearms were reported stolen in the City and County of Honolulu. In 1989, 386 firearms were reported stolen; in 1990, 308; in 1991, 361; and in 1992, 491.

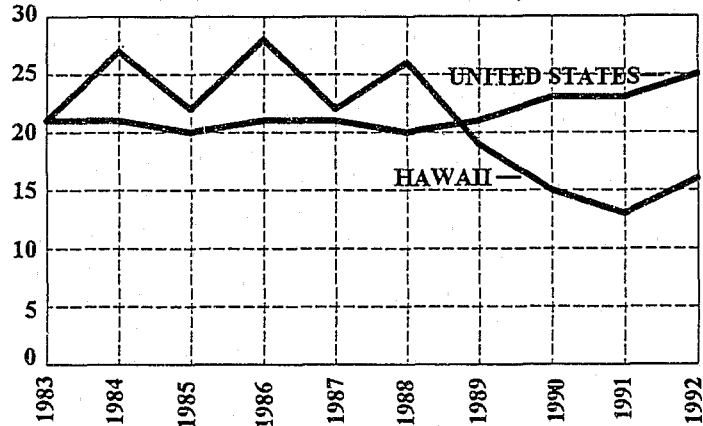
<sup>8</sup> By definition, guns purchased on the black market are illegal. The sources for these guns are those that are stolen locally, and those which are brought into the state illegally. In the latter case, failing to register the gun makes it illegal. The gun may then enter the black market by being sold, or, if stolen, is not likely to be reported.



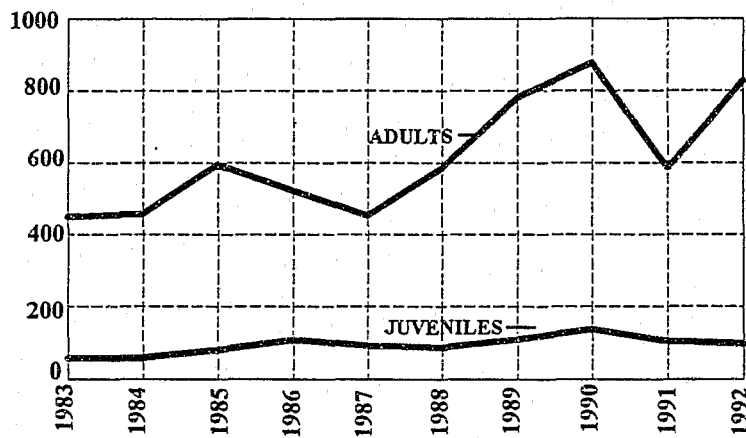




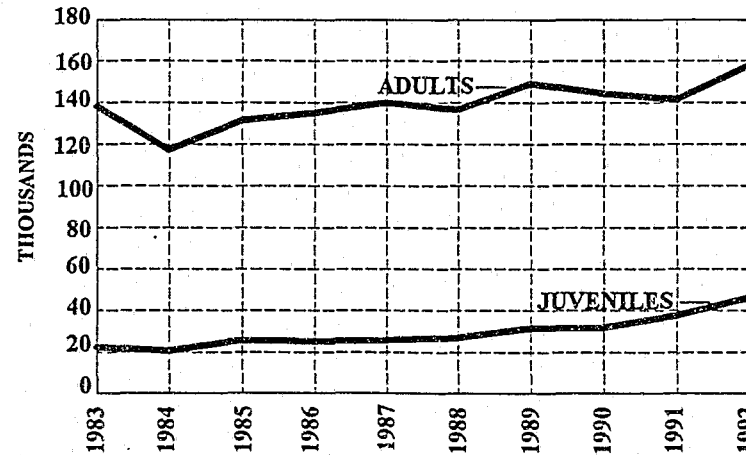
**FIGURE 7: PERCENTAGE OF AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS WITH FIREARMS  
HAWAII AND THE UNITED STATES, 1983-1992**



**FIGURE 8: WEAPONS VIOLATIONS ARRESTS  
HAWAII, 1983-1992**



**FIGURE 9: WEAPONS VIOLATIONS ARRESTS  
UNITED STATES, 1983-1992**



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**T**he data for the Crime Trend Series comes from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. The UCR Program in Hawaii gathers offense and arrest data from each of the four county law enforcement agencies: Honolulu, Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui.

The Research and Statistics Branch of the Crime Prevention Division, Department of the Attorney General, operates as a clearinghouse for the UCR Program, reporting the county offense and arrest data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and publishing the results annually in Crime in Hawaii.

Questions concerning this or other publications can be directed to the authors at (808) 586-1416.

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Department of the Attorney General  
Crime Prevention Division  
810 Richards Street, Suite 701  
Honolulu, HI 96813