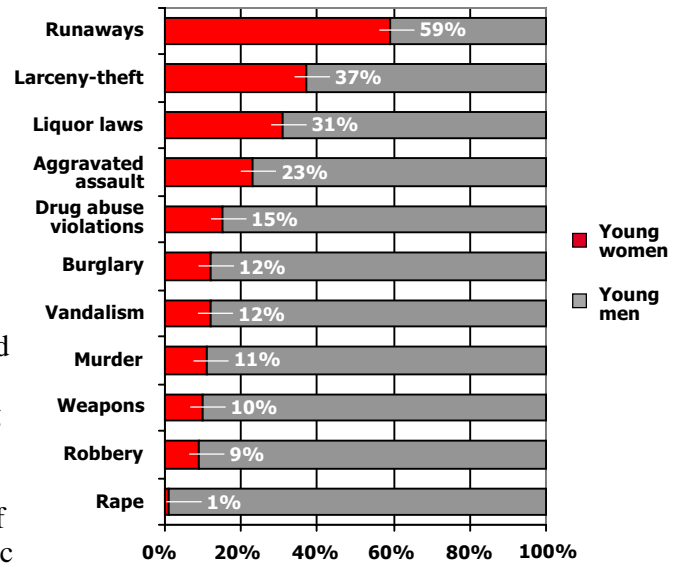


**Girls and Juvenile Justice**

**Being abused is consistently identified as the first step along a girl's pathway into the juvenile justice system**

- ◆ According to the Office of Juvenile Justice, most of the young women who come into contact with the juvenile justice system first do so with a status offense\* (e.g., runaway, truancy, liquor law violations, curfew violations).<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Although a direct link between child abuse and juvenile delinquency is not definitive, childhood maltreatment is a significant risk factor for delinquency.<sup>5</sup> Estimates of young women in the juvenile justice system who have been abused range from about 40% to 73%,<sup>2</sup> compared to a national study in which 26 percent of young women reported having been abused.<sup>6</sup>
- ◆ One review of the literature has indicated that nearly half of incarcerated young women meet the criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.<sup>3</sup>

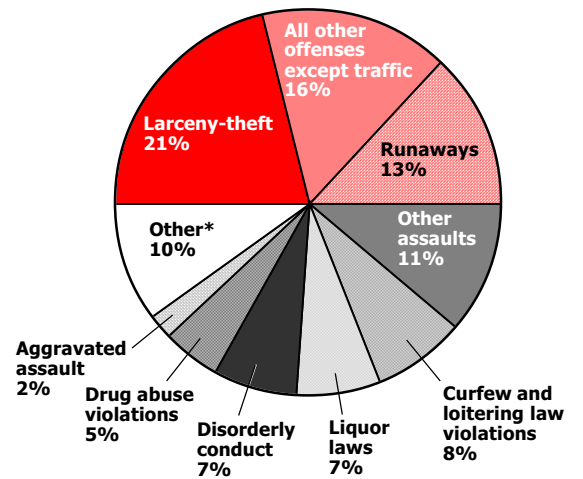
**Figure 1: Juvenile arrests, by gender, 2000.<sup>4</sup>**



**Young women account for more than 1 in 4 arrests of young people**

- ◆ In 2000, 430,000 young women under age 18 were arrested — 28% of the 1,560,000 juvenile arrests that year. That is, more than two and a half times as many young men were arrested as young women.<sup>4</sup> (See Figure 1.)
- ◆ Arrest trends differ widely by sex and by race/ethnicity; they differ also depending on the offense for which young people are arrested.<sup>4</sup>
- ◆ According to the 2000 FBI Uniform Crime Reports, nine types of offense accounted for 90% of arrests of young women. Some 17 types of offense, from Vandalism to Murder, accounted for just 10% of arrests of young women.<sup>4</sup> (See Figure 2.)

**Figure 2: Percentage of arrests of young women under 18, by offense, 2000.<sup>4</sup>**



\* Other offenses include Vandalism, Burglary, Motor vehicle theft, Drunkenness, Stolen property, Weapons, Driving under the influence, Offenses against family and children, Fraud, Sex offenses, Arson, Embezzlement, Prostitution, Vagrancy, Suspicion, Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, Forcible rape.

\* Status offense: Acts that are law violations only for individuals of juvenile status.

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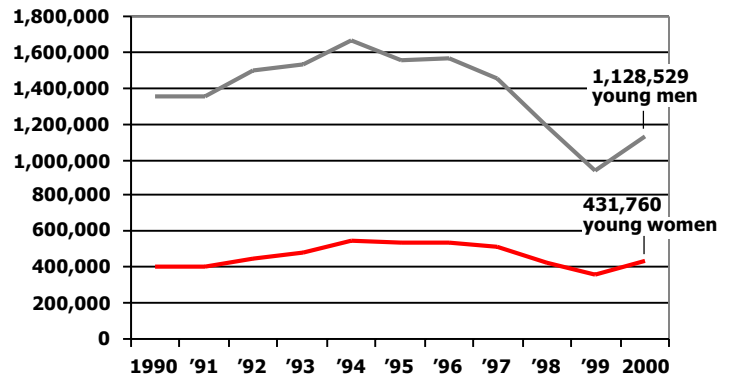
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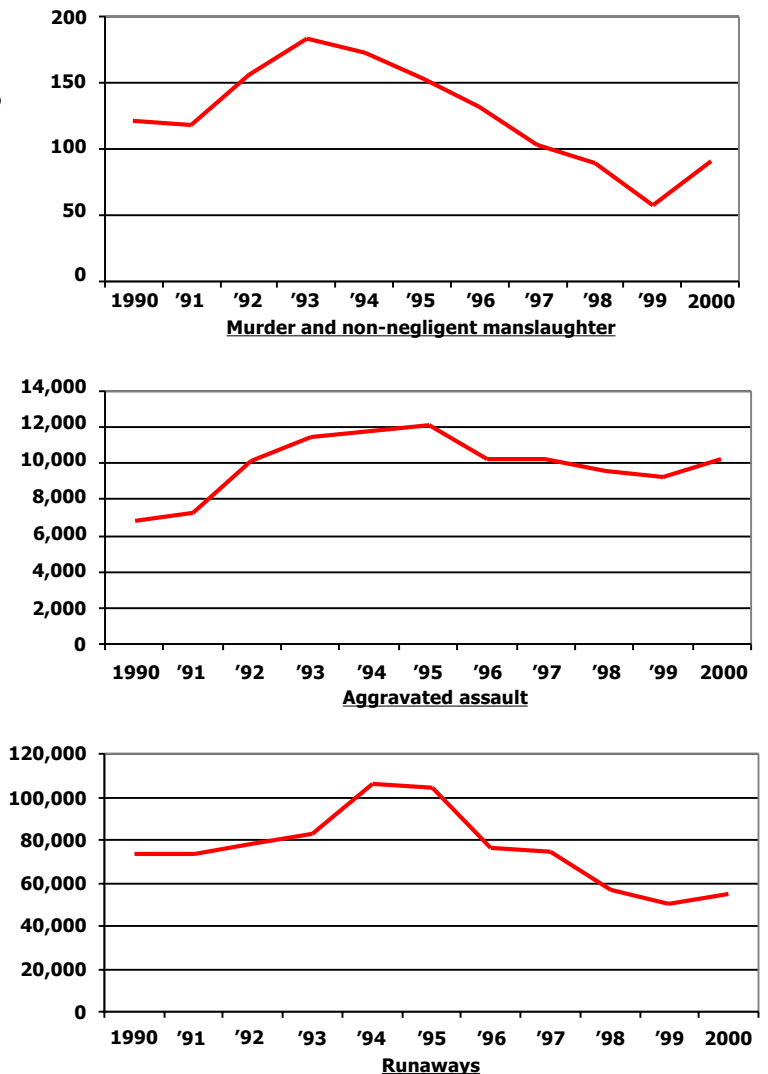
# Girls and Juvenile Justice

- ◆ The proportion of arrests of young women increased between 1994 and 2000 (25% and 28% respectively). However, actual numbers of arrests of young women have decreased — from an estimated 678,500 in 1994 to approximately 431,700 in 2000.<sup>4</sup> (See Figure 3.)
- ◆ Of the young women who enter the juvenile justice system, 73% never return on a new referral.<sup>8</sup>
- ◆ Young women’s participation in gangs has grown more rapidly in smaller cities than in large urban areas. It is estimated that 10% of gang members are young women.<sup>8</sup>
- ◆ Although the percentage of arrests of young women for aggravated assault increased 58% between 1990 and 2000, the total number of those offenses was 10,246, compared to 33,633 arrests of young men in 2000.<sup>4</sup> (See also Figure 4.)
- ◆ Nationally, minority young women account for 34% of the U.S. population of ages 12–17, yet 52% of the young women detained for juvenile offenses were from minority backgrounds.<sup>8,9</sup>
- ◆ Nationwide, for every 100,000 young women, 102 were committed to public or private facilities for juvenile offenses. The custody rate for Black young women was more than three times (234) that for White young women (75). The custody rate for American Indian/Alaskan Native young women was 224 per 100,000; for Hispanic young women 100 per 100,000; and for Asian/Pacific Islander young women 39 per 100,000.<sup>8,9</sup>
- ◆ In 1997, young women represented 17% of detained juveniles, yet represented 47% of juveniles held for status offenses. For the offenses of drug trafficking and weapons violations, young women constituted just one in 20 juveniles held.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 3: Arrest trends of young women and young men under age 18, 1990–2000.<sup>4</sup>**



**Figure 4: Arrests of young women under 18, by offense charged (actual numbers), 1990–2000.<sup>4</sup>**



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