

statistical report **13**

who are the victims?

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Who are the Victims?

Characteristics of Non-victims and Victims

We usually know a lot about the characteristics of criminals, at least about those who are caught and convicted, because in the process of apprehension and trial a large body of statistical data is usually obtained. Little is known however, about the characteristics of the victims, chiefly because the opportunity for gathering the information does not present itself. When a crisis is reported, the focus is on the criminal rather than on the victim. If an attempt were made to obtain detailed statistical information about the victim, such a request would be unlikely to be greeted sympathetically by a person who already felt that his privacy had been invaded.

In this survey we were able to ask two sets of questions which tell us a great deal about the victims of crime. One set of information relates to the attitudes held by victims about crime and law enforcement (as contrasted with attitudes held by non-victims); the other, which we deal with in this section, covers aspects of the life style of the victims which show that crime does not appear to strike at citizens impartially.

Table I compares the characteristics of the 279 victims (within the last 12 months) and the 340 non-victims in our sample.* Most of the data are presented in the form of a ratio, with non-victims as the base.

* For a description of the total sample, made up of two independent sub-samples (Sample 1 and Sample 2), see Statistical Report 12, UNREPORTED CRIME, N.S.W. Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 1974.

Although there are slightly less males than females in our total sample, among the victims there is a preponderance of males (146 : 133, or 1.00 : 0.77). In other words, although males constitute only 45 per cent of our total sample, they make up 52 per cent of the victims. The proportion was practically the same in both Sample 1 and Sample 2, giving rise to the first indication about the nature of victims: they are more likely to be males than females.

The victims tend to be younger than those who have not suffered victimization during the past 12 months, having an average age of 39 years, compared with 46 years as the average for the non-victims.

Although the average (median) family income for Sample 1 and Sample 2 was not identical in both samples it was higher for victims than for non-victims, with a total sample average of \$7,825 for victims and \$6,340 for non-victims.

There appears to be a direct relationship between occupational status and the chances of being a victim of a crime. As can be seen in Table I, the higher the status (of the head of the household) of the people being interviewed, the greater was the likelihood that they had been victims of a crime within the past 12 months.

A similar trend is to be seen according to the status of the family of residence, except that the lowest rate of victimization was found to be in Status C suburbs.

Among those we interviewed, victims were much more likely to come from broken homes (separated/divorced) than would have been expected from the proportion we found among the non-victims. They were also more likely to be single people than were the non-victims.

Table I Characteristics of Non-victims and Victims

N = 340 Non-victims

N = 279 Victims

	Non-Victims	Victims
AGE (Median years)	46.30	38.70
SEX (Proportion of males to females)	1 : 1.34	1 : 0.77
INCOME of Family (Median)	\$6,340	\$7,825

Marital status

	Proportions NV : V
Married	1 : 0.89
Widowed	1 : 0.49
Separated/Divorced	1 : 3.04
Never Married	1 : 2.01

Education

	Proportions NV : V
No secondary school	1 : 0.47
Secondary school	1 : 1.02
Tertiary	1 : 1.93

Residential status

	Proportions NV : V
"A" Grade (Highest)	1 : 1.90
"B" Grade	1 : 1.19
"C" Grade	1 : 0.77
"D" Grade (Lowest)	1 : 1.12

Head of Household

	Proportions NV : V
Protestant	1 : 0.89
Roman Catholic	1 : 0.98
Jew	1 : 1.74
Other	1 : 0.99
None	1 : 1.43

Occupational status

	Proportions NV : V
"A" Grade (Highest)	1 : 1.42
"B" Grade	1 : 1.02
"C" Grade	1 : 0.96
"D" Grade (Lowest)	1 : 0.84

Self employed?

	Proportion NV : V
Yes	1 : 1.44

Roman Catholics were evenly distributed between victims and non-victims, as were (to a lesser extent) Protestants. Among victims, the proportion of Jews was much higher than was to be found among the non-victims, and the same was true of those who professed no religion (atheists, agnostics, "none", etc.).

Victims were twice as likely to be tertiary educated as were non-victims, whereas the reverse was true in relation to primary education where we found that non-victims were twice as likely as victims not to have gone beyond primary school.

A final point of difference was that we found that the head of the household of victims was more likely to be self-employed than was the head of the household of non-victims.

It may appear from the above analysis that the victims of recent crime are more likely to be young males, who are Jewish or irreligious, from high income families where the head of the household is self-employed in a high status occupation, who are also separated or divorced or have never married, who have been to university and live in a high status suburb. Such a conclusion would have to be very tentative, if not consciously avoided, as three conditions would have to be met if these generalisations were to be true.

First, there would have to be large enough numbers in each of the categories to warrant the generalization of typicality; second, there would have to be clear trends (progressively from low income to high income groups, for example) related to the incidence of victimization. Further there is no evidence from the figures as they stand to indicate whether the victims are predominantly males and young and of high status, etc., or whether some victims are males while others are young and others are of high status, etc.

The matter of numbers is particularly important in discussing the proportion of non-victims to victims because if, for

example, only ten people were self-employed, it would be very misleading to generalise about the whole sample, and perhaps about the population from which the sample was drawn, on the basis of the proportion of non-victims to victims among the self-employed who were interviewed. In fact, 28 per cent of our sample came from families where the head of the household was self-employed, a number sufficiently large to generalise about this variable in relation to victimization. On the other hand, there were only 17 Jews in our sample, a figure far too small to generalise with confidence about either Jews or the total sample.

It is much more sensible to look at those variables the responses to which can be arranged in ordinal categories, to see whether there is a discernible trend, i.e. a progression from high to low incidence of victimization (or vice versa) from one category to another (assuming the relationship is linear). For example, 557 of our respondents could be classified according to the status of the occupation of the head of the household (Status A being the highest, Status D the lowest) and we have already indicated that, overall, victims are more frequently to be found to come from families with high status occupations, but it can also be seen (in Table I) that there is a regular increase from status group to status group in the proportion of victims in each group.

In the analyses which follow, we shall be looking for progressive patterns of this nature, in addition to looking closely at major differences in frequencies of response.

Attitudes to Police Law enforcement and the Police

As the protection of the citizen is one of the main responsibilities of the police, we asked a series of questions intended to discover the general feelings people hold about the police and the way in which they are seen to be doing their job.

The first of these questions simply asked whether it was felt that the police in their area were doing an excellent, good, fair, or a poor job in enforcing the laws.

DO YOU THINK THE POLICE HERE DO AN EXCELLENT, GOOD, FAIR OR A POOR JOB IN ENFORCING THE LAWS?

	Percentage
Excellent	11.6
Good	44.4
Fair	31.2
Poor	10.4
Don't know	2.5

If we consider a dividing line to lie between the answers "Fair" and "Good", then the overall response indicates that people generally believe that the police in their district are doing their job well (56 per cent). If "Fair" is considered to be a positive rather than a neutral statement, then the approval figure is even higher (87 per cent) (the percentage being identical for both sub-samples).

The second question named aspects of a policeman's job such as might be relevant to a citizen calling on the resources of the neighbourhood police in time of need. Three alternative answers were given, "Very good", "Pretty good", "Not so good". Again we found that the opinion held about the police in the district is favourable.

HOW GOOD A JOB DO THE POLICE DO ON BEING PROMPT IN ANSWERING CALLS - VERY GOOD, PRETTY GOOD, OR NOT SO GOOD? (ETC.)

How good a job do the police do? Regarding:	Very good	Pretty good	Not so good	No opinion
	%	%	%	%
A. Promptness	23.4	35.0	22.2	19.3
B. Being respectful to people like yourself	48.0	34.1	11.1	6.8
C. Paying attention to complaints	25.0	36.4	19.1	19.5
D. Giving protection to the people in the neighbourhood	22.0	37.2	18.3	22.5

If we regard the answers "Very good" and "Pretty good" as positive, then clearly the combined percentages are high on all four aspects of the policeman's job revealing that in each area of responsibility a majority is of the opinion that the police are doing a good job. Even if we regard "Pretty good" as non-committal, the percentages in the "Very good" column are all higher than the corresponding ones in the "Not so good" column.

Lest we be held to be looking only for evidence of positive attitudes held by the public towards the police, let us look at the results in another way. It is admitted that 56 per cent of the people say that the local police do a good or excellent job of enforcing the laws. But what of the others, who make up almost half the sample? Some either do not know or do not want to express an opinion (3 per cent), but one in every ten claims that the police are making a poor job of enforcing the laws. A third give the response of "Fair", a term which we have held to be neutral or, alternatively, positive. Some might claim that "Fair" is damning with faint praise, and that if that is the best you can say about the way people are doing their job it isn't very good. So, let us add "Fair" to "Poor", and what do we have? Forty one per cent who fail to endorse the work the police are doing as being good or excellent.

Such conclusions as the above, we would suggest, are not entirely justified by the evidence, because in the second question (as we have already indicated) people were given the chance to damn with faint praise if they wanted to, as the negative response provided for those who felt that they could not praise the work the police were doing was "Not so good". The percentages relating to this response as shown are certainly a little higher than the single response of ten per cent who said "Poor" in answer to the first question, but by no means as high as the suggested 41 per cent which resulted when we added "Fair". The average of the four "Not so good" responses to the second question was 17 per cent.

This figure should still be taken seriously, however, for it means that when asked to comment on specific aspects of the policeman's job ("Paying attention to complaints;"etc.), nearly a fifth of the people questioned indicated that, in their opinion, the police were doing a "not so good" job. This reaction should be remembered in conjunction with our discussion in the previous report (No.12) about the reasons given by people to explain why they do not always report incidents where they have been the victims. We pointed out that one of the most often mentioned reasons was that "The police wouldn't want to be bothered about such things" (62 per cent). This statement should be related to the claim by 19 per cent of the people to this later question that the police are "not so good" regarding "paying attention to complaints".

Victims and Non-victims

A further examination of the figures reveals that the generally high opinion we have discussed as being characteristic of the majority of our sample is more a reflection of the views of the non-victims. In each of the four areas of responsibility, the "Very good" response is lower from victims. In every case the figures are higher for victims for the "Not so good" response. In three out of the four items (A,B and D), the "Not so good" responses of the victims outweigh the "Very good" responses.

The same differences between the opinions expressed about the police by victims and non-victims in answer to this question is characteristic of the previous more general question. Whereas 63 per cent of the non-victims, when asked to comment on how well they thought the police were enforcing the laws, praised the local police for the job they are doing (13 per cent "Excellent", 50 per cent "Good"), only 48 per cent of the victims felt this way (10 per cent "Excellent", 38 per cent "Good"). In fact a majority of the victims (51 per cent) answered "Fair" or "Poor". Thus it can be seen that whereas

the overall response is one of praise for the way policemen are doing their job, this praise reflects predominantly the opinions of people who have not been recent victims of any crime.

Law enforcement and specific crimes

Whereas the items in the two questions just discussed were related to general areas of the policeman's job, the next question asked about various crimes and the extent to which it is believed that the police try to enforce the laws against these crimes. If the people interviewed are consistent in their evaluation of the job the police are doing, they could be expected to say, more frequently than not, that the police usually do their best to combat these crimes. The categories of alternative answers provided were as given in the following preamble to the question, as asked by the interviewers:

Q. : For each of the crimes I will read to you, please tell me if you think the police around your neighbourhood always, sometimes, or hardly ever try to enforce the laws against that crime.

The interviewers found that some people said "Never", so we have added that response as another category. Table II summarises the replies.

Table II Police enforcement of laws

How do the police enforce the laws?	Always	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%
A. First, drunken driving, do the police always, sometimes, or hardly ever enforce the laws against drunken driving?	44.9	17.5	7.4	1.7	28.6
B. How about other traffic offences?	43.7	31.3	8.7	0.7	15.6
C. And breaking into people's homes - do the police always, sometimes, or hardly ever enforce the laws against burglary?	42.0	19.5	11.0	0.9	26.7
D. What about fighting in public places, such as bars, parks, or in the street - but I don't mean riots	36.3	22.8	6.5	2.6	31.8
E. Do the police enforce the laws against gambling - always, sometimes, etc.?	12.7	2.9	21.7	10.8	51.9
F. And what about hold-ups and bashing?	47.4	20.0	4.3	1.4	26.9

It can be seen that with the exception of the figure for "gambling offences", the highest response is consistently that the police always try to enforce the laws. Apart from the item of gambling we find that the combined percentage responses under the headings of "Always" and "Sometimes" are comparable with the figure of 60 per cent who, in answer to the previous general question of what sort of a job the police were doing in enforcing the laws, said "Excellent" or "Good".

Victims and Non-victims

Again we must ask if these opinions are characteristic of both victims and non-victims. This time the division between the two groups is not so distinct. Although in all cases but one the percentage of victims who respond "Always" is less than that of the non-victims, the differences are in most instances marginal. When we sum the two positive responses, there is little differences between the two sets of opinions.

Perhaps the point should be made that although there is little difference between the positive scores, the victims consistently record larger negative scores than do the non-victims. But with the exception of gambling, these negative responses are low. These differences support our earlier suggestion that those who have more recently been victimized are less positive than others in their attitudes towards the police.

There were two instances of interesting differences between the attitudes revealed by the victims and the non-victims; in both the level of educational attainment was the important factor. The percentage of non-victims who said that the police always try to enforce the laws against drunken driving decreased with the amount of education of the respondent, but among the victims it was quite the reverse - with them, the

lower the educational attainment of the person concerned, the less likely was he to say that the police always try to enforce the laws relating to drunken driving. Exactly the same difference between non-victims and victims was found in relation to opinions regarding the degree to which the police try to enforce the laws against hold-ups and bashings - the lower the education, the less likely were victims to say "always", while among the non-victims the more the educational attainment the less likely was an "always" response.

Function of the Police

To ask people only whether police are enforcing laws overlooks the fact that one important responsibility of the policeman is to prevent crime from happening. We therefore, asked people to indicate which activity they held to be the main concern of the policeman. Their answers show that prevention of crime is seen as his main responsibility by the majority of people: 69 per cent expressed this view, as contrasted with half that number maintaining that his main concern should be catching criminals.

Victims, possibly because of their recent experiences, more strongly than the others claimed that the policeman should be concerned mainly with the prevention of crime happening rather than catching the criminal after the deed (see next page*).

* In the tables which follow, percentage calculations have been made to the first decimal place for the total sample but have been rounded off to the nearest whole number when relating to percentages of non-victims or victims.

SOME PEOPLE SAY THE MAIN JOB OF THE POLICE IS TO PREVENT CRIMES FROM HAPPENING. OTHERS SAY THE MAIN JOB OF THE POLICE IS TO CATCH THE PEOPLE WHO COMMIT THE CRIMES. DO YOU BELIEVE THE POLICE SHOULD BE MAINLY CONCERNED WITH PREVENTING CRIMES, OR SHOULD THEY BE MAINLY CONCERNED WITH CATCHING CRIMINALS?

	Total	Non-Victims	Victims
	%	%	%
Preventing crime	68.7	64.0	74.0
Catching criminals	31.3	36.0	26.0

If policemen are to prevent crime, then it might be argued that they should have more power to question people, particularly suspects. Maybe so, but most people do not agree. When asked if policemen should be given more power to question people, two thirds of the people interviewed said that they have enough power already. A few felt that they have too much power and that it should be curtailed. However, we must not overlook the fact that 21 per cent said that they would favour an increase in the power of the police to question people, a sizeable proportion when it is realised that it represents one person in every five who would see the powers of the police increased. This view is shared by victims as well as by non-victims, although among the lesser number who feel that police power should be curtailed, victims outnumber non-victims by two to one. The figure of 21 per cent which represents those people who think that the police should have more power is exactly the same as Wilson and Brown discovered in their study.*

* Crime and the Community (1973), p.35.

Police sometimes have a hard time deciding if there is enough evidence to arrest a suspect. We asked people if they thought it is better for the police to risk arresting an innocent person rather than possibly letting the criminal get away. People tended to be conservative in their replies, indicating that it is preferable to be really sure before an arrest is made, even at the risk of letting a criminal escape. On this issue the victims and the non-victims are very much of the same mind.

Police honesty has been challenged (and defended) recently. We asked people to express an opinion about the honesty of the police around their neighbourhood and once again there was remarkable consistency in the replies of the two sub-samples (Sample 1 and Sample 2) with only five per cent of each expressing the opinion that almost all police are corrupt. Approximately 13 per cent of each sub-sample said that they did not know, but 40 per cent said that the police are mostly honest (with a few corrupt) while approximately the same number held that almost all their neighbourhood police were honest.

Opinions among victims and non-victims differed slightly, with victims less inclined than non-victims to say that almost all police are honest, more inclined to say that they are mostly honest with a few corrupt, and with a stronger minority than among the non-victims claiming that they are almost all corrupt. The overall picture is one of a belief that policemen in Sydney are mainly honest.

It is possible that although there is a belief in the honesty which characterises the policeman of the neighbourhood, there may be less confidence in the "higher-ups" in the police force in Sydney. Such a suggestion was not endorsed by the people we questioned. They indicated that they may feel a little less inclined than before to assert that almost all the "higher-ups" in Sydney are honest, but they do not label them as dishonest. They believe that most of them are honest, a few corrupt.

Consistently, both victims and non-victims reduced their "almost all honest" figures for the "higher-ups" in Sydney from those they gave when asked about their local police, and increased the figures indicating that the most accurate description was "mostly honest, few dishonest". The victims maintained their pattern of showing less specific endorsement and more criticism than non-victims, but both groups again assert their belief in the overall honesty of policemen.

We have already seen that one area about which people feel less certain that the police are enforcing the law is gambling. A separate question was asked concerning whether police perhaps should not interfere at all with vice and gambling, or should act only on complaints, or should make every effort to stop the vice and gambling. This question came considerably later in the questionnaire, long after the item which previously referred to gambling. Opinion was evenly divided in both sub-samples between indicating that the police should act only on complaints, and that they should make every effort to curtail gambling and vice. Together these two opinions accounted for over 90 per cent of the replies with very few people advocating non-interference.

In spite of the pattern of opinions being practically identical in each of the separate sub-samples, the victims in each sub-sample displayed a slightly more tolerant attitude than did the non-victims. They were less inclined to say that the police should make every effort to stop the vice and gambling, and they were more inclined than were the non-victims to support non-interference on the part of the police, but the latter figure is still small, with 90 per cent of both groups favouring either action on complaints or strong independent action aimed at prevention.

It is not difficult to reconcile this revealed tendency on the part of victims to be less insistent that the police

should make every effort to stop vice and gambling, with the previously discussed tendency for victims to say that the main job of the police is to prevent crime, if we remember that victims seemed to be most concerned about crimes which could possibly affect them. Presumably vice and gambling are regarded as crimes on the part of the victim, not calling for preventive action on the part of the police.

An activity which brings up alternatives of action similar to those associated with gambling is demonstrations. Police are sometimes criticised for their handling of participants in demonstrations or for their failure to act effectively, just as they are sometimes criticised for their operations or non-operations in relation to gambling. We asked whether or not political and civil rights demonstrations should be allowed without restrictions.

Most people appear to be in favour of permitting demonstrations (81 per cent), although the majority supported the response: "Allow, if peaceful", rather than "Allow demonstrations no matter what", but one fifth (18 per cent) asserted that demonstrations should not be allowed at all.

Victims were more inclined than non-victims to say that these political and civil rights demonstrations should be permitted without restrictions, perhaps for the same reasons as those suggested in the discussion about their attitude towards police, vice and gambling.

A relative or friend who is a Policeman

We have discovered from the responses already discussed that attitudes to the police are, in some way, related to being a recent victim of a crime. It is possible that a more favourable (or it could be, a less favourable) attitude to the police could be revealed by those people who have a close friend

or a relative who is a policeman. Later, in another report, we shall examine the correlates of this relationship but at this point we shall show whether or not victims, with their tendency to be less positive towards the police, are more frequently than non-victims to be found to have friends or relatives who are policemen.

Approximately a quarter of all people interviewed indicated that they have a close friend or relative who is a policeman and it turned out that this was indeed something which was more characteristic of victims than non-victims.

DO YOU HAVE A CLOSE FRIEND OR
RELATIVE WHO IS A POLICEMAN?

	Total	Non-Victims	Victims
	%	%	%
Yes	27.4	23.0	33.0
No	72.5	77.0	67.0

Similarly, apart from close friends and relatives, more victims were on name-greeting terms with policemen than were non-victims.

(OTHER THAN A CLOSE FRIEND OR RELATIVE)
DO YOU KNOW A POLICEMAN WELL ENOUGH TO CALL
HIM BY NAME IF YOU SAW HIM ON THE STREET?

	Total	Non-Victims	Victims
	%	%	%
Yes	45.8	42.0	51.0
No	54.0	58.0	49.0

We have seen that victims are more likely to know a policeman well enough to greet him by name in the street, more likely to have a close friend or relative who is a policeman, but that they are in some respects more critical of policemen than are non-victims, and inclined to be more critical of the way they carry out their job. It may seem difficult, now, to predict whether, compared with non-victims, victims will be more inclined to say that policemen's salaries are too high or too low.

Overall, the public feel divided on the issue of police pay. Very few (1 per cent) believe that the policeman's pay is too high, but a third said that they just do not know. Another third felt that salaries were too low, while approximately a quarter said that they were just about right. With opinion so more or less evenly spread over all the possible answers except one, we are forced to say that there is no general agreement about the satisfactoriness of police pay, but that almost all are agreed that it is not too high.

However, there is a marked difference between the opinions of victims and non-victims. In spite of (or perhaps because of) the tendency to be more critical of the way policemen are doing their job, the victims are much more emphatic in their claim that the policeman's salary is too low. They are less inclined than the non-victims to say that they cannot express an opinion on this matter, and they are also less inclined to say that the policeman's pay is just about right.

We are in a position to compare some of the material we have been discussing in relation to attitudes held by people in Sydney towards the police with answers to the same questions as given by a nation-wide sample of Americans.*

* See the NORC study; the field work was completed in 1966.

The main concern of the police is seen to be very much the same in both countries, but with the American less inclined to stress prevention of crime. Apparently, however, in Sydney people are less convinced that he is doing his job well; the combined percentages of those who say "Excellent" and "Good" is 56 per cent, as compared with the American's 67 per cent, although both sets of figures indicate that the majority is not complaining. The excellence of the police as seen by the Americans is more an opinion of the higher income bracket people than the lower, although we do not find that to be so in Sydney:

	Family Income				
	"The police are doing an excellent job"	\$0 - \$2,999	\$3,000 - \$5,999	\$6,000 - 9,999	\$10,000 & over
	%	%	%	%	%
U.S.A.	18.0	18.0	23.0	30.0	
Sydney	21.0	12.0	13.0	7.0	

However, stories about the police being corrupt are discounted as much in one country as the other, with over 80 per cent in each asserting that most or all police are honest. Similarly, over 80 per cent in both countries have no complaints about the respect afforded them by the police.

So far, one may have gained the impression that the public attitudes towards the police are not very much different in the two countries. But their feelings about the exercise of the authority of the police varies between the two countries. For example, when asked whether they think that the police

should interfere with vice and gambling, only 46 per cent of Sydney people say that they believe the police should make every effort to stop it. The Americans, on the other hand, voice this opinion to the extent of 73 per cent! When asked whether demonstrations should be allowed or not, only 18 per cent of Sydney people assert that they should not be allowed at all, compared with 40 per cent of Americans.

Clearly, although the Americans are more satisfied with the job their police are doing, they still want them to be more assertive, to exercise more restraints. To this end, the majority (52 per cent) favour giving the police more power, a suggestion supported by less than half that proportion in Sydney, and they want then to go ahead and arrest suspects even at the risk of arresting an innocent person, to a far greater extent than do the people in Sydney.

The Courts -- Prisons -- and Juries

The Courts

Inseparable with the policeman's lot is the functioning of the courts and the prisons. The policeman may do the arresting, but people are also aware of the consequences of this action when the accused is tried by the courts and, if sentenced, passed to a third agent of society in the enforcement of the law.

In both sub-samples there was more criticism of the way the courts are dealing with crime than praise for the job they are doing. Very few (3 per cent) said that, in their opinion, the courts were doing an excellent job, and almost four times as many (11 per cent) claimed that they were doing a very poor job. The combined approval ("Excellent" plus "Good") of the

work being done by the courts in dealing with crime was only half as large as the combined disapproval.

HOW DO YOU RATE THE JOB THE COURTS ARE DOING IN DEALING WITH CRIME?

	Total		Non-Victims		Victims	
	%		%		%	
Excellent	2.6	22.2	3.0	27.0	2.0	17.0
Good	19.6		24.0		15.0	
Acceptable	28.0		28.0		28.0	
Unsatisfactory	31.8	43.0	29.0	36.0	35.0	51.0
Very poor	11.2		7.0		16.0	
Don't know	6.9		9.0		4.0	

It can be seen that this general dissatisfaction of the job the courts are doing in dealing with crime is largely a victims' opinion, but neither among non-victims nor victims was the percentage of satisfaction very high.

When people were asked to explain why they felt as they did about the way the courts are dealing with crime, a variety of explanations was given. Those who praised the courts indicated that they thought they were doing the best they can by giving appropriate penalties and applying the law as it stands. Those critical of the manner in which the courts are operating commented on the backlog of cases and the delay in court hearings, as well as complaining that justice seemed to vary according to factors such as the quality of the lawyer or the age of the accused. One in

six felt that the penalty does not always fit the crime, while others (36 per cent) felt that the courts are too lenient. These opinions were expressed by victims and non-victims alike, with a slight tendency for the victims to stress the belief that the punishment does not always fit the crime and can be too harsh, an attitude which is consistent with the comments made later in the interview about jurors.

The Prisons

It may have been noticed that people when asked to comment on matters such as the efficiency of the police force or the courts, do not feel ill-equipped to do so. Although, similarly, very few people (7 per cent) failed to comment on the job the courts were doing and even less (2 per cent) about police efficiency, almost a quarter (23 per cent) felt unable to express an opinion about the effectiveness of the prisons.

Looking at those who did express their assessment of the way the prisons are doing their job we find that non-committal ("Acceptable") approval was indicated by almost the same percentage as had previously endorsed the jobs the courts are doing (28 per cent). But whereas almost half the people interviewed had been critical of the way the courts are dealing with crime, less than a third feel this way about prisons. At the same time, this percentage figure is the highest of all the responses, meaning that although the public feel less qualified to comment on the extent to which the prisons are satisfactorily dealing with the problem of crime, they nevertheless express more dissatisfaction than satisfaction (see next page).

HOW DO YOU RATE THE JOB THE PRISONS
ARE DOING IN DEALING WITH CRIME?

	Total		Non-Victims		Victims	
	%		%		%	
Excellent	2.1	19.9	3.0	23.0	1.0	16.0
Good	17.8		20.0		15.0	
Acceptable	27.6		27.0		28.0	
Unsatisfactory	21.1	29.1	18.0	23.0	25.0	37.0
Poor	8.0		5.0		12.0	
Don't know	23.5		27.0		19.0	

Consistent with their comment about the job the courts are doing, the victims were also more adversely critical than were the non-victims about the prisons - considerably more critical. A breakdown of the total sample into these two groups shows that among the non-victims opinion was almost equally divided between the four possible opinions: approval, non-committal, disapproval, no opinion. The victims were less undecided; the percentage of those who said that the job the prisons are doing in dealing with crime is unsatisfactory (or poor) is twice that of those who described it as satisfactory (or excellent).

Those who looked with general approval at the job the prisons are doing tended to stress either the rehabilitative or the punishment aspect of prisons, with a few people accepting the limiting resources available to the prisons and saying that they are doing the best they can ("after all, there are few

escapes, so it cannot be too bad"). The relative emphasis given to these explanations is shared by both victims and non-victims. With two exceptions, the relative emphasis on the reasons given for dissatisfaction with the job the prisons are doing was also shared by the non-victims and the victims, with the latter feeling more strongly that prisons are unproductive institutions and that they do not have an inadequate reformative influence. Both groups equally stressed that there was not enough discipline, that prisons should be punitive.

Juries

Insofar as court decisions are often in the hands of juries, the public may be expected to have definite opinions about how members of juries should act. We asked each person to suppose that he/she were serving on a jury and had to decide a criminal case. We asked them to indicate whether they would be more likely to agree with those jurors who follow strictly the instructions of the judge about applying the rules of the law to the facts presented in the case, or to agree with those jurors who are more flexible about the law and more likely to take into account other information about the defendant and his background. Although eight per cent said that they did not know how they would act under the circumstances, two thirds indicated that they would agree with those jurors who are more flexible about the law. In both sub-samples the proportions were the same, and, as might be now be expected, the victims more heavily endorsed the second proposal:

	Total	Non-Victims	Victims
Would agree with rule-minded jurors	26.2	29.0	23.0
Would agree with more flexible jurors	66.4	62.0	72.0
Don't know	7.4	9.0	5.0

Various Crimes and Injustices

Right at the end of the interview each person was asked to indicate how seriously he regarded several items which represented behaviour described as illegal or unjust. He was required to indicate how serious each act was by indicating a number from 1 to 11, number 1 representing the least serious and number 11 the most serious. The question served two purposes. One was to discover the rank order of seriousness which would result, the other was to discover if there were any marked differences between the attitudes of victims and non-victims.

It can be seen in Table III that all except one were regarded as of more than average seriousness, ranging from the least serious (theft of \$5) to murder or manslaughter. The theft of a motorcar is evidently not thought of as being much more serious than the theft of property worth \$5. Apparently it is a much more serious matter to refuse a room in a hotel to a negro than it is to steal a motorcar (assuming that it is recovered undamaged). The four acts of physical violence are seen as the four most serious of the eleven situations listed.

There are two observations to make about the comparison of the mean scores of the non-victims and the victims. First, the scores are remarkably close. There is no single item over which there is a serious dispute about the degree of its seriousness. Accordingly, we would be entitled to assume that there is a very clear idea throughout the community of the seriousness with which these acts are regarded.

The second observation is that, in spite of the close agreement about the relative seriousness of the eleven

items, in nine cases the victims give a lower mean score than do the non-victims. That is, they give a slightly lower emphasis to most of these crimes than do the non-victims.

Table III: Attitudes towards various Crimes and Injustices

	Mean Score				Mean Score		
	Total	Non-Victims	Victims		Total	Non-Victims	Victims
1. A person inflicts injury on another person who dies from the injury	10.49	10.48	10.50	7. A person without a weapon threatens to harm a victim unless the victim gives him money. The offender takes the victim's money (\$5) and leaves without harming the victim	7.74	7.75	7.71
2. A person forces a female to submit to sexual intercourse. No other physical injury is inflicted	9.99	10.05	9.91	8. A hotel manager refuses to rent a person a room because he is a negro	7.63	7.61	7.66
3. A person inflicts an injury on another person who is treated by a physician and his injuries require him to be hospitalised	8.94	8.99	8.87	9. A person legally separated from his family fails to send child support payments	7.54	7.90	7.09
4. A policeman roughs up a suspect in the police station	8.63	8.78	8.44	10. A person takes an automobile which is recovered undamaged	6.12	6.20	6.02
5. Without breaking into or entering a building and with no one else present, a person takes property worth \$1,000	8.35	8.61	8.03	11. Without breaking into or entering a building and with no one else present, a person takes property worth \$5	5.71	5.92	5.44
6. A gambling house owner pays the police and political officials not to interfere with his club	8.31	8.51	8.05				

The emerging picture of the Victim

In the last of these three reports we shall show that the victim appears to be a person who is generally apprehensive about the likelihood of crime occurring near or to him. The findings discussed in the present report suggest that this apprehension is accompanied by an assertion that the main job of the police is the prevention of crime, not the catching of criminals after the crime has been committed (with him as the victim?). He is also less likely than non-victims to say that the police do a good job, he is more critical of the job the courts are doing and considerably more critical of the way the prisons are dealing with crime.

At the same time, we find that he is more likely than non-victims to have a relative or a friend who is a policeman, he is more critical of the policeman's low pay, and if he were serving on a jury he would be more likely to side with the jurors flexible about the law and its application.

Furthermore, we have noted that there is an overall tendency for recent victims of crimes to see various crimes and injustices, about which there is considerable public consensus, a little less seriously than do other people.

Our further study of the nature of the victim will be in the context of feelings of safety in the suburbs of Sydney as indicated by its citizens.

