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Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin

National Crime Victimization Survey

May 1995, NCJ-151658

Criminal Victimization 1993

By Lisa Bastian
BJS Statistician

In 1993 U.S. residents age 12 or older experienced a total of 43.6 million crimes — nearly 11 million violent victimizations and over 32 million property crimes. Expressed as the number of crimes per 1,000 persons or households, crime rates indicate that there were 52 violent victimizations per 1,000 persons and 322 property crimes per 1,000 households.

Violent crimes, a quarter of the total that victims described, include rape and sexual assault, robbery, and both aggravated and simple assault, from the victimization survey, and homicide, from crimes reported to police (see page 3). Property crimes are comprised of burglaries, motor vehicle thefts, and thefts of other property.

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is an ongoing survey of households, each year interviewing about 100,000 persons in 50,000 households.

Improved NCVS survey procedures and a revised questionnaire now enable BJS to count crimes that were excluded or unreported in previous years. To learn about these changes, see **The NCVS redesign** on page 6.

This Bulletin includes not only the 1993 victimization estimates from the redesigned survey but also the first tabulations of 1992 data based on the redesigned survey.

About 4 in 10 of the violent crimes estimated by the victimization survey, and about 3 in 10 of the property crimes, were reported to the police.

For both violent and property crimes, blacks were more likely than whites — and urban residents more likely than rural residents — to be victimized.

Highlights

Of the 43.6 million criminal victimizations that victims described in 1993, 10.9 million were rapes, robberies, or assaults.

Among the almost 100 million households in the United States, there were over 32 million property crimes in 1993.

- Violent victimization rates, the number of crimes during 1993 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, included —
 - 2 rapes or attempted rapes
 - 1 sexual assault
 - 4 robberies with property taken
 - 3 assaults with serious injury.
- Victims sustained a rape or some other non-rape injury in over 2.6 million incidents in 1993; about 29% of the robberies involved injury.
- Males, blacks, and the young were more likely than others to experience violent crime:
 - 1 in 16 males and 1 in 23 females
 - 1 in 15 blacks and 1 in 20 whites
 - 1 in 8 persons age 12 to 15 and 1 in 179 persons age 65 or older.
- Persons in households with an income below \$7,500 a year were over twice as likely as those from households with \$75,000 or more to be victims of violence.
- City dwellers were robbed at more than 3 times the rate of rural residents.
- The households of city dwellers were victimized by motor vehicle theft at almost 5 times the rate of rural households.
- An estimated 35% of the crimes described by victims were reported to law enforcement authorities. Violent victimizations had the highest reporting rate, 42%, compared to 27% of personal thefts and 33% of household property crimes.

10.9 million violent crimes in 1993

Victims sustained 10.9 million violent crimes. These crimes included almost a half million rapes and sexual assaults, 1.3 million robberies, over 2.5 million aggravated assaults, 6.5 million

simple assaults, and 24,526 murders (table 1 and the box on page 3).

In terms of crime rates per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, during 1993 there were 2 rapes or attempted rapes, 1 sexual assault, 6 completed or at-

tempted robberies, 12 aggravated assaults, and 31 simple assaults. Murders were the least frequent violent victimizations — in 1993 about 1 murder per 10,000 persons.

In over 70% of all violent crime incidents, the crime was attempted but not completed. Such incidents ranged from attempts to rape or rob to threats of violence, which may or may not have included a weapon.

Over 2.6 million incidents, nearly a quarter of the violent crimes, resulted in injury to the victim.¹ About 29% of all the robberies occurring that year involved injury to the victim.

Burglaries, motor vehicle thefts, and household thefts

Most crimes sustained in 1993 were property crimes. Nearly three-quarters of all victimizations studied by the survey, or 32 million victimizations, were burglaries, motor vehicle thefts, or thefts.

About 6 million household burglaries occurred in 1993. Almost a third of the total, 1.9 million victimizations, were forcible entries. Three million were unlawful entries without force, and 1.2 million were attempts to enter using force.

There were close to 2 million car thefts and an additional 24 million property thefts. The largest share of the property thefts, 9.6 million or 40%, involved a loss of property valued at less than \$50 by the victim. In about 18%, or 4.3 million, the loss was estimated to be at least \$250. There were also 1.2 million theft attempts.

Expressed as a property crime rate, there were 60 burglaries, 20 motor vehicle thefts, and 243 property thefts per 1,000 households in 1993.

¹Rapes are included as injuries.

Table 1. Criminal victimizations and victimization rates, 1992-93: Estimates from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey

Type of crime	Number of victimizations (1,000's)		Victimization rates (per 1,000 persons age 12 or older)	
	1992 ^a	1993	1992 ^a	1993
All crimes	42,912	43,622
Personal crimes^b	10,692	11,409	51.1	53.9
Crimes of violence	10,317	10,896	49.3	51.5
Completed violence	3,311	3,226	15.8	15.3
Attempted/threatened violence	7,006	7,670	33.5	36.3
Rape/Sexual assault	607	485	2.9	2.3
Rape/attempted rape	374	313	1.8	1.5
Rape	175	160	.8	.8
Attempted rape	200	152	1.0	.7
Sexual assault	233	173	1.1	.8
Robbery	1,293	1,307	6.2	6.2
Completed/property taken	862	826	4.1	3.9
With injury	310	276	1.5	1.3
Without injury	552	549	2.6	2.6
Attempted to take property	431	481	2.1	2.3
With injury	81	100	.4	.5
Without injury	350	381	1.7	1.8
Assault	8,416	9,104	40.2	43.0
Aggravated	2,317	2,578	11.1	12.2
With injury	671	713	3.2	3.4
Threatened with weapon	1,646	1,865	7.9	8.8
Simple	6,099	6,525	29.1	30.8
With minor injury	1,445	1,358	6.9	6.4
Without injury	4,655	5,167	22.2	24.4
Property crimes	32,220	32,213	325.3	322.4
Household burglary	5,815	5,995	58.7	60.0
Completed	4,756	4,835	48.0	48.4
Forcible entry	1,845	1,858	18.6	18.6
Unlawful entry without force	2,911	2,977	29.4	29.8
Attempted forcible entry	1,059	1,160	10.7	11.6
Motor vehicle theft	1,838	1,967	18.6	19.7
Completed	1,203	1,297	12.1	13.0
Attempted	635	670	6.4	6.7
Theft	24,568	24,250	248.0	242.7
Completed ^c	23,474	23,033	237.0	230.5
Less than \$50	10,313	9,642	104.1	96.5
\$50-\$249	7,976	7,688	80.5	76.9
\$250 or more	4,144	4,264	41.8	42.7
Attempted	1,094	1,217	11.0	12.2

Note: These data are preliminary and may vary slightly from the final estimates. Completed violent crimes include completed rape, sexual assault, completed robbery with and without injury, aggravated assault with injury, and simple assault with minor injury. The total population age 12 or older was 209,352,860 in 1992; in 1993 it was 211,524,770. The total number of households in 1992 was 99,046,200; in 1993 it was 99,926,400. ...Not applicable.

^aThese 1992 estimates are based on a half sample of data from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey and are not directly comparable with figures previously published for 1992, which were estimated under the previous, and now superseded, survey design.

^bThe victimization survey cannot measure murder because of the inability to question the victim. Personal crimes include purse snatching and pocket picking, not shown separately.

^cIncludes thefts in which the amount taken was not ascertained.

Victimizations reported to law enforcement authorities

Overall, 42% of the violent crimes committed in 1993 were reported to the police (table 2). Thirty-four percent of all rapes were reported, while 19% of sexual assaults were brought to the attention of law enforcement authorities. Fifty-six percent of robberies, 53% of aggravated assaults, and 35% of simple assaults were reported to the police.

Murder in the United States, 1993

In its annual compilation of local police agency statistics for 1993, the FBI reported 24,526 murders or non-negligent manslaughters — a 3% increase over the previous year. The national murder rate was 10 per 100,000 inhabitants.

The FBI defines murders in its annual report *Crime in the United States* as the willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another. The incidence of murder varies by U.S. region, and characteristics of murder victims vary according to sex, race, and age.

In 1993 Southern States accounted for 41% of the homicides but 35% of the Nation's population. The West, which held 22% of the population, accounted for 23% of the murders. The Midwest reported 19% of the murders, and the Northeast, 17%.

Supplemental demographic information was available for 23,271 murder victims. About 51% of these victims were black, 46% were white, and more than 2%, of some other racial identity.

Victims were likely to be male and relatively young: 77% were male, and nearly 50% were between ages 20 and 34. About 12% were under age 18.

In 1993, 47% of murder victims were known to be either related to (12%) or acquainted with (35%) their assailants. Fourteen percent of victims were murdered by strangers, while 39% of victims had an unknown relationship to their murderer.

About a third of all the property crimes that victims recalled to NCVS were reported to the police. However, motor vehicle thefts were more likely than

any other crime to be reported; the police were informed in 78% of all motor vehicle thefts or attempted thefts.

Table 2. Victimizations reported to the police, 1992-93: Estimates from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey

Type of crime	Number of victimizations reported (1,000's)		Percent of victimizations reported to the police	
	1992 ^a	1993	1992 ^a	1993
All crimes	15,433	15,345	36.0%	35.2%
Personal crimes^b	4,527	4,670	42.3%	40.9%
Crimes of violence	4,425	4,534	42.9	41.6
Completed violence	1,867	1,732	56.4	53.7
Attempted/threatened violence	2,558	2,802	36.5	36.5
Rape/Sexual assault	196	140	32.2	28.8
Rape/attempted rape	121	106	32.2	34.0
Rape	40	56	22.9	34.7
Attempted rape	81	51	40.4	33.4
Sexual assault	75	33	32.2	19.4
Robbery	755	733	58.4	56.1
Completed/property taken	577	558	66.9	67.5
With injury	213	191	68.9	69.2
Without injury	363	366	65.8	66.7
Attempted to take property	178	176	41.3	36.6
With injury	63	49	77.1	48.8
Without injury	115	127	32.9	33.3
Assault	3,474	3,661	41.3	40.2
Aggravated	1,268	1,367	54.7	53.0
With injury	477	414	71.2	58.0
Threatened with weapon	791	953	48.0	51.1
Simple	2,206	2,294	36.2	35.2
With minor injury	722	674	50.0	49.6
Without injury	1,484	1,620	31.9	31.4
Property crimes	10,906	10,675	33.8%	33.1%
Household burglary	2,952	2,931	50.8	48.9
Completed	2,582	2,496	54.3	51.6
Forcible entry	1,468	1,393	79.5	75.0
Unlawful entry without force	1,114	1,103	38.3	37.1
Attempted forcible entry	371	435	35.0	37.4
Motor vehicle theft	1,405	1,530	76.5	77.8
Completed	1,119	1,212	93.0	93.5
Attempted	287	317	45.1	47.4
Theft	6,549	6,215	26.7	25.6
Completed ^c	6,288	5,864	26.8	25.5
Less than \$50	1,375	1,147	13.3	11.9
\$50-\$249	2,121	1,989	26.6	25.9
\$250 or more	2,574	2,429	62.1	57.0
Attempted	260	350	23.8	28.8

Note: These data are preliminary and may vary slightly from the final estimates. Completed violent crimes include completed rape, sexual assault, completed robbery with and without injury, aggravated assault with injury, and simple assault with minor injury.

^aThese 1992 estimates are based on a half sample of data from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey and are not directly comparable with figures previously published for 1992, which were estimated under the previous, and now superseded, survey design.

^bThe victimization survey cannot measure murder because of the inability to question the victim. Personal crimes include purse snatching and pocket picking, not shown separately.

^cIncludes thefts in which the amount taken was not ascertained.

Compared to personal thefts or household property thefts, violent victimizations had the highest reporting rate. Victims may cite many reasons for reporting or not reporting particular crimes to law enforcement authorities.²

When victims report violent incidents to the police, a common reason they give is that they wanted to prevent future crimes from being committed against them by the offender or offenders. Victims also reported incidents because they thought it was the right thing to do. Among victims who chose not to report a violent crime, many indicated that they felt the matter was private or personal in nature.

²For analyses of reasons why victims reported or did not report crimes, see *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1992*, BJS, NCJ-145125, March 1994.

Victims of personal and property thefts frequently reported the incidents to recover their stolen property, or chose not to report because they had been able to recover their property or the theft attempt had been unsuccessful.

Characteristics of victims

Research by BJS has shown a relationship between certain demographic characteristics and the risk of crime victimization.³ Males, young persons, blacks, Hispanics, residents of central cities, and the poor tend to have higher rates of victimization than persons who do not possess these characteristics (table 3).

³Highlights from *20 Years of Surveying Crime Victims*, BJS report, NCJ-144525, October 1993.

For every violent crime category but rape and sexual assault, victimization rates were significantly higher for males than females. Males were twice as likely as females to experience robbery and aggravated assault. However, there were 4 rapes or sexual assaults per 1,000 females age 12 or older and 0.4 rapes per 1,000 males.

Except for rape/sexual assault and simple assault, blacks were more likely than whites or persons of other races, such as Asians or Native Americans, to be victims of crime. For instance, in 1993 there were 19 aggravated assaults per 1,000 black persons, 11.4 per 1,000 whites, and 8.8 per 1,000 persons in other racial categories. The victimization rates for rape and sexual assault were not significantly different among the three racial groups.

Victimization rates generally decline with age. Persons under age 25 had higher victimization rates than older persons. Those 65 or older generally had the lowest victimization rates. The rate of assault, for example, was 98.1 per 1,000 persons age 16 to 19 and 4.1 per 1,000 persons 65 or older.

Hispanics and non-Hispanics had similar victimization rates for the crimes of rape/sexual assault, simple assault, and personal theft. However, Hispanics had significantly higher rates for all other personal crimes, especially robbery, with a rate twice that of non-Hispanics (10.8 versus 5.8).

Victimization rates generally decline with increases in family income. Compared to persons in higher income groups, members of households with an income under \$7,500 had significantly higher rates of rape and sexual assault and of aggravated assault. For personal crimes of theft, however, this pattern did not hold.

Table 3. Victimization rates for persons age 12 or older, by type of crime, sex, age, race, ethnicity, income, and locality of residence of victims, 1993

Characteristics	Victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older							
	Total	Crimes of violence						Personal theft
		Total	Rape/ Sexual assault	Robbery	Total	Assault Aggra- vated	Simple	
Sex								
Male	63.3	61.0	.4	8.5	52.1	16.3	35.8	2.3
Female	45.2	42.6	4.0	4.0	34.5	8.3	26.2	2.5
Age								
12-15	125.3	120.8	4.5	13.6	102.6	23.3	79.3	4.5
16-19	120.7	117.0	7.2	11.7	98.1	30.0	68.1	3.7
20-24	97.7	93.6	5.7	10.5	77.4	27.1	50.3	4.1
25-34	61.2	58.8	2.4	7.4	49.1	15.0	34.1	2.3
35-49	44.9	43.0	1.6	5.1	36.2	8.8	27.5	1.9
50-64	18.3	17.1	.2*	3.0	13.9	4.0	10.0	1.1
65 or older	7.9	5.6	.3*	1.3	4.1	1.1	3.0	2.2
Race								
White	51.8	49.8	2.3	5.1	42.4	11.4	31.1	2.0
Black	72.6	67.0	2.7	13.0	51.3	19.0	32.3	5.6
Other	41.9	39.7	2.0*	8.2	29.5	8.8	20.8	2.2*
Ethnicity								
Hispanic	62.5	59.1	2.1	10.8	46.2	17.2	29.0	3.4
Non-Hispanic	53.2	50.9	2.3	5.8	42.8	11.8	31.0	2.3
Family income								
Less than \$7,500	93.5	89.5	5.5	12.2	71.8	23.0	48.8	4.0
\$7,500-\$14,999	59.4	57.5	2.7	8.9	45.9	14.4	31.5	1.9
\$15,000-\$24,999	53.5	50.5	2.5	5.9	42.2	13.0	29.2	3.0
\$25,000-\$34,999	51.9	50.2	2.3	4.7	43.3	11.6	31.7	1.7
\$35,000-\$49,999	51.5	49.2	1.9	5.0	42.3	11.8	30.6	2.3
\$50,000-\$74,999	47.6	45.9	1.1	4.6	40.2	8.7	31.4	1.7
\$75,000 or more	40.9	38.2	1.9	4.2	32.1	6.4	25.7	2.7
Residence								
Urban	73.8	69.2	3.4	10.9	54.8	15.2	39.6	4.6
Suburban	47.8	46.0	1.7	5.1	39.3	11.2	28.1	1.7
Rural	43.4	42.1	2.2	3.0	36.9	10.6	26.2	1.3

Note: These data are preliminary and may vary slightly from the final estimates. The victimization survey cannot measure murder because of the inability to question the victim. *Estimate is based on about 10 or fewer sample cases.

Residents of urban areas had higher victimization rates for all personal crimes than did suburbanites or residents of rural areas. In fact, urban residents were robbed at greater than 3 times the rate of residents of rural areas (10.9 versus 3.0) and raped or sexually assaulted at twice the rate of suburban residents (3.4 versus 1.7).

Higher property crime victimization rates in 1993: households of blacks, Hispanics, the poor, urban dwellers, and renters

As occurred with personal crimes, certain demographic groups had higher property victimization rates than others (table 4). Blacks had a significantly

higher rate of property crime than whites. Compared to non-Hispanics, Hispanics had a higher rate for each of the property crimes.

In general, households with higher annual family incomes were victimized by household property crimes at greater rates than the lowest income households. However, households earning under \$7,500 a year sustained burglaries at almost twice the rate of households with the highest annual earnings.

As with personal crimes, place of residence was related to a household's risk of victimization. For each type of property crime in the survey, urban residents had consistently higher rates than suburban or rural residents. For example, households in urban areas were burglarized at 1.5 times the rate of rural households (84.4 versus 53.6).

Households that rented their residence had significantly higher victimization rates than households that owned. Households that rented sustained motor vehicle thefts at more than 1.5 times the rate of households that owned their residence, with 26.6 thefts per 1,000 households versus 15.8.

Recent trends

In recent years, a pattern could be discerned in which levels of certain completed violent crimes had been declining or holding steady while levels of attempted victimizations had generally been on the increase.

Data from the redesigned survey comparing victimization levels and rates between 1992 and 1993, however, show little change. Among the major crime categories, there were no statistically significant differences in the numbers of victimizations between the two years (table 5). Because estimates for 1992 are based on a half sample of data from the redesigned survey, larger increases or decreases than usual may be required to indicate statistically significant change between the two years.

The rate at which victims reported their incidents to the police was also generally stable between 1992 and 1993.

Table 4. Property victimization rates, by type of crime, race, ethnicity, income, residence, and form of tenure of head of household, 1993

Characteristics	Victimizations per 1,000 households			
	Total	Burglary	Motor vehicle theft	Theft
Race				
White	315.0	56.7	17.2	241.1
Black	369.9	85.8	33.9	250.2
Other	344.3	51.9	33.8	258.7
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	444.7	87.8	36.8	320.2
Non-Hispanic	313.3	58.0	18.5	236.9
Family income				
Less than \$7,500	314.4	97.5	14.1	202.8
\$7,500-\$14,999	299.3	67.1	19.2	213.0
\$15,000-\$24,999	311.2	58.2	18.8	234.2
\$25,000-\$34,999	335.9	50.8	21.2	263.9
\$35,000-\$49,999	340.8	54.1	18.6	268.1
\$50,000-\$74,999	370.9	49.7	22.4	298.8
\$75,000 or more	392.2	51.2	26.4	314.6
Residence				
Urban	411.6	84.4	34.3	292.9
Suburban	304.6	46.8	17.2	240.6
Rural	250.3	53.6	7.2	189.5
Form of tenure				
Home owned	286.3	50.0	15.8	220.5
Home rented	386.4	77.7	26.6	282.1

Note: These data are preliminary and may vary slightly from the final estimates.

Table 5. Comparison of numbers of victimizations experienced and reported to the police, 1992-93

Type of crime	Victimizations					
	Number (1,000's)			Percent reported to the police		
	1992	1993	Percent change, 1992-93	1992	1993	Difference between percents, 1993-92
All crimes	42,912	43,622	1.7%	36.0%	35.2%	-.8
Personal crimes	10,692	11,409	6.7	42.3	40.9	-1.4
Crimes of violence	10,317	10,896	5.6	42.9	41.6	-1.3
Rape/Sexual assault	607	485	-20.1	32.2	28.8	-3.4
Robbery	1,293	1,307	1.0	58.4	56.1	-2.3
Assault	8,416	9,104	8.2	41.3	40.2	-1.1
Property crimes	32,220	32,213	0	33.8%	33.1%	-.7
Household burglary	5,815	5,995	3.1	50.8	48.9	-1.9
Motor vehicle theft	1,838	1,967	7.0	76.5	77.8	1.3
Theft	24,568	24,250	-1.3	26.7	25.6	-1.1

Note: These data are preliminary and may vary slightly from the final estimates. None of the percent changes in the data collected using the redesigned survey was statistically significant for the summary categories shown. Estimates for 1992 are based on a half sample of data from the redesigned NCVS. As a result, the magnitude of the percent change required to pass a test for statistical significance may be larger than that required given a full sample of data.

Characteristics of sexual assault and domestic violence: new data from the redesigned victimization survey

The redesign effort has increased reporting and improved estimates of some of the most difficult-to-measure crimes, like rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence. These new data permit the analysis of relationships and patterns that the NCVS could not previously detect:

- There were almost a half million rapes and sexual assaults in 1993— 2 rapes or attempts per 1,000 persons age 12 or older and 1 sexual assault per 1,000.

- Males were the victims in 7% of all rapes and over 13% of the sexual assaults.
- Persons age 12 to 15 experienced 12% of all rapes and 17% of sexual assaults measured by the victimization survey.
- Offenders committed over 1 million violent crimes against victims to whom they were related; in well over half of these, the offender was the victim's spouse or ex-spouse.
- Females were victimized by relatives at 4 times the rate of males (8 violent victimizations per 1,000 females versus 2 per 1,000 males).

- Offenders committed over a half million violent crimes against a spouse or ex-spouse. Of these, 9% were rapes or sexual assaults, 6% were robberies, 14% were aggravated assaults, and 71% were simple assaults.

A comprehensive tabulation of 1993 victimization data from the redesigned NCVS is forthcoming in the publication *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1993*.

The NCVS redesign

This Bulletin presents for the first time data from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey. Beginning in 1979, the NCVS underwent a thorough, decade-long redesign to improve the survey's ability to measure victimization in general and certain difficult-to-measure crimes, such as rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence, in particular.

A consortium of experts in criminology, survey design, and statistics performed extensive study and testing to update the questionnaire as well as survey procedures. Among the changes was the addition of sexual assault to expand the types of sexual crimes counted. Direct questions about these crimes were added to encourage victims to report to interviewers incidents that may have been committed by someone known to them.

Other improvements introduced in the redesigned NCVS were Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) and an enhancement of some initial survey questions by "short cues" — examples of specific people, places, objects, or actions that may have been associated with a victimization — used to jog respondents' memories of events.

In general, the redesign had the anticipated result of increasing the number of crimes counted by the survey. Specifically, however, the increases in crimes *not* reported to the police were greater than the increases in crimes reported to the police. One reason for this occurrence is that the improved cues for certain questions, as described above, caused respondents to recall more of the less serious crimes — those that are also less likely to be reported to law enforcement officials. As a result, the percentage of crimes reported to police based on the redesigned survey is lower than the percentage calculated based on data collected with the previous survey design. This difference is particularly the case for crimes like simple assault, which does not involve the presence of weapons or serious injury.

Comparisons of estimates of crime based on previous survey procedures with estimates from the data in the redesigned survey are not recommended. The improvements noted above and other fundamental changes introduced by the redesign make comparisons inappropriate. Several forthcoming technical reports will address these issues in more detail.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Jan M. Chaiken, Ph.D., is director.

BJS Bulletins are a publication series that presents the first release of findings from permanent data collection programs.

Lisa Bastian of the Bureau of Justice Statistics wrote this report. Robyn Cohen provided statistical review. Tom Hester and Tina Dorsey edited the report, which was published under the direction of Marilyn Marbrook, assisted by Yvonne Boston and Jayne Robinson.

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