

# Serious crime down in Nevada, with some strong exceptions

**Brendan Riley**

CARSON CITY (AP) - New FBI statistics show general declines in serious crime in major Nevada cities between 1998 and 1999 - although murders were up in Reno and rapes increased in Las Vegas and Henderson.

The overall decline for the three communities parallels a national trend - although experts have said there are signs the trend is bottoming out.

The FBI's latest report, released this week, said all major types of reported crime were down nationwide, in each region of the nation, and in suburbs, rural areas and in cities of all sizes.

Nationally, the violent crimes of murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault were down a combined seven percent, led by murder and robbery, both down eight percent. Rape and assault were down seven percent each.

The property crimes of burglary, auto theft and larceny-theft also were down a combined seven percent, led by an 11 percent decline in burglary. Auto theft was down eight percent, larceny-theft 6 percent.

In Nevada, the combined crime index, including violent and property crimes, was down by 10 percent in the Las Vegas area covered by the Metropolitan Police Department, down 16 percent in Henderson, and down seven percent in Reno.

Nationally in 1999, murder was down - and Las Vegas followed that pattern, from 116 killings in 1998 to 109 in 1999. Henderson

went from three to none - but Reno increased from 10 to 14.

The number of rapes dropped in Reno from 102 in 1998 to 88 in 1999 - but in the same period increased from 501 to 532 in Las Vegas and from 96 to 113 in Henderson.

Robberies dropped in Las Vegas and Reno, but increased in Henderson. Aggravated assaults dropped in Las Vegas and Henderson, but went up in Reno. Burglaries and larceny-thefts decreased in all three communities.

Auto theft went down in Las Vegas and Henderson but went up in Reno. Arson dropped in Las Vegas but went up in both Reno and Henderson from year to year.

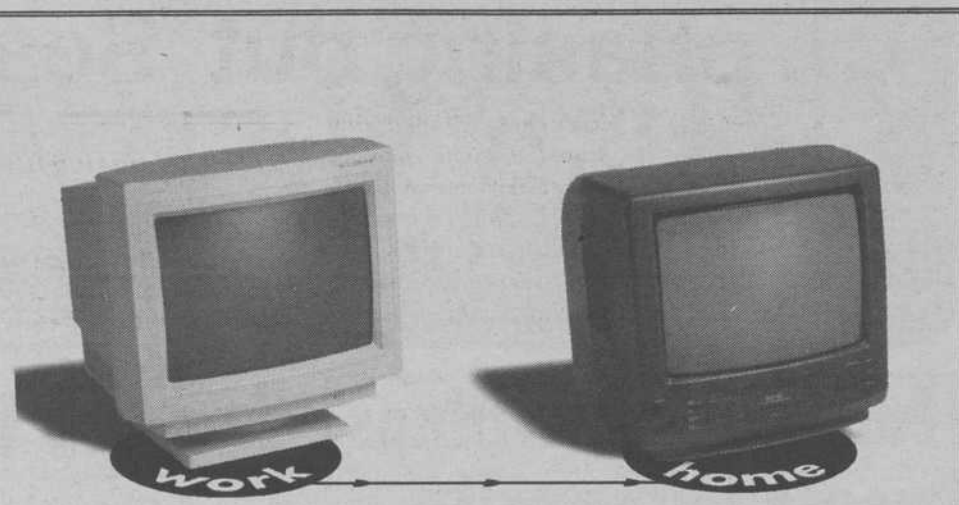
"The news of a general decline is certainly welcome," said state Attorney General Frankie Sue Del Papa. "I'd say that the efforts of Nevada's law enforcement community are more coordinated and more cooperative than in any other time I can remember."

Del Papa added that while the FBI list includes most major crimes, high-tech crime is likely to be included in the future because it's increasing so much.

In Washington, D.C., the report prompted Democrats and Republicans to point to anti-crime measures they've championed.

Academic experts added other factors, including some beyond the control of politicians, such as the aging of the baby boomers past crime-prone years.

The FBI figures come from more than 17,000 U.S. police agencies and extend back to 1960.



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## Calif. police demoralized after ruling in black woman's death

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (AP) — Police have become demoralized and less aggressive since officers shot and killed an unarmed black woman in her car in late 1998, a grand jury reported after a seven-month investigation. The grand jury report, released last Monday, said criticism of the shooting has made police reluctant to even engage in traffic stops and pay diligent attention to white-collar crime.

"Officers are not investigating suspicious or possible criminal activity in order to avoid use-of-force confrontations," the report said.

It also found no evidence of rampant racism within the Riverside Police Department and said that if anything, the department suffers from unfair discipline practices that favor minorities.

"Some minority officers have violated department policies with impunity. The absence of uniform disciplinary actions is common knowledge among the officers and has also had a poisonous effect on morale," the grand jury report said.

Critics of the department called the re-

port one-sided, accusing the grand jury of relying too heavily on police testimony.

"They knew where they wanted to go before they conducted the investigation," said former Police Chief Jerry Carroll, who resigned this year after weathering a storm of criticism following the shooting of 19-year-old Tyisha Miller.

Miller was struck by 12 bullets as she lay in a parked car on Dec. 28, 1998. The officers involved said they opened fire when she lunged for a gun.

The shooting led to regular protests in this city 60 miles east of Los Angeles, with some protesters and community members saying it was racially motivated. Miller was black. The officers were white and Hispanic.

"It sounds like the grand jury is trying to bail out the Riverside Police Department," said the Rev. Burnell Butler, Miller's cousin. "They are useless, just taking up space."

The grand jury recommended the department hire more officers, provide better training and implement a discipline review panel. It did not charge anyone.

## Farrakhan

(Continued from Page 1) charged in 1994 with plotting to hire a hitman to kill him.

The charges were later dropped. Wallace said he believed that Farrakhan, who has battled prostate cancer and other health problems, is making amends partly because he has faced his own mortality.

Earlier this year, Farrakhan publicly embraced W. Deen Mohammed, son of Elijah

Muhammad, in an attempt to heal wounds that have split U.S. Muslims into factions.

"I think that he has thought seriously about the people he has disaffected," Wallace said in an interview.

Shabazz said it was still difficult for her to meet with Farrakhan on camera.

"I did not know if I wanted to sit across from him," she said. "I did not know if my heart could handle it."