



May 2022 – June 2023 Homicide Analysis

Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Crime Strategies Unit

July 26, 2023

Homicides in Jackson County: Continued Exploration of the Data

In 2019, the Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office Crime Strategies Unit (CSU) analyzed how law enforcement and the criminal justice system responded that year to the challenge of solving and disposing homicide cases. Although homicide rates are declining nationally and in many large cities, Kansas City is on pace to break its historic 2020 homicide record this year, with 111 homicides reported as of July 20th.

The data presented in the following analysis comes from weekly shoot review data provided by the Kansas City Police Department and the Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney's Case Management System (CMS). With the FBI's transition from the UCR program to NIBRS, we have been unable to download their latest violent crime data, and subsequently exactly mimic the identical analysis conducted in 2019. This data covers all cases referred to and disposed by our office over the last 14 months, from May 2022 to the end of June 2023, with a homicide (murder or manslaughter) charge, as of June 30th. We breakdown the results of our analysis below:

- A majority of homicides during this period in Jackson County have not yet resulted in criminal charges as they have not yet been solved by police and referred to our office. Based on both our internal CMS and KCPD shoot review data, over this period, KCPD solved or cleared 45.0% of the homicides that occurred – a total of 90 out of 200 total homicides.
- Not all KCPD-reported homicides are in Jackson County, but the vast majority are. According to shoot review data, 7 of Kansas City's 207 homicides were reported by KCPD in Clay, Platte, or Cass counties.

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- Outside of KCPD, Eastern Jackson County police agencies solved 30 homicides that occurred during this period, and of those the Prosecutor's Office filed 16. 12 were not filed (6 due to self-defense issues, 5 from insufficient evidence, and 1 from the defendant's death), and 2 are still under review.
- Over this period, police agencies in Jackson County, including KCPD, presented 120 homicide cases to the Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office.
- Of the 120 referred cases, 80 were filed, 26 were declined, 14 are still under review. Of the 26 declined cases, 16 were due to self-defense issues, 9 from insufficient evidence and other reasons, and 1 from the defendant's death.
- The Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office had an 85.4 percent conviction rate for homicide cases disposed over this period. Of the 123 homicide cases closed, 92 were resolved with guilty pleas, 18 were decided by trial (with 13 guilty verdicts and 5 not guilty verdicts), and the remaining 13 were dismissed.
- The average prison sentence for murder convictions in Jackson County over this period was 26.5 years. Life sentences were counted as 30 years, even though life without the possibility of parole is actually the convicted person's remaining life, possibly much longer than 30 years. Among these convictions were 4 life-without-parole and 1 life-with-parole verdicts. In comparison, the average prison sentence for murder convictions in 2019 was 23.2 years. Additionally, the average sentence for homicides amongst incarcerated males and females in MDOC was 25.5 years as of June 30, 2022.

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Out of **200** total homicides in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri*, KCPD solved **90** (as of June 30th).

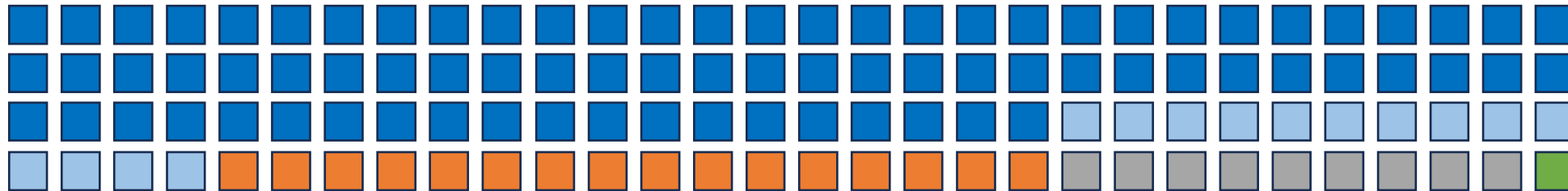
In other words, **45.0%** of reported homicides have been referred to the Prosecutor's Office (as of June 30th).



In Eastern Jackson County**, police solved **30** (as of June 30th).

Police agencies in Jackson County submitted **120** homicide cases to the Prosecutor's Office.

The Prosecutor's Office filed charges in **80** cases and is currently reviewing charges in **11** cases.



The Prosecutor's Office declined charges in **26** cases.

16 Declined Due to **Self Defense**

1 Defendant **Passed Away**

9 Declined Due to **Insufficient Evidence and Other Reasons**

* 7 homicides that occurred over this period were reported in Clay, Platte, or Cass Counties (outside of Jackson County jurisdiction). The clearance rate does not contain homicides that occurred *before* this period that may have been solved and filed by our office during this period.

** We do not currently track homicide incidents within other law enforcement agency jurisdictions, therefore we do not know how many total homicides occurred in Eastern Jackson County during this period.

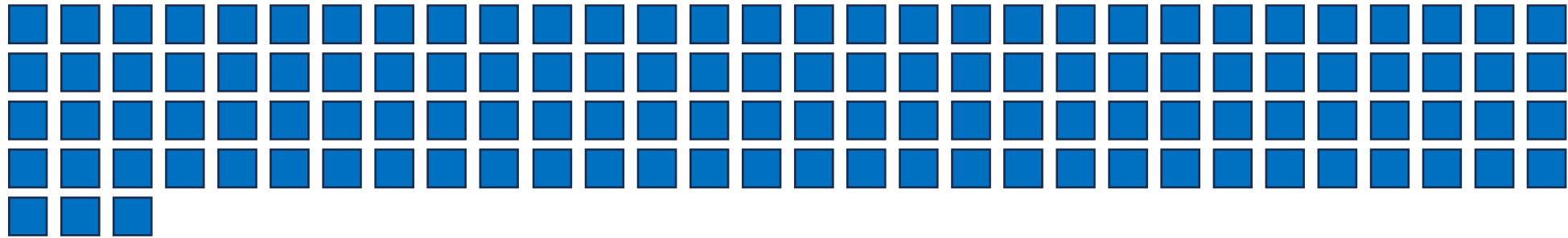
*** This analysis does not include vehicular fatalities. However, during this period, there were 31 vehicular homicide cases referred to our office.



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In total, the Prosecutor's Office disposed of **123** homicide cases from May 2022 to June 2023*.



Of those cases, **18** went to trial with **13** guilty verdicts and **5** not guilty verdicts**.

Of the **5** not guilty verdicts, **4** were associated with co-defendants that were found guilty by a jury on the same charges.



Also, **92** defendants entered a guilty plea in the cases disposed from this period***.

Average Sentence given for a Murder 1st or 2nd Degree conviction
in Jackson County over this period****:

26.5 years

* This excludes 16 vehicular fatality cases that were also disposed over the same period. Multiple cases (representing unique defendants) can stem from the same homicide incident. Over this period, our Office has resolved 111 unique homicide incidents.
 ** 11 were delivered by jury whereas the remaining 2 were by a judge. To reiterate, 4 of the 5 defendants that were found not guilty had co-defendants that were found guilty by jury on same charges.
 *** Of the remaining 13 cases, 4 were dismissed due to Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity, 2 to deceased defendants, 1 to mental incompetence, and 6 to uncooperative witnesses (5 of these stemmed from the same incident).
 **** In total, 36 unique homicide cases were disposed with a Murder 1 or 2 charge. 2 are still pending sentencing hearings. The median sentence is 20 years. The average sentence for homicides in MDOC, for incarcerated males and females, was 25.5 years as of June 30, 2022.

