

COLUMBIA MISSOURI POLICE DEPARTMENT RACIAL PROFILING TRAFFIC STOP INFORMATION—2008

Introduction

We are releasing Columbia Police traffic stop data for 2008 to the media. You may have noticed that though our statistics are due to the state by March 1, this report is a few weeks late, to you. We provided our numbers on time to the state, but in the intervening time we did more work than required, and that took time. You can see by the length of this report what we mean.

Why did we do that?

Because there's been a paradigm for the last several years where we release our raw data, with no explanation or context, and a very cursory and basic viewing by the public and media is done, and various groups pronounce the Columbia Police Department guilty or not guilty of racial profiling by what they see in those raw numbers.

What we hope to do is provide additional information, beyond what the state requires, and to see what the numbers might say.

For that I asked Columbia Police Sgt. John Worden, a doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri, for assistance. He in turn took our data to MU statistics faculty for assistance and direction. I appreciate his help and theirs for all of this. They did not provide analysis.

I think that we have a “chicken and egg” situation of sorts when it comes to this issue. In other words, what we really as a community detest, including inside your police department, is the thought that our officers spot a driver of a car, and from their visual determination of that person's race, seek to make a criminal case against that person for no other reason. That kind of profiling behavior is, as it should be, completely unacceptable, and deserves our collective scorn, and intervention by police management.

However, what if good police work is taking place but it mimics “racial profiling?”

There is more to consider here and we will try here to explain why we think so. This adds length to the report, but we wanted to be thorough.

First, since this is a report that deals with race, here are statistics as to who is committing crime in Columbia. Below are race/sex breakdowns on arrested offenders, as reported by the victims and witnesses. They are committing crime in the city of Columbia, Missouri, according to our 2008 FBI Uniform Crime Statistics.

Part 1 Crimes by Arrested Offender

Homicide(9)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	1	11.11
Black	8	88.89
Asian	0	0
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	8	88.89
Female	1	11.11

Robbery(74)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	14	18.92
Black	60	81.08
Asian	0	0
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	52	70.27
Female	22	29.73

Forcible Rape(5)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	0	0
Black	5	100.00
Asian	0	0
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

**** All Male Offenders**

Aggravated Assault(155)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	67	43.23
Black	85	54.84
Asian	3	1.94
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	117	75.48
Female	38	24.52

Burglary(132)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	65	49.24
Black	66	50.00
Asian	1	.76
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	124	93.94
Female	8	6.06

Larceny/Stealing(1160)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	643	55.43
Black	505	43.53
Asian	12	1.03
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	503	43.44
Female	655	56.56

Auto Theft(38)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	8	21.05
Black	30	78.95
Asian	0	0
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

Gender	Number	Total of Percentage
Male	35	92.11
Female	3	7.89

Arson(5)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	2	40.00
Black	3	60.00
Asian	0	0
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

**** All Male Offenders****Part 1 Crime Totals(1578)**

Race	Number	Total of Percentage
White	800	50.7
Black	762	48.3
Asian	16	1.01
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	849	53.8
Female	762	46.0

Selected Part 2 Crimes

Assaults Other(960)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	463	49.23
Black	492	51.25
Asian	5	.52
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	758	78.96
Female	202	21.04

Forgery(59)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	32	54.24
Black	27	45.76
Asian	0	0
Nat. American/ Alaskan	0	0

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	33	55.93
Female	26	44.07

Fraud(80)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	48	60.00
Black	32	40.00
Asian	0	0
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	40	50.00
Female	40	50.00

Property Damage(164)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	91	55.49
Black	69	42.07
Asian	3	1.83
Nat. American/Alaskan	1	.61

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	126	76.83
Female	38	23.17

Weapons Violation(49)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	15	30.61
Black	33	67.35
Asian	1	2.04
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	48	97.96
Female	1	2.04

Receiving/Buying Stolen Property(44)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	21	47.72
Black	23	52.27
Asian	0	0
Nat. American/Alaskan	0	0

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	35	79.55
Female	9	20.45

Drug Charge(148)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	52	35.14
Black	95	64.19
Asian	1	.68
Nat. American/Alaskan	1	0

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	133	89.26
Female	16	10.74

Drug Charge (Possession Only)(501)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	266	53.09
Black	231	46.11
Asian	3	.60
Nat. American/Alaskan	1	.20

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	399	79.64
Female	102	20.36

Selected Part II Crime Arrest Totals(2005)

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
White	988	49.27
Black	1002	49.97
Asian	13	.65
Nat. American/Alaskan	2	.09

Gender	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	1572	78.4
Female	434	21.6

It is important to point out that UCR Crime Reporting does not classify Hispanics as a separate race, and we don't count Hispanics as such. That's why they're missing from the above numbers.

They are considered an ethnicity of Caucasian. They are counted for the purposes of racial profiling; they are not for our primary statistical gathering of data for crime committed in Columbia. We hope to change that method of counting so that Hispanic crime can be more accurately reported.

Next, we provide the traffic stop statistics for 2008. They are included in a table below, and are also included in full as submitted to the Missouri Attorney General in a separate stand alone PDF attachment:

Columbia Police Department

Population: 77,083

Age 16 and over

Key Indicators	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Am. Indian/Alask.	Other
Stops	16,926	12,268	3914	257	403	7	78
Searches	1504	704	747	33	15	1	4
Arrests	274	116	156	1	1	0	0
Statewide Pop Percentage	N/A	83.95	10.72	2.72	1.50	.49	1.12
Columbia Pop. Percentage	N/A	81.19	10.16	2.17	4.65	.11	1.43
Disparity Index	N/A	.892	2.273	.69	.51	.38	.032
Search Rate	8.88	5.74	19.09	12.84	3.72	14.28	5.12
Contraband Hit Rate	20.61	19.89	22.22	9.09	0.00	0.00	0.00
Arrest Rate	1.61	.945	3.98	.389	.248	0.00	0.00
Search/Arrest Rate	18.22	16.48	20.88	3.03	6.66	0.00	0.00

Notes- Population figures are 2007 Census estimates who are designated as a single race. The other category includes persons of mixed race or unknown.

Disparity Index = (proportion of stops/proportion of population). A value of 1 represents no disparity; values greater than 1 indicate over-representation.

Search Rate(searches/stops)X100

Contraband Hit Rate(searches with contraband found//total searches)X100

Arrest Rate(arrests/stops)X100

Search/Arrest Rate(number of arrests/searches)X100

Hit Rate.

The above table represents what was reported to the attorney general with the exception of the search/arrest rate. This represents an additional “hit rate.” This in particular is supplemental to what is required by the state for reporting.

What is a “hit rate?” Quite simply, a hit rate is where something is discovered during a search that results in arrest. Good police work. In the desirable vs. undesirable scenario, if police officers are racially profiling, they are going to stop minorities at a higher rate, and come up with nothing of evidentiary value because they’re stopping minorities with the blind attempt to obtain evidence of a crime. If they’re conducting traffic stops based on probable cause, finding contraband, and other criminal evidence, then we should as a community, agree that this is a good thing, and what we want in our police department.

The higher the number, the better job we are doing. If we were profiling, the hit rate numbers for African Americans would be lower. This shows that 20.88% of the time we were correct with African Americans vs. 16.48% of the stops with whites.

The contraband hit rate shows the same thing. 22.22% for African Americans and 19.89% for whites.

Where are we stopping people and conducting searches?

Beat 00-05

	Total/ % of City total	White/ % of City Total	Black/ % of City Total
Search	164/ 10.9%	78/ 5.19%	84/ 5.58%
Arrest	16/ 5.83%	4/ 1.45%	12/ 16.21%
Search Hit Rate	9.75%	5.12%	14.29%

Beat 10-15

	Total/ % of City Total	White/ % of City Total	Black/ % of City Total
Search	123/ 8.18%	79/ 5.25%	42/ 2.79%
Arrest	14/ 5.11	10/ 3.65	4/ 1.46
Search Hit Rate	11.38%	12.65%	9.52%

Beat 20-25

	Total/ % of City Total	White/ % of City Total	Black/ % of City Total
Search	218/ 14.5%	116/ 7.71%	98/ 6.51%
Arrest	32/ 11.7%	15/ 5.5%	17/ 6.20%
Search Hit Rate	14.68%	12.93%	17.34%

Beat 30-35

	Total/ % of City Total	White/ % of City Total	Black/ % of City Total
Search	158/ 10.5%	78/ 5.19%	78/ 5.19%
Arrest	24/ 8.8%	11/ 4.01%	13/ 4.74%
Search Hit Rate	15.19%	14.10%	16.67%

Beat 40-45

	Total/ % of City Total	White/ % of City Total	Black/ % of City Total
Search	259/ 17.22%	81/ 5.39%	177/ 11.8%
Arrest	44/ 16.06%	16/ 5.84%	28/ 10.22%
Search Hit Rate	17.0%	19.75%	15.82%

Beat 50-55

	Total/ % of City Total	White/ % of City Total	Black/ % of City Total
Search	244/ 16.22%	91/ 6.05%	149/ 9.9%
Arrest	37/ 13.5%	16/ 5.84%	21/ 7.7%
Search Hit Rate	15.16%	17.6%	14.09%

Beat 60-65

	Total/ % of City Total	White/ % of City Total	Black/ % of City Total
Search	126/ 8.38%	62/ 4.12%	61/ 4.05%
Arrest	21/ 7.66%	9/ 3.3%	11/ 4.01%
Search Hit Rate	16.67%	14.52%	18.03%

Beat 70-75

	Total/ % of City Total	White/ % of City Total	Black/ % of City Total
Search	64/ 4.26%	38/ 2.53%	25/ 1.67%
Arrest	9/ 3.3%	6/ 2.19%	3/ 1.09%
Search Hit Rate	14.06%	15.8%	12%

Beat 80-85

	Total/ % of City Total	White/ % of City Total	Black/ % of City Total
Search	62/ 4.12%	35/ 2.33%	26/ 1.73%
Arrest	10/ 3.65%	7/ 2.55%	3/ 1.09%
Search Hit Rate	16.13%	20%	11.54%

Beat 90-95

	Total/ % of City Total	White/ % of City Total	Black/ % of City Total
Search	47/ 3.12%	23/ 1.53	24/ 1.6%
Arrest	10/ 3.64%	5/ 1.82%	5/ 1.82%
Search Hit Rate	21.28%	21.74%	20.83

County/ Unknown

	Total/ % of City Total	White/ % of City Total	Black/ % of City Total
Search	36/ 2.39%	25/ 1.66%	11/ .73%
Arrest	7/ 2.55%	6/ 2.19%	1/ .36%
Search Hit Rate	19.44%	24%	9.09%

The above charts contain the number of searches in each beat. The search hit rate is for that beat only. A good indicator is the total search hit rate compared that to the white and black search hit rates. Higher search hit rate numbers mean that we are doing better than low numbers. Some of these numbers are small and therefore a small change can make a big difference in the percentages.

Many of our traffic stops are conducted in the busiest areas of Columbia that frequently have a greater demand for police service. Beats 20 and 25, 40 and 45, and 50 and 55 account for a significant amount of the calls for service as well as more than 50 percent of all traffic stops conducted.

The next table is a breakdown of citations vs. warnings by race.

Citation/ Warning Breakdown by Race

	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Other
Citations	5219	3951	1034	94	119	3	18
%	30%	32.2%	26.4%	36.8%	29.5%	42.8%	23.07%
Warnings	12132	8751	2867	167	285	4	58
%	69.9%	71.33%	73.27%	65%	70.7%	57.1%	74.36%

There were 17351 entries for tickets or warnings. Average totals were taken from this number.

Conclusion

So what does all this mean? I have attached a presentation done by Dr. Jeff Milyo of the University of Missouri that was prepared last May for the committee work of the Citizens' Review Board. His research makes several statements of fact that are usually not at hand when the numbers are considered and conclusions drawn.

None of this is simple. It's important to realize where the stops are occurring in relationship to where crime is more often committed and thereby police resources are more greatly committed and concentrated. This is what our community expects.

Another term worth mentioning that is getting some attention in academic circles is called the "veil of darkness." It really is difficult, if not impossible for police officers to ascertain the race, sex, age of motor vehicle drivers after dark. This is due to several reasons, like environmental conditions, vehicle speed, driving conditions for the officer in relation to that vehicle, ambient light and window tinting.

There is some discussion in academic circles that racial profiling statistics for this very reason should only be counted during daylight hours.

There are a staggering number of state laws and city ordinances that pertain to the operation of motor vehicles upon the streets and highways of Columbia, and in Missouri.

Each of these statutes and ordinances provides ample probable cause for police officers to stop drivers for those violations. Even the smallest equipment violations allow for a traffic stop to occur. If a police officer paying close attention happens upon other illegal activity taking place in the car he or she has just stopped, that is hard work that leads to desirable community safety in the form of proactive law enforcement.

Experience tells us that this often leads to the prevention of crime, and the apprehension of criminals that might otherwise have committed a more serious crime if not stopped for that minor violation. An otherwise law abiding citizen who has committed no other violations can be quickly released, perhaps with a warning and thanks for their cooperation.

Those who break the law have choices too. If they are engaged in criminal activity, and step into a car and drive with a burned out headlight, a broken taillight, expired license plates or even windows too darkly tinted, they should consider the odds that they might be stopped for a relatively simple violation, before they turn the key. What happens next will largely be a result of their choices.

While this level of observation and arguable editorialization might seem excessive, I hope you will understand. Every year since we've been doing this, we have provided the raw numbers, and nearly no explanation of the complexities and context of this issue. We're trying it differently this year.

We are already planning for better data collection for the years ahead. We will implement these changes for even better and more detailed analysis in the future.

So, these are the statistics for 2008. It is our sincere hope that this additional information will assist the media and the community in making informed decisions about what is taking place when the red and blue lights appear in the rear view mirror.

Capt. Tom Dresner
Interim Chief of Police

March 23, 2009