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CRIME
IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION

MID-YEAR
1991

Bookings

San Diego
ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
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MEMBER AGENCIES: Cities of Carlsbad, Chula Vista, Coronado, Del Mar, El Cajon, Encinitas, Escondido, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, Oceanside, Poway, San Diego, San Marcos, Santee, Solana Beach, Vista and County of San Diego.
ADVISORY/LIAISON MEMBERS: California Department of Transportation, U.S. Department of Defense and Tijuana/Baja California.

Arrests and Bookings

As mentioned previously, a key factor related to the number of inmates in custody is bookings, or admissions. Bookings are directly affected by the number of adult felony and misdemeanor arrests and local policies regarding bookings. Virtually all felony arrestees are booked into County jail facilities; however, officers have the discretion to cite and release misdemeanor offenders under specified circumstances. One approach to reducing overcrowding in San Diego has been to limit the types of misdemeanor arrestees booked to those involved in violent crimes and alcohol and drug-related offenses.

Arrest and booking data are presented for calendar years 1981 through 1990.

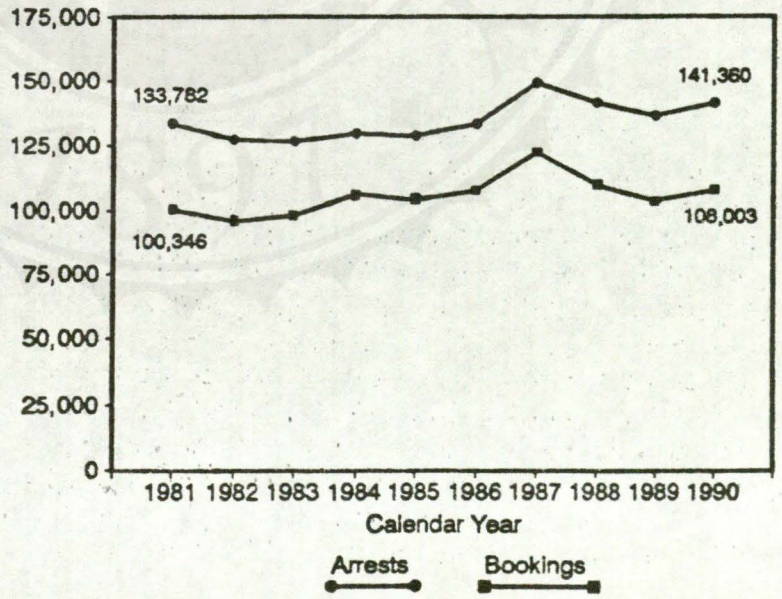
1981-1990

- Over ten years, the number of bookings increased 8% (100,346 to 108,003), compared to a 6% rise in adult felony and misdemeanor arrests (133,782 to 141,360).

- The number of both bookings and arrests peaked in 1987. At this time, about 82% of arrests resulted in a jail booking.

- Since 1987, jail bookings dropped 12% compared to a 5% reduction in arrests. About three-quarters of the adult arrestees were booked into jail at the time of arrest in 1990. The decrease in bookings reflects policies implemented to limit the types of misdemeanants taken into custody.

Figure 19
TOTAL ADULT ARRESTS AND NEW BOOKINGS
San Diego County, 1981-1990



SOURCES: Bureau of Criminal Statistics, Sheriff's Department, and San Diego Association of Governments

Characteristics of Adults Booked Into Jail

FY 1989-90 to FY 1990-91

- Most inmates admitted into Sheriff's jails are unsentenced (97% in FY 1990-91).

- Overall, the number of jail bookings was down, due to a 7% decline in the number of unsentenced inmates booked, from 106,853 to 99,436.

- Bookings of sentenced prisoners were up 25%, from 2,515 to 3,149. Sentenced prisoners have a smaller impact in terms of numbers, but they tend to stay in custody longer than pretrial inmates.

- Over half the inmates booked into local jails were charged with misdemeanor offenses in FY 1990-91 (57%), compared to 38% for felony charges, and 5% for other offenses.

- The proportion of bookings for misdemeanor offenses increased slightly (2%), in part, due to increases in bookings for public drunkenness.

- During the first six months of 1991, the number of jail bookings decreased, from 55,351 to 49,933 (not shown). It has been suggested that law enforcement may have reduced bookings in County facilities to avoid booking fees that went into effect in April 1991. However, bookings started to decline prior to that time, including agencies that are not being charged booking fees. The reduction is primarily associated with decreases in booking for drug offenses (13%) and driving under the influence, 8% (not shown).

Table 26
NEW BOOKINGS, BY SENTENCE STATUS, SHERIFF'S FACILITIES
San Diego County, FY 1989-90 and FY 1990-91

	FY 1989-90	FY 1990-91	Change
Sentenced	2,515	3,149	25%
Unsentenced	106,853	99,436	-7%
TOTAL	109,368	102,585	-6%

SOURCE: Sheriff's Department; San Diego Association of Governments

Table 27
NEW BOOKINGS, BY LEVEL OF OFFENSE, SHERIFF'S FACILITIES
San Diego County, FY 1989-90 and FY 1990-91

Level of Offense	FY 1989-90	FY 1990-91	Change
Felony	40%	38%	-2%
Misdemeanor	55%	57%	2%
Other	5%	5%	0%
TOTAL	109,368	102,585	-6%

SOURCE: Sheriff's Department; San Diego Association of Governments

Table 28
AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY (DAYS), SHERIFF'S FACILITIES
San Diego County, April-June, 1990 and 1991

	1990	1991	Change
Sentenced	46.4	46.1	<-1%
Unsentenced	3.3	3.2	-3%
Other	23.6	32.3	37%
TOTAL	16.4	16.4	0%

SOURCE: Sheriff's Department; San Diego Association of Governments

Average Length of Stay

Data presented on average length of stay for adult inmates reflect the total time in custody from booking to final release. Data on length of stay in Sheriff's facilities prior to April 1990 are not comparable to information in this report. The data presented for Sheriff's inmates are for April through June, 1990 and 1991.

Sheriff's Facilities

- The overall length of time spent in custody remained at 16.4 days during the two quarters; however, there were slight decreases in length of stay for sentenced and unsentenced inmates.

- Custody time for other inmates, including out-of-county bookings, parole and probation violators, federal prisoners, and fugitives, was up 37%.

- On the average, sentenced prisoners were in custody 46.1 days during the second quarter of 1991, compared to 3.2 days for unsentenced inmates.

DISPOSITIONAL DATA

CRIME IN THE REGION
9-91

SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

The Offender-Based Transaction Statistics (OBTS), developed by the State Bureau of Criminal Statistics, provide an overview of the adult criminal justice system by tracking felony cases from arrest through disposition and sentencing. All dispositions during 1990 are included, though the arrests may have occurred in prior years. These data illustrate the interrelationship of system components by presenting attrition rates for each stage in the criminal justice process (law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and corrections). Data for juveniles are not yet available through a new computerized records system, the Regional Juvenile Information System (REJIS).

The criminal justice process begins with the arrest by law enforcement. The three possible dispositions for a felony arrest include: release of the arrestee by law enforcement; denial of a complaint by the prosecutor; or filing of a felony or misdemeanor complaint in municipal court. If a felony charge is reduced to a misdemeanor by either the prosecutor or the judge, the determination of guilt or innocence is made in municipal court. Felony cases are bound over or certified to the superior court for disposition if there is probable cause to believe that a felony was committed or if the defendant pled guilty to a felony at the municipal court level.

Detailed information on case dispositions is presented in Appendix C.

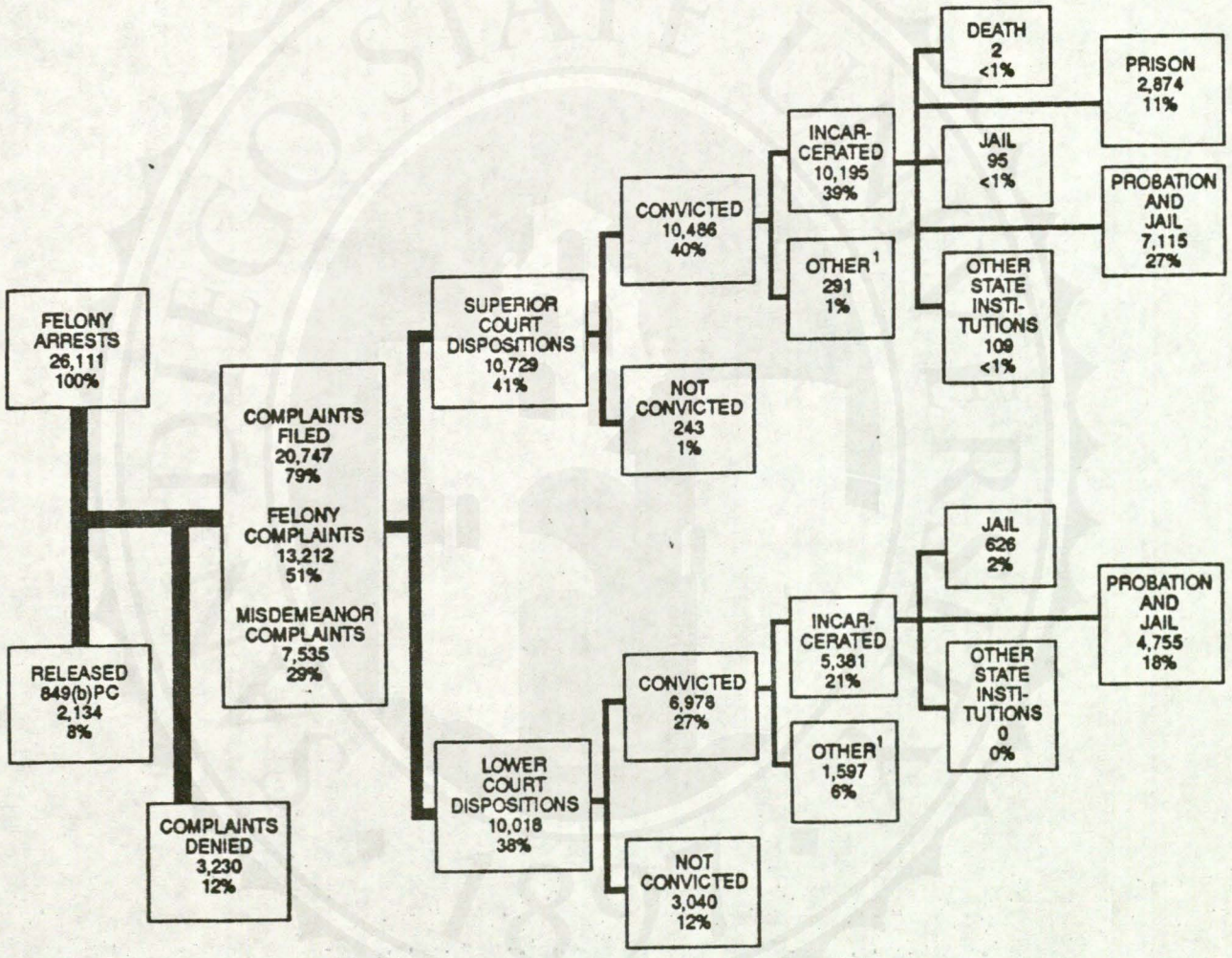
1990

- In 1990, San Diego County law enforcement agencies released 8% of the felony arrestees without requesting formal charges, 2% less than in 1989. Charges were not requested for those released in 1990 because the evidence was insufficient (45%), the victim refused to prosecute (21%), further investigation was required (2%), or the suspect was exonerated (less than 1%). Reasons were unspecified in 32% of the arrest cases.

- An additional 12% of the felony arrests were not prosecuted because the District Attorney or City Attorney did not file charges, a decrease from 16% in 1989. Complaints were denied due to insufficient evidence (34%), lack of the elements of a crime (28%), inadmissible search (9%), unavailability of the victim/witness or refusal to prosecute by the victim (14%), or the interest of justice (1%). Other/unknown reasons accounted for 14% of the complaints denied.

- Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the felony arrests resulted in a complaint filed (20,747).
- Two-thirds (67%) of the arrestees were convicted (17,464).
- Sixty percent (60%) were incarcerated (15,576).
- Forty-eight percent (48%) were sentenced to local jails (12,591).
- Eleven percent (11%) went to prison (2,876).

Figure 11
DISPOSITIONS OF ADULT FELONY ARRESTS
San Diego County, 1990



[1] Includes straight probation, fine, and other.

NOTE: All percentages are based on total arrests (26,111).

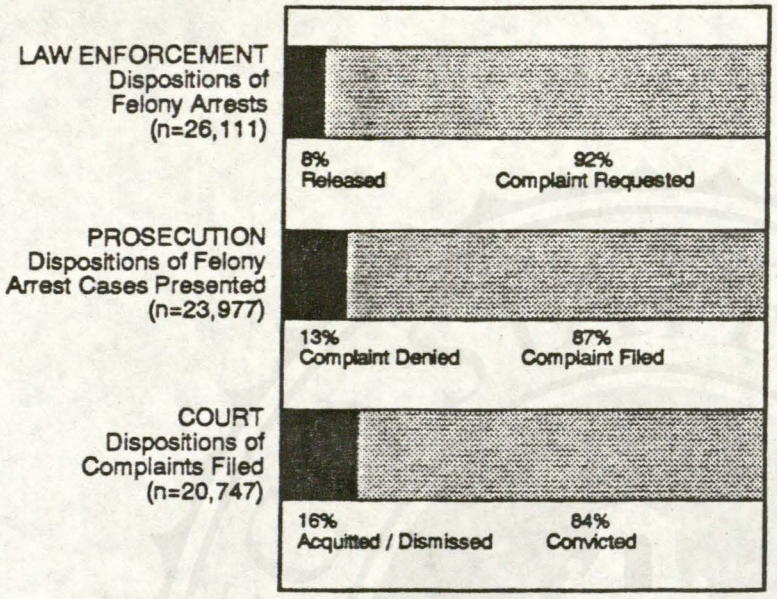
SOURCE: Bureau of Criminal Statistics, Offender-Based Transaction Statistics; San Diego Association of Governments

Agency Dispositions

Another way of analyzing dispositions is to assess the actions taken by each component of the criminal justice system.

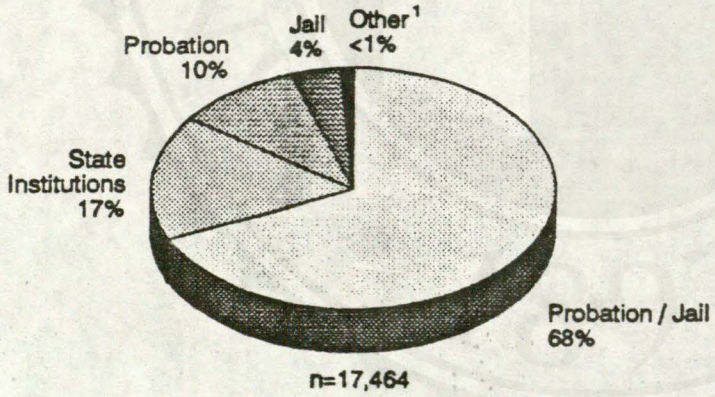
- Law enforcement requested a complaint in 92% of all felony arrests.
- Prosecutors filed charges in 87% of the cases referred by police.
- The courts convicted 84% of all defendants.
- Of those convicted, 68% were sentenced to probation with jail time and an additional 4% received straight local custody time.

Figure 12
DISPOSITIONS OF ADULT FELONY CASES, BY COMPONENT
San Diego County, 1990



SOURCE: Bureau of Criminal Statistics, Offender-Based Transaction Statistics; San Diego Association of Governments

Figure 13
SENTENCES OF ADULT FELONY CONVICTIONS
San Diego County, 1990



[1] Includes fines.

NOTE: Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

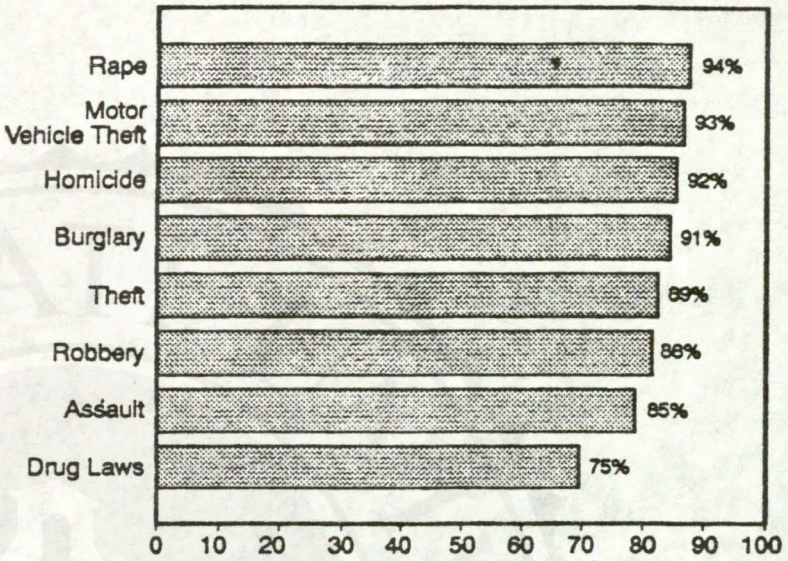
SOURCE: Bureau of Criminal Statistics, Offender-Based Transaction Statistics; San Diego Association of Governments

Type of Offense

Dispositions and sentences vary by offense type.

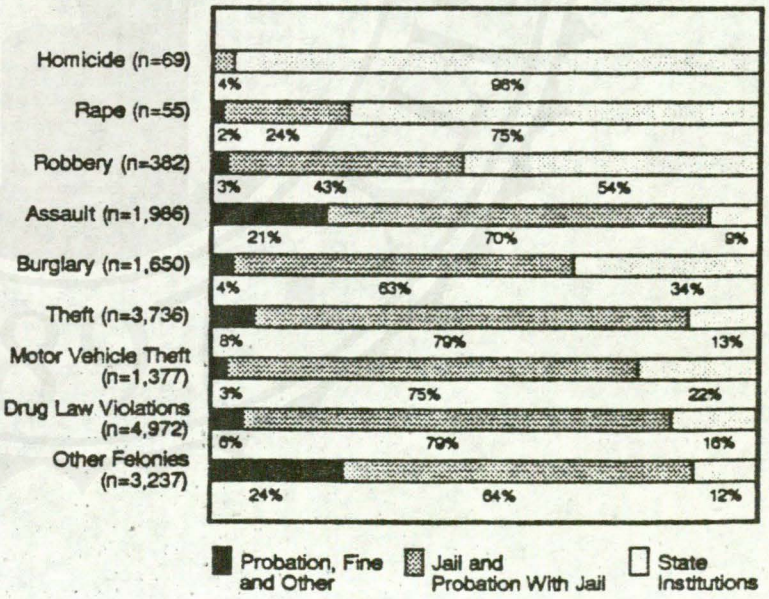
- In 1990, the conviction rate for complaints filed ranged from 75% for drug violations to 94% for rape.
- Conviction rates were higher for most offense categories in 1990 compared to the prior year (not shown). The rape conviction rate rose 11%, the largest increase among the seven major felony offense categories. The only category to decrease was homicide (from 96% to 92%).
- The sentence for most of those convicted in three categories of violent felony offenses (homicide, rape, and robbery) was incarceration in a State institution. Sentences for other felony offenses were primarily local custody or probation with local jail time.
- Twenty-four percent (24%) or less of the defendants in each category received straight probation, a fine, or another non-custody sentence.

Figure 14
CONVICTION RATE OF COMPLAINTS FILED, BY ARREST OFFENSE
San Diego County, 1990



SOURCE: Bureau of Criminal Statistics, Offender-Based Transaction Statistics; San Diego Association of Governments

Figure 15
SENTENCES OF CONVICTED ADULTS, BY CONVICTION OFFENSE
San Diego County, 1990



NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: Bureau of Criminal Statistics, Offender-Based Transaction Statistics; San Diego Association of Governments

Trends

1986-1990

Over the past five years, legislation has been enacted which increased penalties for a number of felony offenses. These changes are reflected in the disposition data.

- The number of complaints issued increased 38% (15,029 to 20,747).
- The proportion of defendants convicted rose from 81% to 84%.
- The incarceration rate was up 5%, from 70% to 75%.
- A higher percentage of defendants was sentenced to prison (14% in 1990 compared to 10% in 1986).

1989-1990

- The number of complaints filed increased 8% (19,195 to 20,747).
- Similar to the five-year trends, the percent convicted, incarcerated, and sent to prison also increased.

Table 22
DISPOSITIONS FOR COMPLAINTS FILED
San Diego County, 1986, 1989, and 1990

	1986	1989	1990	Change 1986-90	Change 1989-90
Total Complaints Issued	15,029	19,195	20,747	38%	8%
% Convicted	81%	81%	84%	3%	3%
% Incarcerated[1]	70%	72%	75%	5%	3%
% Sent to Prison[2]	10%	12%	14%	4%	2%

[1] Includes California Youth Authority, probation with jail, jail, death, prison, and California Rehabilitation Center.
[2] Includes prison and death sentences.

SOURCE: Bureau of Criminal Statistics, Offender-Based Transaction Statistics, San Diego Association of Governments

APPENDIX C

Table C1
DISPOSITIONS OF ADULT FELONY ARRESTS, BY ARREST OFFENSE
San Diego County, 1990

	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft	Drug Law Violators	All Other
Felony Arrest Dispositions	92	211	968	3,662	3,688	3,660	1,962	8,832	3,036
Law Enforcement Releases	1	31	152	385	137	205	335	754	134
Complaints Denied	7	71	99	766	218	503	351	902	313
Complaints Filed	84	109	717	2,511	3,333	2,952	1,276	7,176	2,589
Misdemeanor	0	11	92	1,447	1,360	1,175	190	2,364	896
Felony	84	98	625	1,064	1,973	1,777	1,086	4,812	1,693
Lower Court Dispositions	4	15	179	1,720	1,617	1,471	303	3,506	1,203
Dismissed	4	5	71	304	262	297	76	898	252
Diversions Dismissed	0	0	0	32	0	7	3	777	4
Acquitted	0	0	2	23	6	8	1	4	4
Convicted	0	10	106	1,361	1,349	1,159	223	1,827	943
Sentence									
Youth Authority	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Probation	0	1	19	434	190	187	41	349	294
Probation with Jail	0	8	77	843	1,041	846	153	1,247	540
Jail	0	1	9	72	114	121	28	197	84
Fine	0	0	1	11	4	5	1	34	24
Other	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Superior Court Dispositions	80	94	538	791	1,716	1,481	973	3,670	1,386
Dismissed	0	1	15	26	21	18	14	89	18
Diversions Dismissed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0
Acquitted	3	1	0	4	9	2	1	2	7
Convicted	77	92	523	761	1,686	1,461	958	3,567	1,361
Sentence									
Death	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prison	69	46	203	179	604	434	205	766	368
Youth Authority	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Probation	2	1	16	26	34	48	23	82	58
Probation with Jail	3	45	288	533	990	952	712	2,676	916
Jail	0	0	10	19	10	13	9	21	13
Fine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CRC	1	0	5	3	47	13	9	22	6
Other	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

SOURCE: Bureau of Criminal Statistics, Offender-Based Transaction Statistics

Table C2
DISPOSITIONS OF ADULT FELONY ARRESTS, BY CONVICTION OFFENSE
San Diego County, 1990

	Total	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft	Drug Law Violations	Other Felonies
Total Convictions	17,464	69	55	382	1,986	1,650	3,736	1,377	4,972	3,237
Lower Court	6,978	0	1	1	1,233	338	1,897	169	1,476	1,863
Sentence										
Youth Authority	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Probation	1,515	0	1	1	381	39	228	10	195	660
Probation with Jail	4,755	0	0	0	785	258	1,514	132	1,082	984
Jail	626	0	0	0	63	41	154	27	190	151
Fine	80	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	9	67
Other	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Superior Court	10,486	69	54	381	753	1,312	1,839	1,208	3,496	1,374
Sentence										
Death	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prison	2,874	64	41	203	174	508	467	284	748	385
Youth Authority	3	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Probation	290	0	0	10	28	26	65	27	77	57
Probation with Jail	7,115	3	13	160	530	725	1,285	870	2,625	904
Jail	95	0	0	3	20	8	12	9	21	22
Fine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CRC	106	0	0	4	0	44	9	18	25	6
Other	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

SOURCE: Bureau of Criminal Statistics, Offender-Based Transaction Statistics

Table C3
DISPOSITIONS OF ADULT FELONY ARRESTS
Five California Counties, 1990

	Los Angeles County	Orange County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County	Santa Clara County
Felony Arrest Dispositions	81,231	15,599	11,267	26,111	9,740
Law Enforcement Releases	9,088	795	66	2,134	389
Complaints Denied	11,031	1,103	2,898	3,230	770
Petition to Revoke Probation*	844	0	0	0	1
Complaints Filed	60,268	13,701	8,303	20,747	8,580
Misdemeanor	21,784	7,887	4,246	7,535	2,434
Felony	38,484	5,814	4,057	13,212	6,146
Lower Court Dispositions	25,886	9,253	5,717	10,018	3,920
Dismissed	5,312	1,484	1,137	2,169	588
Diversions Dismissed	1,390	499	246	823	779
Acquitted	97	14	10	48	7
Convicted	19,087	7,256	4,324	6,978	2,546
Sentence					
Youth Authority	0	0	0	0	0
Probation	4,127	1,439	506	1,515	397
Probation with Jail	13,045	4,766	2,943	4,755	1,438
Jail	1,626	908	802	626	647
Fine	251	124	73	80	20
Other	38	19	0	2	44
Superior Court Dispositions	34,382	4,448	2,586	10,729	4,660
Dismissed	1,217	95	109	202	101
Diversions Dismissed	199	2	12	12	28
Acquitted	216	14	17	29	11
Convicted	32,750	4,337	2,448	10,486	4,520
Sentence					
Death	7	0	1	2	0
Prison	13,083	1,265	984	2,874	1,044
Youth Authority	26	2	4	3	7
Probation	1,804	150	29	290	214
Probation with Jail	17,550	2,729	1,366	7,115	3,205
Jail	115	63	27	95	38
Fine	13	0	3	0	1
CRC	150	2	34	106	9
Other	2	126	0	1	2

NOTE: The graphs in the report collapse "Petition to Revoke Probation" and "Complaint Denied".

SOURCE: Bureau of Criminal Statistics, Offender-Based Transaction Statistics