

Unit 5: Robbery

Words To Know

- Anxiety
- Armed robbery
- Coercion
- Robbery
- Vulnerability

What Is Robbery?

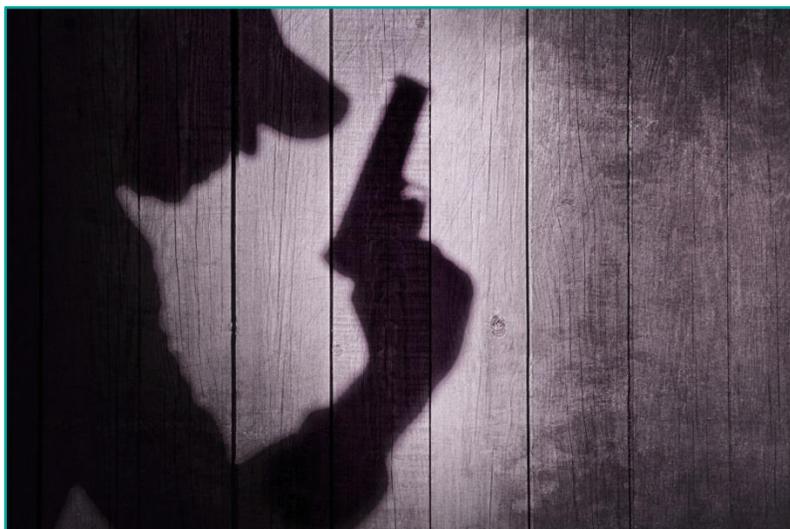
Robbery is taking or attempting to take anything of value (actual or perceived) from another person by force or threat of force. Because robbery is face-to-face, it is considered a violent crime. Victims of robbery—unlike property crime victims—are directly threatened by their offenders. Robbery may be committed with or without a weapon and with or without physical injury. It is not uncommon for victims to be assaulted, have obscenities shouted at them, or be threatened with weapons. Robbers may make victims kneel or lie face down; they may tie victims up or lock them in a room—all adding to their fear and anxiety. Violence can easily escalate during a robbery, resulting in serious injury or even murder.

Most victims experience a common emotion during the robbery—fear. Victims report feeling certain that the offender intended to kill them during or after the robbery. Many victims feel guilty because they did not try to prevent the

robbery or because they feel somehow responsible for putting themselves in the situation that led to the crime. Many robbery victims suffer severe emotional trauma that changes their lives forever. Victims report that after the robbery they experience fear, anger, shock, inability to sleep, nightmares, inability to return to work, lack of concentration, and guilt.

Why did it escalate to this? Why the gun butt to the head when I gave you everything I had in the till?

—Robbery victim, in response to being physically attacked





In the News: Robbery Trends

According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, robberies of individuals make up approximately 75 percent of all robberies. The remaining 25 percent are committed against businesses and banks. Review the facts about robbery below. How do these trends make you feel?

- Most robberies in the United States involve a weapon. The most commonly used weapon is a handgun.¹⁸
- The most common location for a robbery is on the street or highway (38.9 percent in 2016).¹⁹
- The number of robberies at convenience stores increased in 2016.²⁰
- Almost all robberies occur in metropolitan areas.
- Robbery offenses accounted for 26.6 percent of violent crime offenses reported to police in 2016.²¹
- In 2016, robberies accounted for an estimated \$465 million in losses. The average dollar value of property stolen per reported robbery was \$1,400.²²
- Banks experienced the highest average dollar loss at \$3,531 per offense.²³
- Most victims of robbery are between the ages of 21 and 25, and most offenders arrested for robbery are between the ages of 16 and 20.²⁴
- Of those arrested for robbery in 2016, 55 percent were black and 43 percent were white.²⁵
- In 2016, about 21 percent of victims were robbed by someone they knew.²⁶
- Most robberies occur between 7:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m.²⁷
- Of the people injured in bank robberies in 2016, 50 percent were the robbery perpetrators.²⁸

¹⁸ <https://ucr.fbi.gov/nibrs/2016/tables/data-tables> (Table: Offenses Involving Weapon Use, Offense Category by Type of Weapon/Force Involved, 2016)

¹⁹ <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2016/crime-in-the-u.s.-2016/topic-pages/tables/table-15>

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2016/crime-in-the-u.s.-2016/topic-pages/violent-crime>

²² <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2016/crime-in-the-u.s.-2016/topic-pages/robbery>

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ <https://ucr.fbi.gov/nibrs/2016/tables/data-tables> (Tables: Victims, Age by Offense Category, 2016; Offenders, Age by Offense Category, 2016)

²⁵ <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/tables/table-43>

²⁶ <https://ucr.fbi.gov/nibrs/2016/tables/data-tables> (Table: Relationship of Victims to Offenders by Offense Category, 2016)

²⁷ Ibid. (Table: Crimes Against Property Incidents, Offense Category by Time of Day, 2016)

²⁸ <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/bank-crime-statistics-2016.pdf/view>

Examples of Robbery

Robbery involves taking or attempting to take anything of value from a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or making the victim fearful.

The following are three examples of robbery. As you read each scenario, consider the impact of victimization.

I don't understand what got them to that point...to do this to someone. I cannot fathom that.
—Robbery victim

Four teenagers confront Gerald, an elderly man, after he goes to his mailbox. One of the teenagers strikes him in the face, knocking his glasses to the ground and breaking them. They take Gerald's mail, including his Social Security check.

What is the impact on Gerald?

A group of gang members surround Josh, a 15-year-old high school student, as he leaves the campus. They make comments about his jacket and how they would like to have it. Fearing for his safety, he takes off his jacket and gives it to them.

How would you feel if Josh were your brother?

A man who appears high on drugs walks into a fast food restaurant and orders the young counter worker, Sarah, age 17, to give him all of the money in the cash drawer. Sarah gives the robber all the money in the cash register and begs him not to shoot anyone. The gunman shoots her in the chest and leaves with \$140.

They weren't wearing masks so I assumed they weren't going to leave any witnesses.
—Robbery victim

Who has been affected by this crime and how?



What Is the Impact of Robbery?

Criminal behavior such as robbery creates a ripple effect that has a negative impact on a number of life areas: financial, physical, emotional, and religious/spiritual. The following lists outline some examples of how robbery affects these areas of victims' lives. Add your own examples below.

<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to work • Counseling costs • Medical costs • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises • Cuts and abrasions • Ulcers • Broken bones • Broken teeth • _____ • _____
<p>Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guilt • Nightmares • Depression • Paranoia • Inability to sleep • _____ • _____ 	<p>Religious/Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning of one's faith • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____



OVC *Victim Impact: Listen and Learn* DVD

After viewing the OVC *Victim Impact: Listen and Learn* DVD clip about robbery, answer the following questions:

What were Jim's reactions?

Which robbery case are you calling me about? I work at a convenience store and I get robbed about 10 times a month!

—Robbery victim

What were Jim's parents' emotions?

How was Jim harmed?

How does Jim think these offenders should be held accountable for the harm they caused?



Being Accountable for Your Crimes

Robbery is a violent crime that has a serious financial and emotional impact on its victims. Victims of robbery suffer a loss of security and are left feeling fearful and vulnerable.

No one has the right to commit a violent crime against another person, regardless of the circumstances. Put yourself or your loved ones in the place of a robbery victim and imagine how you would feel.

How Can I Be Accountable for My Crimes?

Taking their stuff was only part of the crime for that couple. They had to pay for counseling to try to get over their fear. I will pay my restitution to start making amends.

—T.J.

Thanks to what I did, that lady doesn't trust anybody. Maybe my counselor can help me find the right way to let her know I won't hurt her again.

—Anna

I hurt that kid just so I could take something that belonged to him. How can I make it up to him and his family?

—Jermaine



Additional Activities

Activity B – Bonnie

Bonnie, age 32, is walking to her car in a supermarket parking lot as a car slowly drives by. She is carrying her groceries and purse in one arm and her infant daughter, Katie, in the other. She feels a tug on her purse and thinks that her purse strap got snagged on the car’s side view mirror. She turns to see a woman in the car pointing a gun at her as her purse is ripped from her arm.

What may Bonnie specifically experience as a robbery victim?

<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____
<p>Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<p>Religious/Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____

How would you feel if Bonnie were your mother, sister, aunt, or niece?

Activity D — Miguel

Write down some of the difficulties victims may have when interacting with police, medical personnel, employers, and insurance companies. Then read the following story.

Miguel has been working at his uncle's convenience store for 2 weeks and is trying hard to please his uncle. His uncle is allowing Miguel to work for him even though Miguel is not a U.S. resident. The store is located in a high-crime area.

Miguel has just helped a customer find his favorite brand of orange juice and is alone in the store. Two men enter the store and walk around for a few minutes. One of the robbers is high on drugs. He points a gun at Miguel's head and the other robber jumps over the counter. Miguel feels a sharp pain in his chest. The robbers yell at Miguel, "Don't hit the alarm and don't try to call the police!"

The man with the gun guards the door while the other robber tries to open the cash register. Miguel inches toward his cell phone on the counter, dials the police, and moves away from the phone. The robbers are unaware the police were called.

Miguel continues to feel sharp pains in his chest and thinks he is going to have a heart attack. One of the robbers forces Miguel to open the cash register and takes \$500. The robber hits Miguel in the head, knocking him unconscious, and both robbers leave the store.

The police take more than 20 minutes to respond. In the meantime, Miguel has had a mild heart attack but is still alive. The emergency personnel take 30 minutes to respond and have to wait to find out which hospital is willing to treat Miguel, who has no insurance. A television news crew happens to be in the area and they begin broadcasting live from the scene. Miguel's uncle and the rest of the family are at home watching the news.