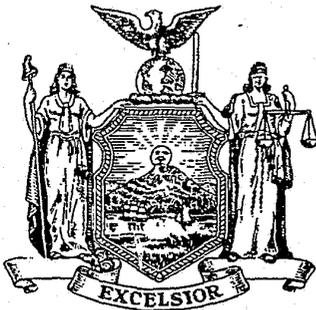


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PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS
The Bedford Hills and Taconic Nursery Program
in 1992



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**PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS
The Bedford Hills and Taconic Nursery Programs
in 1992**

This report presents a statistical overview of the legal and demographic characteristics of the 105 women who participated in the Bedford Hills and Taconic nursery programs during 1992. This statistical profile is illustrated by the case histories of seven participants.

DIVISION OF PROGRAM PLANNING, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

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PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS
The Bedford Hills and Taconic Nursery Programs
in 1992

SUMMARY

1. During 1992, there were 105 participants in the Bedford Hills and Taconic nursery programs.
2. Sixty-eight percent of the women were committed for drug offenses (see Table 1, p.2).
3. Sixty-nine percent of the women had a history of prior adult convictions (see Table 3, p.4).
4. Sixty-two percent of the women were committed from New York City (see Table 4, p.5).
5. The mean minimum sentence was 23.0 months; the median minimum, 18.0 months (see Table 5, p.6).
6. The ages of the women ranged from 16 to 38, with 28 being the average and the median age (see Table 7, p.7).
7. Seventy-six percent of the participants were single (see Table 8, p.8).
8. Seventy-three percent of the women had other children (see Table 9, p.9).
9. The ethnic affiliation of most women was black or Hispanic (see Table 10, p.9).
10. Women discharged from the program in 1992 spent an average of 7.3 months in the program (see Table 11, p.10).
11. Of the seven women profiled in this report, four women and their babies were discharged together; two women placed their babies in foster care and one sent her baby home to live with her mother.

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) administers a program for women who are pregnant (or recently gave birth) when committed to Department custody. Section 611 of the Correction Law authorizes DOCS to provide care for the mother and the infant.

What is now Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, the Department's only maximum security facility for women, remained the only site of a prison nursery in the state, as well as the nation, for decades. The prison nursery first opened in 1901. With the significant increase in female commitments, the Department opened a second nursery at Taconic Correctional Facility in 1990. The Bedford program has a capacity for 27 women and their infants, Taconic for 23.

Bedford Hills and Taconic are neighboring facilities, as a result, staff from the two nursery programs work closely together. Bedford Hills designates the security classification for each woman which determines the facility and program placement of the inmate. Taconic, a smaller, medium security facility, provides comprehensive programming for women with a history of alcoholism or substance abuse (CASAT).

There is considerable interest by a variety of parties in the operation of the nurseries and in the characteristics of the participants. This brief report, with the accompanying case profiles, provides an overview.

There were 105 participants in the two nursery programs during 1992. Sarah S. (pseudonym) is representative of these women.

Sarah

Sarah S., 25, from New York City, was sentenced to DOCS for a period of 16 months to 4 years for her involvement in a number of drug sales. Sarah, like many of the women in this study, was arrested after selling cocaine to undercover New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers.

The sale and the use of illegal drugs is nothing new to Sarah. Her father died of a drug overdose and her mother is also an addict. Sarah lived in various foster homes and began using drugs when she was fifteen. She has had previous contact with the criminal justice system.

Sarah gave birth to her second child at Riker's Island while awaiting sentencing. Until her incarceration, she received no prenatal care. The father of this child was also incarcerated at Riker's Island. Sarah's previous child lives with relatives in another state.

Sarah remained in the Taconic nursery with her baby for 7 months. While in the nursery, she participated in a drug treatment program and like all nursery participants, was involved in parenting classes. Sarah was paroled from Taconic and she and her baby entered a halfway house.

Commitment Offense

Sixty-eight percent of the women were committed for drug offenses.

Table 1

COMMITMENT OFFENSE TYPE		
OFFENSE TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Violent Felony	14	13.3
Other Coercive	6	5.7
Drug Offenses	71	67.6
Property & Other	11	10.5
Youthful Offender	3	2.9
TOTAL	105	100.0

Juanita

Juanita R., 31, was on parole when she was arrested in Queens for selling cocaine. Her earlier sentence to DOCS also involved the sale of drugs. Juanita had completed the Shock Incarceration Program and was a participant in New York State Division of Parole's Shock Program. Three years earlier, she received a five year probation sentence, once again for the sale of a controlled substance.

Juanita separated from her husband several years ago and he is raising their two children. After this separation, she had another child who is in foster care. Between incarcerations, Juanita had been living on the streets and selling cocaine to support herself and her addiction.

She and her fourth child participated for 10 months in the Taconic Nursery program. Juanita was placed in the day reporting program and she took her baby with her to a halfway house. Later, she was paroled to the same halfway house.

Table 2

COMMITMENT OFFENSE		
OFFENSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Violent Felony Offense	14	13.3
Murder 2nd	1	1.0
Robbery 2nd	6	5.7
Assault 1st	2	1.9
Burglary 2nd	2	1.9
Crim. Poss. Weapon 2nd	2	1.9
Arson 2nd	1	1.0
Other Coercive	6	5.7
Att. Assault 2nd	2	1.9
Robbery 3rd	2	1.9
Crim. Neg. Homicide	1	1.0
Conspiracy 2nd	1	1.0
Drug Offenses	71	67.6
Sale	52	49.5
Possession	19	18.1
Property and Other	11	10.5
Burglary 3rd	1	1.0
Forgery 2nd	4	3.8
Grand Larceny 4th	3	2.9
Crim. Poss. Forged Instr. 2nd	1	1.0
Crim. Poss. Stolen Property 4th	1	1.0
DWI	1	1.0
Youthful Offender	3	2.9
Burglary	1	1.0
Drug Offense	2	1.9
TOTAL	105	100.0

Prior Adult Criminal Record

Sixty-nine percent of the women had a history of prior adult convictions.

Table 3

MOST SERIOUS PRIOR ADULT RECORD		
PRIOR RECORD	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No Prior Arrest	19	18.1
No Prior Conviction	14	13.3
Conviction No Jail	18	17.1
Prior Jail Term	41	39.0
Prior Prison Term	13	12.4
TOTAL	105	100.0

Paula

Paula V. was arrested on two separate occasions by the NYPD for selling crack. For these offenses she received concurrent sentences that carried a minimum of 2 1/2 years and a maximum of 5 years. Paula had one previous felony conviction for selling drugs which resulted in a 1 year jail sentence.

When Paula was a teen she was placed in a group home by her mother because she was beyond her mother's control. About this same time, her father, who had maintained only minimal contact with his family, was killed in a drug deal. When she was 16, Paula gave birth to her first child. This child is being raised by the father and paternal grandmother. A second child lives with Paula's mother.

Paula's third child was born at Riker's Island while she awaited transfer to DOCS. Paula kept her baby with her in the Taconic nursery until the child's first birthday. At that time, the baby was placed in foster care. Paula later transferred from Taconic to Esmore, a private residential treatment center. She absconded from this facility after two months and has not returned to the custody of DOCS.

Region of Commitment

Sixty-two percent of the women were committed from one of the five counties comprising New York City.

Table 4

REGION OF COMMITMENT		
REGION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
New York City	65	61.9
Suburban New York	14	13.3
Upstate Urban	15	14.3
Upstate Rural	11	10.5
TOTAL	105	100.0

Sharon

Sharon S. was committed to DOCS after violating the conditions of the probation sentence she received for possession of a forged check. Altogether, Sharon has been arrested 25 times, predominantly for shoplifting. Sharon states that her crimes are motivated by her cocaine addiction and the need for personal items for herself and her children.

Probation reports indicate that Sharon was raised in an unstable home environment that included suspected sexual abuse by her mother's live-in boyfriend. Sharon began running away from home during her mid-teens and supported herself, in part, through shoplifting. In her early twenties, Sharon was shot in the stomach by another woman who suspected that Sharon was carrying her husband's baby.

Until her latest arrests, this 26 year old from a large upstate city, lived with her children in her mother's home. For several months, the children were placed in the care of her aunt since Sharon's mother was also incarcerated in the local county jail. In addition to monitoring by the probation department, Sharon was placed under the supervision of child protective services after her second child was born with traces of cocaine in his system.

Prior to giving birth to her third child, Sharon participated in substance abuse counseling at Taconic. After spending five months in the nursery program, Sharon was paroled and returned upstate with her baby to live in her mother's home.

Minimum Sentence

Seventy-three percent of the women were sentenced to a minimum term of two years or less, with a mean of 23.0 months and a median of 18.0 months.

Table 5

AGGREGATE MINIMUM IN MONTHS		
MONTHS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
12	25	23.8
16	6	5.7
18	25	23.8
20	1	1.0
24	20	19.0
28	2	1.9
30	7	6.7
36	10	9.5
42	3	2.9
48	3	2.9
54	2	1.9
60	1	1.0
TOTAL	105	100.0
MEAN 23.0		MEDIAN 18.0

Table 6

GROUPED AGGREGATE MINIMUM		
MONTHS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
12-17 Months	31	29.5
18-23 Months	26	24.8
24-35 Months	29	27.6
36-47 Months	13	12.4
48-71 Months	6	5.7
TOTAL	105	100.0

Age at Reception

Age at reception ranged from 16 to 38, with 28 being the average and the median age.

Table 7

AGE AT RECEPTION		
AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
16	1	1.0
17	2	1.9
18	1	1.0
19	7	6.7
20	3	2.9
21-24	26	24.8
25-29	37	35.2
30-34	24	22.8
35-39	4	3.8
TOTAL	105	100.0
MEAN 28.0		MEDIAN 28.0

Cecilia

Cecilia T., at age 38, is one of the oldest participants in the nursery program. Cecilia had no misdemeanor or felony convictions until she was in her mid-thirties. Since then, she has been arrested three times for felony drug charges and is now a second felony offender.

Cecilia never worked because of a variety of medical conditions and was maintained on public assistance. Before entering a methadone treatment program, Cecilia was a heroin addict for several years. At the time of her latest arrest, she was drinking heavily and using crack. Cecilia's three older children are in the legal custody of her mother.

While at Taconic, she participated in CASAT. Cecilia kept her fourth child with her for one year before giving the baby to her mother. Subsequently, Cecilia was transferred to a residential treatment facility in New York City and hopes to be paroled to a halfway house.

Marital Status

Seventy-six percent of the participants reported they were single at the time of admission to DOCS.¹

Table 8

MARITAL STATUS		
Status	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Single	80	76.2
Married	18	17.1
Divorced	1	1.0
Separated	4	3.8
Common Law	1	1.0
TOTAL	105	100.0

Julie

Julie W. was sentenced to 1 1/2 to 3 years in state prison following her conviction for selling 5 vials of crack to a NYPD undercover officer. This was Julie's second felony conviction for drugs after a ten year string of misdemeanor convictions for prostitution.

The oldest of six children, Julie, like most of her siblings, was given up for adoption. She resided with her adopted family until her mid-twenties but was homeless for the two years previous to incarceration. Julie is single and supported herself and her crack addiction through prostitution and the sale of drugs.

Julie's first child was born during her incarceration at Taconic. She remained in the nursery program for three months, at which time she was paroled. Both Julie and her baby entered a halfway house in New York City.

¹ Marital status, like ethnic affiliation, is self-reported by the inmate at initial classification.

Children

Inmates are asked at initial classification to report the number of their living children. Adult offspring may be included in this count. Seventy-three percent of the women had other children.

Table 9

LIVING CHILDREN		
CHILDREN	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
0	28	26.7
1	21	20.0
2	19	18.1
3	18	17.1
4	9	8.6
5	2	1.9
6	3	2.9
7	3	2.9
8	1	1.0
TOTAL	105	100.0

Ethnicity

The ethnic affiliation of most women was black or Hispanic.

Table 10

ETHNIC STATUS		
ETHNICITY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
White	12	11.4
Black	64	61.0
Hispanic	28	26.7
Unknown	1	1.0
TOTAL	105	100.0

Program Time

The amount of time the women spent in the nursery was calculated to determine how many women remained for the maximum allowable time (twelve months in most cases, longer if release is presumptive).

For the 73 women discharged in 1992, there was a fairly even distribution up to 12 months, with an average and median of 7.3 months. Of the women who left the program prior to 12 months, some were released on parole or were transferred to community programs. Others sent their baby to live with a relative or friend. Finally, some women placed the child in foster care.

Table 11

TIME IN PROGRAM (1992 DISCHARGES)		
MONTHS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Under 1 Month	2	2.7
1 Months	7	9.6
2 Months	4	5.5
3 Months	3	4.1
4 Months	6	8.2
5 Months	7	9.6
6 Months	6	8.2
7 Months	6	8.2
8 Months	4	5.5
9 Months	6	8.2
10 Months	8	11.0
11 Months	8	11.0
12 Months	2	2.7
13 Months	2	2.7
14 Months	1	1.4
17 Months	1	1.4
TOTAL	73	100.0
MEAN 7.3		MEDIAN 7.3

Rae

Rae F. has an extensive criminal history which has resulted in 15 convictions as an adult, three of which were felonies. Most of her offenses were for theft. At the time of her latest arrests, she was on parole.

Rae was raised by her father and stepmother in New York City. She obtained a GED and worked as a nurse's aide, but probation reports indicate that she supported herself through her criminal activity. In the past, Rae admitted to the use of cocaine. Rae's first child is in the care of her aunt.

Rae's second child was born one month after she entered DOCS. Rae kept her baby for ten months, at which time, the godmother picked the child up for placement in foster care. Subsequently, Rae entered a residential treatment program in New York City, but was returned to general confinement after it was discovered that she had been using drugs.

Thirty-two women remained in program in 1993. Their program time is calculated using April 1, 1993 as a constructed termination date.

Table 12

TIME IN PROGRAM (1992-93 CASES)		
MONTHS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
3 Months	4	12.5
4 Months	9	28.1
5 Months	2	6.3
6 Months	6	18.8
7 Months	3	9.4
8 Months	3	9.4
9 Months	3	9.4
10 Months	1	3.1
11 Months	1	3.1
TOTAL	32	100.0
MEAN 6.3		MEDIAN 6.1

CONCLUSION

The portrait which of the typical 1992 nursery participant is that of a single woman in her late twenties who had other children prior to her latest pregnancy. She was committed to DOCS from New York City for a drug offense and received a minimum sentence just under 2 years. She had previous contact with the criminal justice system and had served either a prior jail or prison sentence. The 1992 nursery participant spent an average of 7.3 months in the program.

A more detailed report concerning the discharge histories of nursery program participants is being considered. A preliminary analysis indicates that of the 90 women discharged from the Taconic nursery program from June 12, 1990 through April 20, 1993, 38 mothers were paroled from the Department with their babies; 1 mother entered the Department's day reporting program and took her infant with her and 51 women who remained in the custody of DOCS placed their children with others. Twenty-five of these babies were placed with a grandparent, 4 with their fathers, 16 with a relative or friend of the mother and 6 were placed in foster care.

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