

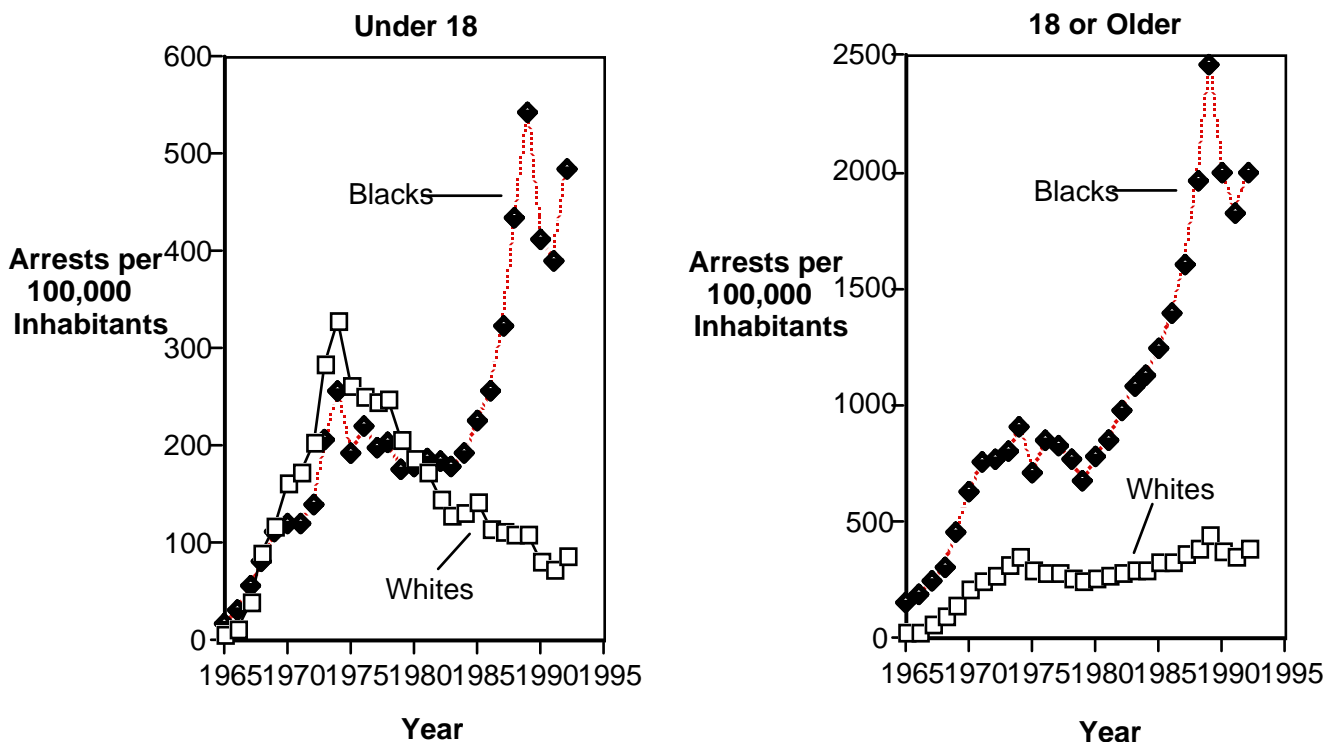
**A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research**

University of Maryland at College Park\*

## ***Higher Arrest Rates for Drug Law Violations Found Among Blacks***

Since the emergence of crack-cocaine and the subsequent escalation of the war on drugs in the early 1980s, the number of persons arrested for drug law violations has climbed steadily. During this period the rate of drug law violation arrests for adult blacks has increased by 156%, compared with a 49% increase among whites. By 1992 there were 1,999 drug law violation arrests per 100,000 adult blacks, more than five times the rate among whites. The rate of drug violation arrests for white youths has actually declined since the 1980s, but the rate among black youths has increased by 170%. Criminologists have debated the possible reasons for these higher arrest rates among blacks, including differences in drug use, greater use of open-air drug markets, greater enforcement in certain crime-prone neighborhoods, and racial bias in enforcement practices. Whatever the reasons for the racial differences in drug law arrest rates, the conclusion is inescapable that the black community is bearing the brunt of the nation's enforcement of drug laws.

### **National Arrest Rates for Drug Violations, by Age and Race**



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from the *1993 Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice: p. 457, Table 4.33.

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