

FRIGHTENING STATISTICS: VIOLENCE CAUSES MORE DEATHS OF ALASKA NATIVES IN ANCHORAGE

Why is an Alaska Native in Anchorage four times more likely to die a violent or accidental death than the average American citizen?

These grim statistics are from a study just completed by Dr. Rodman Wilson for the Municipality of Anchorage showing that violence ranks as the number one killer of Natives in this city.

Such statistics may be challenged on the basis of numbers and reliability, but they are terrifying enough to demand some action or at the very least some answers about what is going on today in Anchorage.

Does the study mean that Alaska Natives are being victimized more when they come into Anchorage from the Bush? If so, why! More importantly, what can be done about it? We don't mean to criticize, but the Study should have been more complete in terms of identifying the problems

Are Alaska Natives dying of automobile accidents? Or are they being struck down as pedestrians more often than others? We know that the number of auto accidents in Anchorage is very high and that there is an increase of traffic. One does not have to be a statistician to realize that.

Are Alaska Natives more trusting of others in this City? According to the Association for Stranded Rural Alaskans in Anchorage (ASRAA), the 'trust factor' plays a significant part in the troubles that Natives encounter when they come into Anchorage. This could also mean that the average stranger in Anchorage may be more violent and untrustworthy too.

The average age for an Anchorage resident is 27 compared to the average American, which is 31. Are young Alaska Natives being victimized more often than not and if so, why?

How do the statistics compare with those of other years? Are violent and accidental deaths of Alaska Natives in Anchorage on the rise or on the decline.

What about violent and accidental deaths of Alaska Natives in other Alaskan cities? If there is some correlation, then we have a problem that needs more attention, not by the Anchorage Assembly but by ourselves and by the State of Alaska

For the past four years, ASRAA has been providing assistance to people from the Bush including a very good Crime Prevention Program that shows there has been a 47 percent drop in the victimization rate. How do these numbers figure into Wilson's study if at all.

Dr. Wilson may have put together a study for the Anchorage Assembly for reasons of his own, but he has pointed out some concerns that need our attention.

The Anchorage Assembly will be receiving the Wilson Study on December 4, 1985, and we hope it's response will generate some immediate action, if the report is accepted.