

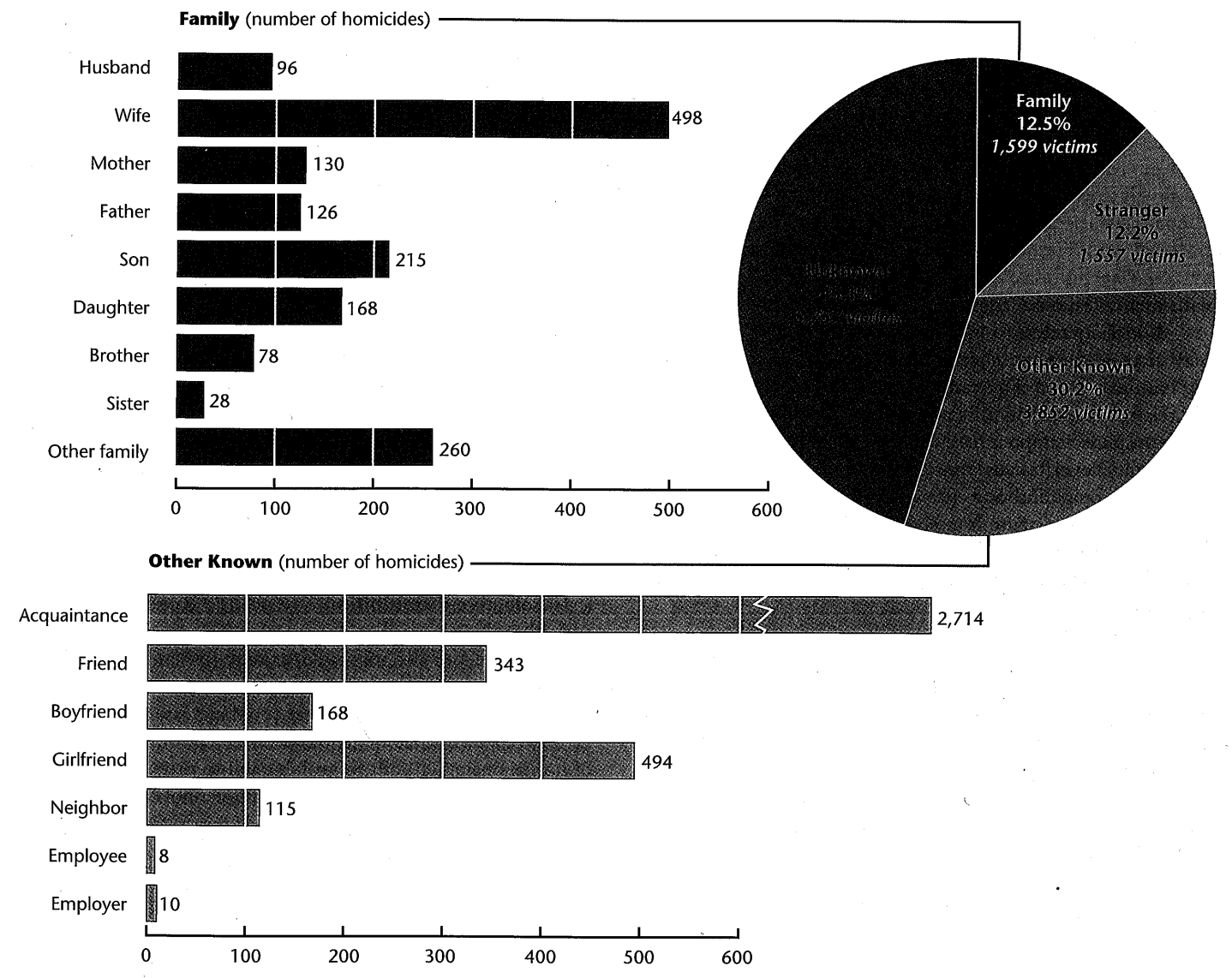
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**FIGURE 10-4** Murder by Relationship of Victim or Offender, 2012

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2012* (Washington, DC: FBI, 2013).

victimization. Victim precipitation seems to blame the victim, which makes it quite controversial. From a scholarly point of view, however, the thrust of the concept of victim precipitation is not to blame the victim for the event, but to examine both individual and situational factors that may have contributed to and initiated the crime. This is especially important in studying patterns of homicide because quite often a homicide begins as a fight or an argument between people who know each other. The circumstances of the particular encounter determine whether the event will end as some type of assault or as a homicide.

Wolfgang also identified alcohol use as a factor in homicide cases where the “victim is a direct, positive precipitator in the

crime.”<sup>24</sup> He concluded that the positive and significant association between alcohol and victim-precipitated homicides may be explained by the fact that the victim was the “first to slap, punch, stab, or in some other manner commit an assault” and that if the victim had not been drinking, he or she would have been less violent.<sup>25</sup> Wolfgang’s research on homicide revealed that most victims of spousal homicide had been drinking at the time of the incident, a situation that did not apply to homicide offenders.<sup>26</sup>

**Weapon Use**

There are different perspectives on the role that weapons play in crime, with most of the discussion centering on the role of