

21 FACTS FOR 21 YEARS OF "LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT"

1. "Law & Order: SVU" has been seen in more than 230 territories around the world, including Turkmenistan, Macau, Vatican City and Antarctica.
2. Dick Wolf began his career in television as a writer on such iconic series as "Miami Vice" and "Hill Street Blues."
3. "SVU's" Olivia and Elliot were named after Dick Wolf's daughter and son.
4. Ice T originally signed on for only four episodes as Det. Odafin Tutuola, but will soon begin his 20th season.
5. Richard Belzer, who played Det. John Munch, has played the character in 10 different TV series.
6. For the first two seasons of "SVU," Chris Meloni was still co-starring on HBO's prison drama "Oz."
7. Raul Esparza, as ADA Rafael Barba, was "SVU's" first male ADA in a series regular role. The character is named after director and executive producer Norberto Barba.
8. Diane Neal, Kelli Giddish and Peter Scanavino guest starred as different characters before landing their series regular roles.
9. Since "SVU" premiered, there have been four different U.S. presidents and three popes.
10. "SVU's" dedicated NYPD detectives only have jurisdiction in the borough of Manhattan, but for the first 11 seasons the series filmed in North Bergen, N.J.
11. On May 9, 2019, "SVU" aired its 457th episode, surpassing the 456 episodes of the original "Law & Order," which ran for 20 seasons.
12. The elevators in the squad room, hospital and courthouse rotunda lead to nowhere and the doors are manually opened and closed by crew members.
13. The brick walls in the interrogation rooms are made of papier-mâché, and the two-way mirrors are only one-way. The mirror is replaced with a window when filming a scene from the observation area.

14. Lt. Benson has a plaque hanging in her office with a quote from Ruth Bader Ginsburg:
“Women belong in all places where decisions are being made.”
15. In 2003, Mickey Hargitay guest starred alongside his daughter in the series’ 100th episode.
16. Oscar-winning guest stars include Mahershala Ali, Viola Davis, Jeremy Irons, Angela Lansbury and Robin Williams. Tony Award-winning guest stars include Daveed Diggs, Audra McDonald, Rita Moreno, Bernadette Peters and Billy Porter. Five “SVU” guest stars earned Emmy Awards for their roles: Ann-Margret, Ellen Burstyn, Leslie Caron, Cynthia Nixon and Amanda Plummer.
17. Several siblings have (separately) guest starred, including Dean and Scott William Winters, Patricia and Rosanna Arquette, Kate and Rooney Mara, Danielle and Kay Panabaker, Corey and Casey Cott, and Brighton and Saxton Sharbino.
18. In 2006, Sesame Street premiered “Law & Order: Special Letters Unit,” which featured Muppet versions of Detectives Stabler, Benson, Munch and Capt. Cragen on the case to find a missing letter “M.”
19. The week “SVU” premiered, Time magazine featured Harry Potter on its cover, to coincide with the third book’s release (no films had been made yet). Serena Williams, 17, won her first Grand Slam singles crown at the U.S. Open. TLC’s “Unpretty” topped the charts and Ashley Judd’s “Double Jeopardy” topped the box office. “The West Wing” premiered on NBC that week and aired for seven seasons.
20. Hargitay formed the Joyful Heart Foundation in 2004, with the goal of transforming the way society responds to the issues of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse. She has championed the cause of clearing the backlog of untested rape kits nationwide by twice testifying before the U.S. Congress, and producing the 2017 HBO documentary “I Am Evidence.” In 2016, Vice President Joe Biden appeared in an episode that focused on the subject.
21. A 2015 Washington State University study concluded that “SVU” positively educates viewers as to what constitutes rape, and viewers have a better grasp of sexual consent than viewers of other crime dramas.