

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women



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1996 Femicide Report Women and Children Murdered in Minnesota

The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women monitors information about women and children murdered in our state to educate the public about the lethality of woman abuse and child abuse. We pledge to remember the women, children, and family members and/or friends who die each year from domestic violence and the woman and children who die while being used in prostitution - a system of violence against women and children. Women used in prostitution are battered women in need of protection from abuse. We also remember the women and children who were murdered by acquaintances, strangers, or unknown perpetrators.

We challenge communities to respond to battered women and their children by providing safe shelter and advocacy services, prevention education for all elementary and secondary students, laws to protect women and children, effective enforcement of those laws, and aggressive prosecution of all domestic assault crimes and all prostitution crimes targeting perpetrators, pimps, and "johns".

In Minnesota in 1996:

At least 22 women were murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a current or former husband, boyfriend, intimate partner or household/family member of the woman.

At least 17 children were murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was their mother's husband, boyfriend, or intimate partner, or was the parent, foster parent, guardian, babysitter, or household/family member of the child.

At least 1 friend was killed following a domestic violence murder.

At least 6 women who were used in prostitution were murdered.

WOMEN MURDERED:

1. Genelda Campeau, 65

St. Paul

January 12, 1996

Genelda was stabbed to death by her granddaughter's ex-boyfriend. The granddaughter said the attack came "out of the blue." Edbert Neal Williams stabbed Genelda 52 times with a kitchen knife and attacked her granddaughter, who survived. Williams was arrested and held by the St. Paul police. Williams was sentenced to life in prison for the stabbing death of Genelda and was also sentenced to fifteen years for attempted first-degree murder in the attack of her granddaughter.

2. Kami Talley, 22

Bloomington

February 14, 1996

The relationship between Talley and Buggs had been described as turbulent. The previous summer when Talley broke off the relationship, he attacked her so savagely that she was hospitalized with serious injuries and Buggs spent time in the workhouse. After his release he violated an order for protection. Talley and members of her family repeatedly pleaded with police and judges because Buggs had threatened to kill her. Kami Talley died of gunshot wounds after being shot by her ex-boyfriend at her place of employment. Louis "Butch" Buggs went to Kami's workplace and walked into the second floor offices and confronted her. Kami went to a bathroom where she and Buggs argued briefly before co-workers heard gunfire. He then fled the building and the state. The couple has a 4-year-old daughter. Two months after Kami's death, Louis Buggs was arrested in the state of Virginia by FBI agents and returned to Minnesota. He has been convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison.

3. Kimberly Schoen, 33

Truman

March 1, 1996

Peter Schoen, 34, and his wife Kimberly lived together on a farm. Schoen said his wife fell down the stairs and hit her head while they were fighting. He said he looked at his unconscious and bleeding wife and decided to get a pipe and "put her out of her misery." He said he hit her on the head and neck several times with the pipe, then went outside to tend to his livestock. He later called 911. Peter Schoen has been found guilty of first-degree murder in the death of his wife, Kimberly, and was sentenced to life in prison.

4. Margaret Bohn, 42

Shoreview

April 7, 1996

Margaret Bohn was killed by her son on Easter Sunday. David "DJ" Bohn, 20, told authorities that he had gone to his mother's home with the intention of strangling her. He said he first tried to strangle her and that it was not working, so he grabbed a shovel and began hitting her. When she went down, DJ continued to hit her, then went to the kitchen for knives and stabbed her until he thought she was dead. He then went to the phone and called 911 to report what he had done. He also asked that his younger brother be placed in another home. Margaret died soon after the sheriff's deputy arrived. DJ Bohn pled guilty to intentional second-degree murder and was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

5. Yvonne Stevson, 32

Minneapolis

April 11, 1996

Yvonne died of a gunshot wound. A friend, Phillip Ray Robinson, told investigators that he pointed the gun at Yvonne knowing there was a bullet in the chamber but believing the safety was on. He then pulled back the hammer and pulled the trigger, killing her instantly. Robinson pled guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

6. Sue Akin, 49**Onigum****May 9, 1996**

Sue Akin was killed by her estranged husband, Alvin Akin, after moving to Minnesota to escape domestic abuse. She had obtained an order for protection and had been working to help other abused women and their children at the Family Safety Network in Cass County. Although Alvin Akin violated the OFP, Sue agreed to a plea bargain, which she believed would provide safety for her. But despite the court order, Alvin Akin followed her, squeezed himself into the trunk of her car along with his 12-gauge shotgun and waited for morning. Unsuspecting, Sue got in her car and left. When she came to a stop sign, Alvin Akin climbed out of the trunk of her car and shot at her. A school bus was stopped at the corner and the following report is from the school bus monitor, an eyewitness to the murder. "The biggest hero of all was Sue Akin herself. She had to have seen the eight or ten or so children that were standing along the road waiting to get on the bus. Her quick actions and selflessness saved about 30 people that I can count - and probably more than that. By pulling in front of the bus, she threw the killer off track just long enough for the children to run back into their homes for safety. After being shot and having the assailant standing close, she only knocked on the bus door and asked the driver to call for help, which he assured her he had already done. She never asked to come on the bus or anything else for her own protection. She stood there selfless and made sure the assailant only focused on her and not on the 20 plus children on the bus." Sue was shot and died at the scene. Her assailant fled and later committed suicide.

7. Lorraine Miller, 73**St. Paul****May 10, 1996**

Lorraine Miller's body was found in her bathroom by a maid who worked in the home. St. Paul police reported she had been shot twice but no murder weapon has been found. A few days after finding her body, police arrested Lorraine's 42-year-old son, Lawrence Burton Miller. He was sentenced to life in prison.

8. Tabitha Juetten, 19**Little Falls****May 21, 1996**

Tabitha, who was pregnant, her 1-year-old son, and a friend were taken hostage and held at knifepoint by Tabitha's estranged husband, Robert Juetten. During this standoff, Juetten stabbed his wife in the abdomen and stabbed her friend in the leg, then repeatedly raped Tabitha before releasing the friend and Tabitha's son. Robert Juetten then held her hostage for several hours until officers forced their way in and arrested him. Tabitha's unborn child died with her also. Robert Juetten has been charged with two counts of second-degree murder, attempted second-degree murder, first-degree criminal sexual conduct, kidnapping, and first-degree assault. First-degree murder charges will be considered by a grand jury.

9. Loretta Strand, 62**Ramsey****June 4, 1996**

Loretta Strand was allegedly killed by her boyfriend, Dexter Perez Anderson. Her body was discovered when her roommate returned home. A neighbor had seen Anderson arrive and later leave in Strand's car. Anderson is being held pending formal charges.

10. Barbara Korte, 39**Brooklyn Park****June 8, 1996**

As Barbara Korte visited with a friend and his 11-year-old daughter in her yard, Greg Korte, her estranged husband, drove up. He shot the friend, Michael Pivec, as he sat at a picnic table, then chased his wife as she fled across a road and shot her. He then killed himself. Pivec's daughter witnessed the shootings from a nearby hammock and called 911. The Kortes' 3 boys, ages 13, 10, and 8 were not present.

11. Deborah Martin, 41**Crystal****June 27, 1996**

Murray Bunness made a phone call to his neighbor and friend, Kris Elsenpeter, saying he had killed his wife Deborah and the 16-year-old girl who stayed with them. Mr. and Mrs. Elsenpeter ran to the house hoping to be of some help. When it was confirmed that the two were dead, Mrs. Elsenpeter returned home but Kris stayed to calm Bunness. The two argued and Bunness turned the gun on Elsenpeter. When law enforcement arrived they found Bunness holding his gun and Elsenpeter wounded on the steps. Elsenpeter died moments later. Officers then entered the house and found Deborah Martin, Bunness' wife of 4 years, in the living room, dead of gunshot wounds. Upstairs they found the body of 16-year-old Christina Ayers. She had been living with Martin and Bunness while she attended school. Bunness has been charged with three counts of first-degree murder.

12. Heidi Haines, 20**Minneapolis****June 28, 1996**

Heidi tried to hide her bruises from her family and didn't often come to family gatherings. On June 12th, when Heidi was five months pregnant, she delivered a premature baby boy and named him Darius. He died an hour and a half later. Family members noticed bruising on Heidi's back and a fresh black eye, and suspected the premature delivery of Darius was due to domestic abuse. On June 28th police received a call from witnesses that a woman was being hit by a man in a car at 22nd and Washington Avenue North. As the witnesses drove back to the scene they saw the man, David Cross, outside of the car on the passenger side, strangling the woman, Heidi Haines. When police arrived, Heidi was lying outside of the car, facedown on the ground. She was pronounced dead at 12:02 am of the 29th after police made a prolonged attempt to resuscitate her. The suspect, David Cross, was arrested at the scene and later charged with manslaughter. He was sentenced on December 11, 1996 to life in prison.

13. Ida Strouth, 42**Minneapolis****June 28, 1996**

Henry Patterson, the father of Ida Strouth's 3-month-old granddaughter, believed that Ida was hiding her daughter's and his child from him. Ida Strouth's daughter, Sarah, found the bodies of her mother, her brother, Jake, age 9, and Jake's friend, 13-year-old Jeremiah Sponsel. They had all been stabbed to death. Antonio Brayboy and Henry Patterson have been charged with first-degree murder. Brayboy gave information to the police stating he had stood by and watched as Patterson killed the woman and two boys. They await trial the middle of February.

14. Jennifer Bradley, 30**Minneapolis****July 2, 1996**

Jennifer was found partially clothed in the bathtub of her apartment. Her boyfriend, James Gibson, told police that they had argued and he grabbed her by the neck and pushed her into the bathroom where her body was found. James Gibson was charged with second-degree murder to which he pled guilty. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

15. Rita Walker, 59**St. Paul****July 5, 1996**

The bodies of two women were found by an employee at the St Paul Radisson Hotel after the women did not check out as expected. Rita Walker was apparently shot by Evelyn Walker who then shot herself. Although not related, police said the women considered themselves life partners. Police said there was some indication the two had been planning a murder-suicide and suspect one of them had serious health problems.

16. Sherice Drain, 22**Minneapolis****July 12, 1996**

Adrian Horan pled guilty to the shooting death of Sherice Drain. She and Horan were in a car together at the time of the shooting. She was then driven to Hennepin County Medical Center where she later died. Adrian Horan was sentenced to 36 months in a state prison. He was given credit for serving 122 days. He will also be required to make restitution for funeral expenses.

17. Shauntai Johnson, 27**Wadena****July 20, 1996**

Shauntai's body was found in the crawl space of her basement a day after her children reported her missing. Jerry Johnson, 37, Shauntai's husband, was charged with her murder. After three days of deliberation a jury found him guilty of the strangulation death of his wife. He has been convicted of second-degree murder and first-degree manslaughter.

18. Colene Navratil Wenzel, 24**Osakis****July 23, 1996**

Colene's husband, William Wenzel, told authorities he had been drinking and was sitting on the couch with his wife. He said when he showed her what he thought was a defective safety on his gun, the gun went off. Their three-year-old son, Jonathan, said he heard his mother say, "Put the gun down" just before the shot was heard. Colene was shot in the face. Jonathan remained in his father's custody until William Wenzel was taken to jail on January 8th. Jonathan currently lives with his father's brother and family. Colene hadn't told her family of the history of her husband's abusive behavior toward her, but had talked about it with friends and co-workers. When they offered this information to the prosecutor and investigators they were told it was "not pertinent to the case." William Wenzel was charged with second-degree manslaughter, was offered a plea bargain and pled guilty. He was sentenced to 2 years and ordered to pay \$8,200 restitution.

19. Carolyn Joy Seitz Voorhees**Duluth****August 6, 1996**

Carolyn was shot 11 times when she stepped outside her home where she cared for two people with mental disabilities. She had filed for divorce days earlier. Her husband, Brad Voorhees, had purchased the .22 caliber rifle that was used in the shooting earlier in the day. He was charged with first-degree murder after confessing to authorities.

20. Esther Marie Stynski, 81**Ivanhoe****August 8, 1996**

Esther died after being struck on the head with a blunt object, possibly a cane or a 1-inch-square yardstick. Her husband, John Harry Stynski, said he poked his wife to get her into a chair and later admitted to striking her with the stick but denied hitting her in the face. John Stynski has been charged with first-degree manslaughter.

21. Yvonne Thompson, 41**St. Paul****August 25, 1996**

Yvonne was shot to death by her boyfriend, Freddie Bowen. A dispute between Thompson and Bowen began in the back of her apartment building during which neighbors and witnesses reported hearing Thompson yelling, "Don't shoot me! Don't shoot me!" The dispute continued through the building toward the front door where there was more screaming, then shots and silence. Bowen then ran out of the building, down the street and laid down on the boulevard still holding the gun. Police had by this time taken up positions around Bowen and attempted to negotiate with him. About six hours later, after all

attempts to resolve the situation had failed, police began to approach Bowen who then got up with his gun pointed and police shot Bowen, who was dead on arrival at the hospital. Yvonne Thompson had been trying to break off her relationship with Bowen.

22. Julie Ann Carroll, 43

Faribault

September 12, 1996

Julie Ann Carroll's 10-year-old daughter Meghan ran to her neighbor's house saying she and her mother had both been shot. Police were summoned and found Julie's body. Three-year-old Keely Carroll was unharmed but badly frightened. Meghan was airlifted to a Twin Cities hospital and underwent surgery for her wounds. Meghan reported, "Mommy and Jim were arguing." About an hour and a half after the shootings, Erroll James Grosman surrendered to police and was taken to the Rice County jail and held on \$1 million bail. Later Erroll Grosman was released when bail was lowered to \$500,000. He committed suicide in the middle of December.

CHILDREN MURDERED:

1. Raymont Osborne III, 5 weeks

Minneapolis

January 29, 1996

Paramedics were called to the home of Rebecca Kramer and Raymont Osborne Jr., parents of the baby, at about 3 a.m. on January 22. The baby was having trouble breathing. By the time the paramedics arrived, the baby had stopped breathing and resuscitation was begun en route to the hospital. He was put on life-support and died a week later. An autopsy revealed brain injuries and hemorrhage consistent with shaking and the case was ruled a homicide. The baby's father, Raymont Osborne Jr., was arrested on a second-degree murder charge, which states that he didn't intend to kill the infant but did intentionally assault him by shaking him.

2. Mackinzie Bussiere, 3

Shakopee

March 10, 1996

The boyfriend of Mackinzie's mother, Brian Merkt, called 911 to report that Mackinzie had fallen down the stairs and was not breathing. When officers arrived, they gave her CPR and transported her to the local hospital where she was put on life support. She was then flown to Children's Hospital in Minneapolis where doctors found bruises on her face, buttocks, chest and forehead, abrasions on her abdomen, and burn marks on her chest and right arm. Mackinzie's 5-year-old sister told police that Merkt had been beating Mackenzie. The examining doctor noted she was a child with obvious physical abuse leading to severe cranial trauma and brain swelling. Mackenzie died the next day when she was taken off life support. Brian Merkt has been charged with second-degree murder.

3. Deontay Wilson, 6

Vadnais Heights

April 8, 1996

Deontay's mother, Sabrina Wilson, called the police department to report him missing about 8 p.m. on April 8th. Deputies found the boy's body face down in the garage. The medical examiner determined Deontay had been strangled at least six to seven hours before his body was found. He had been invited upstairs to the residence of Crystal Sesley and her four children, who shared a house with Deontay and his mother. Sesley said she killed Deontay in the bathroom but couldn't remember if she strangled him or drowned him. She later moved his body to the garage. Sesley has been charged with second-degree murder.

4. Estara Johnson, 10 month**St. Paul****May 8, 1996**

Michael Wayne French, Jr. was charged with second-degree manslaughter in the death of his 10-month-old daughter Estara Johnson. The complaint alleged French was carrying his daughter inside the family home when he "bumped his leg while walking through a doorway. Reacting angrily, he spun around quickly striking the baby's head against the door frame very hard resulting in a skull fracture." The complaint also contended French squeezed his daughter's chest forcefully and the child suffered multiple broken ribs. Michael French, Jr. pled guilty to second-degree murder.

5. Tuyet Dao, 18 mosnths**Minneapolis****May 13, 1996**

Victor Perdessi said he planned to kill Tuyet in retaliation for an abortion his girlfriend and Tuyet's mother, Phetsakhone Chaokeo, had a week earlier. Perdessi had gone to the woman's home and threatened her, telling her he was going to kill her child because she had killed his. She pleaded with him for three hours before she was able to run from the house with Tuyet to seek help at a nearby shop. Perdessi followed her and when an employee of the shop told her he didn't want to get involved, Perdessi was able to grab Tuyet and take her back to the house where he shot the toddler in the face, killing her. He then committed suicide.

6. Baby Juetten**Little Falls****May 21, 1996**

The unborn baby Juetten was killed along with her mother, Tabitha Juetten.

7. Jordyn Olson, 7 months**Rochester****June 1, 1996****8. Hannah Olson, 22 months**

Depressed about her family's finances, Janet Olson told her husband David that he would be better off without her and their two young daughters. A few days later David Olson came home from work and found the two girls dead and his wife with cuts to her wrists and chest in an apparent suicide attempt. Janet Olson told authorities she had the children in the bathtub. When one slipped under the water, she took the child out and brought her to the bedroom. The other child had also slipped under the water and she took that daughter to the bedroom. At that point she placed pillows over their faces. Janet Olson has been charged with two counts of second-degree murder.

9. Christina Ayers, 16**Crystal****June 27, 1996**

Christina was living with a couple who had taken her in. The husband, Murray Bunness, came home and shot his wife, Deborah Martin, first. He then went upstairs and shot Christina. Police found her with a phone still in her hand. Evidently she had tried to call for help. Murray Bunness then went downstairs and while standing over his wife's body a neighbor tried to talk to him. He turned the gun on his friend, Kris Elsenpeter, and shot him. Kris died a short time later. Bunness has been charged with three counts of first-degree murder.

10. Jake Strouth, 9**Minneapolis****June 28, 1996****11. Jeremiah Sponsel, 13**

Henry Laverne Patterson murdered his ex-girlfriend's mother, Ida Strouth, her brother, Jake Strouth, and her brother's friend, Jeremiah Sponsel. He slashed their throats with a steak knife while a friend, Antonio William Brayboy, blocked the door to the basement. Patterson believed that Ida was hiding his and her

daughter Sarah's three-month-old baby from him. After filing a domestic assault report against Patterson earlier, Sarah Strouth moved to a location unknown to Paterson. Having previously lived at the Strouth residence for two years, Patterson used the house key he'd kept to let himself in. Henry Patterson, 22, and Antonio Brayboy, 20, have both been charged with three counts of first-degree murder.

12. Alex Frank, 5
13. Brandon Frank, 4

Cold Spring

July 3, 1996

Alex and Brandon's parents had recently separated and the boys went to live with their mother. They were visiting their father, but when he did not return them at the agreed-upon time, law enforcement was called to check on them. When police arrived they found the two boys dead of knife wounds and their father unconscious from his own self-inflicted knife wounds. Kurt Frank has been charged with two counts of second-degree murder in the death of his two boys.

14. Newborn Baby Girl

Minneapolis

July 18, 1996

Police were called to Kathleen Wiernasz's home by relatives because she had just given birth and needed medical care. She was taken to Hennepin County Medical Center, where the infant was pronounced dead. She first claimed the baby was stillborn. Later she admitted giving birth while sitting on the toilet and let the baby fall into the water. She saw the baby move and knew she couldn't breathe but decided to let her drown. Kathleen was charged with second-degree murder.

15. Shaunessy Walker, 15 months

St. Paul

August 14, 1996

Shaunessy's mother, Shayla Walker, told police that Robert Powell, her live-in boyfriend, was playing kickball with Shaunessy. Shayla left the room for a few minutes, heard a "thud" and walked back into a hall, where she saw her daughter on the floor. Her head was against the wall and she was crying. Later that afternoon, paramedics were called to Walker's apartment on a report that the girl had stopped breathing. She was taken to St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center where she was pronounced dead. An autopsy found that she had suffered multiple injuries including large lacerations of the liver, a spleen laceration, and hemorrhages of the pancreas and pelvis. Powell has been charged with unintentional second-degree murder.

16. Anthony M. Johnson, 6 months

St. Paul

October 24, 1996

Anthony's father, Richard Steven Johnson, was caring for his son while the baby's mother was working. Paramedics were called in response to a 911. Homicide investigators noticed bruises on the child's abdomen, chin, cheek, and forehead. There also was a bruise and a bite mark on the baby's left leg, which Johnson said he placed there after finding the baby cold and not breathing. Johnson was charged with second-degree murder after the medical examiner determined the baby died of brain injuries suffered when he was shaken. The child's death came about a month after Johnson allegedly struck the baby's mother during a domestic dispute. Although police responded to a call at that time, they were unable to apprehend him and the couple reconciled and investigators closed the case.

17. Brandon McArthur, 14 months

Cloquet

December 7, 1996

A teenage boy, a friend of Brandon's mother, was baby-sitting with Brandon. When his mother returned home and found him unconscious and having trouble breathing, she took him to the hospital. He had suffered severe head trauma and other injuries and two days later was declared brain dead and life support

was disconnected. The teenager has been charged with second-degree murder. The county attorney wants to try the teen as an adult.

WOMEN MURDERED WHILE BEING USED IN PROSTITUTION:

1. Renee Bell, 30 **Golden Valley** **Body Found May 23, 1996**

Renee's nude body was found floating in a Theodore Wirth Park creek. She had been strangled with an elastic string. The suspect charged with her murder is Mark Profit, 33. His wallet was discovered near the creek by Golden Valley police.

2. Audrey Rodney Neadeau **Minneapolis** **Body found May 31, 1996**

Audrey was beaten to death. No further information is available at this time.

3. Deborah Lavoie, 42 **Golden Valley** **Body found June 3, 1996**

Deborah disappeared May 22nd. Her body was found in Theodore Wirth Park lying on her back with fists clenched. The flesh from her neck to her hips was burned away.

4. Avis Warfield, 36 **Golden Valley** **Body found June 19, 1996**

Avis was last seen on June 13th. She was discovered underneath bushes 1/2 mile east of Theodore Wirth Park. She died of multiple sharp force injuries and her body was partially burned.

5. Debra Rogers, 30 **Minneapolis** **August 15, 1996**

No information is available at this time.

6. Barbara Leighton, 26 **Minneapolis** **August 17, 1996**

Barbara died of multiple stab wounds. No one has been apprehended or charged.

FRIENDS MURDERED:

1. Kris Elsenpeter, 43 **Crystal** **June 27, 1996**

Kris Elsenpeter's friend and neighbor, Murray Bunness, called Kris to come over. When Elsenpeter arrived, he saw his alcoholic friend, gun in hand, standing over the body of his wife Deborah. On the way to the Bunness home Kris had told another neighbor to call 911. When police arrived they were confronted with an enraged man with a gun and an injured man, Elsenpeter, lying on the steps. After a standoff of several minutes, Bunness put down the gun, but Elsenpeter died moments later. In addition to finding the body of Bunness' wife, they also found the body of Christina Ayers, 16, who lived with the family. Bunness was taken into custody and has been charged with three counts of first-degree murder.