

The 2004 Femicide Report: Women and Children Murdered in Minnesota

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

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About the Femicide Report

The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women monitors information about women and children murdered in our state to educate the public about the lethality of violence against women 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 women and children who die while being used in prostitution and sex trafficking—systems of violence against women and children. Women and children used in prostitution and sex trafficking are battered women in need of protection from abuse. We also remember the women and children who were murdered by friends, acquaintances, strangers, or unknown perpetrators.

We challenge communities to respond to battered women and their children by providing adequate funding for 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 reporting the total number of deaths, it is important to note that *at least* this many women and children have been murdered. We cannot be certain we have not missed some deaths since we must use a method of data collection that relies upon news accounts. No state or federal agency collects comprehensive data on domestic homicides. In addition, the murders of women of color, women living in poverty, rural women, lesbians, and women and girls used in prostitution and sex trafficking may be underreported in our listing as they may go unreported in mainstream media.

The 2004 Femicide Report is compiled from news accounts. Please contact MCBW if we have missed a death or if you have updated or more complete information on any femicide.

We ask that the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women be credited when information from this report is used.

In Minnesota in 2004:

At least 13 women were murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a current or former husband, boyfriend, intimate partner, or household member, or family member of the deceased woman.

At least 12 children under the age of 18 were murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was their mother's husband, boyfriend or intimate partner, or was the parent, guardian, baby-sitter, day care provider, or household/family member of the child.

At least 7 women were murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was an acquaintance of the deceased woman or child, or was a stranger or an unknown assailant.

At least 3 friends or family members were murdered in domestic violence-related situations.

At least 12 children have been left motherless.

5. Lynette Rossin, 48**Goodview****May 8, 2004**

Lynette was found in the bedroom of her former home, dead of gunshot wounds. Her husband, Mike Rossin, 49, was also found dead of gunshot wounds. Police determined that Mike Rossin had shot his wife to death and then committed suicide. The couple was in the process of divorcing. On the night of the murder, Lynette was spending the evening across the street at the home of Goodview Mayor Jack Weimerskirch, along with her sister and brother-in-law. Mike Rossin telephoned the mayor's home and asked Lynette to come over to talk to him. When Lynette did not return after 90 minutes, her sister and brother-in-law went to the Rossin house, where they discovered the bodies. Lynette had been living with her mother a few blocks away from her former home. Her daughter was living with Lynette and her son was living with his father. Lynette was a nurse who worked for 29 years at the same clinic. In her spare time enjoyed golfing, cross stitching, exercising, river life, knitting and crocheting.

6. Diane Levy, 47**Minneapolis****May 15, 2004**

Minneapolis police had been to the home of Diane and Frank Levy to arrest Frank at least seven times after receiving calls reporting domestic abuse. In at least two cases, he threatened to kill Diane with a knife. On the morning of May 15, Frank Levy made good on his threats, stabbing his wife to death more than 30 times, using a kitchen knife and scissors. Diane Levy's 15-year-old daughter told police that she woke up to screams that morning and heard her mother yell, "No, don't do this! What are you doing?" When the daughter went into the couple's bedroom, she saw Frank stabbing her mother. The teen jumped on Frank Levy's back but he fought her off and stabbed her in the process. The girl called out to her uncle, Diane's brother, who was downstairs. The uncle hit Frank Levy with a chair but Levy stabbed him at least seven times before running from the house. Diane Levy died before police could arrive. The uncle was in serious condition at the hospital but survived his injuries. Diane's daughter was treated for stab injuries to her face and released. Later that day, Frank Levy showed up at a local police station and said he had just tried to kill his family. Frank Levy was charged with two counts of first-degree murder, including having a pattern of past domestic abuse, and two counts of first-degree attempted murder. In November, Frank Levy pleaded guilty to second-degree unintentional murder and first-degree assault for stabbing Diane Levy's brother. Under the plea agreement, Levy received 37½ years in prison.

7. Erin Rooney, 33**Burnsville****July 13, 2004**

Charles Barnes, 38, called a police dispatcher and said he had just arrived home to find his ex-wife, Erin, unconscious. He told the dispatcher that he thought she had overdosed on drugs and he had given Rooney a shower to attempt to wake her up. When police arrived, they found no signs of drug use except for a single hypodermic syringe, which Barnes said he had found. The Dakota County medical examiner later found that Rooney died of injuries consistent with being hit and strangled, including bruises to her face, cuts on the inside of her mouth and neck injuries. Barnes has two criminal convictions in connection with assaulting Erin Rooney. "This victim suffered a violent death in what appears to be another tragic example of escalating domestic violence," stated Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom. Barnes was sentenced to life in prison.

8. Sheng Vang, 21**Minneapolis****July 18, 2004**

Sheng was found stabbed to death in the St. Paul garage belonging to a member of her estranged husband's family. Police are calling it a case of deadly domestic violence. Sheng's mother had warned her that morning not to go alone to see Moua Her, 22, to retrieve legal documents she needed for a passport. "I told her, 'I will go with you. You can tell the police to go with you. That man is very dangerous,'" she said. According to police, family records and court documents, in the past several years there had been many reports of fights, threats, and abuse of Sheng. Sheng Vang obtained an order for protection against her husband, which was granted after an incident in March when Her tried to strangle his wife and stun her with some sort of electrical weapon. The couple had met in high school and court records show that the abuse started within months of their January 2000 wedding. Moua Her fled the Twin Cities to evade arrest and was captured by police outside of Chicago, after he attempted to use his credit card to pay for an escort service. Sheng was working on a business career while attending Century College. She leaves behind a 2-year-old daughter. In 2006, Moua Her was convicted with charges of first-degree and second-degree murder. He was sentenced to life in prison.

9. Angela Sangster, 32**Minneapolis****September 4, 2004**

Norman Howard, 51, murdered his girlfriend, Angela, by shooting her in the head. Last fall, Angela told police that Howard had said he would kill her, and that he threatened to stab her with a screwdriver in their home. The night of the murder, the couple went together to a Minneapolis bar. Howard became enraged at Sangster when she didn't want to leave the bar when he did. Later that evening, he shot Angela in his car. Later that night, Howard told a friend that he "killed his woman" and then passed out. Norman Howard was charged with two counts of second-degree murder. He was convicted of rape in 1979 and third-degree assault in 1989. Howard was sentenced to ten years in prison for Angela's murder.

10. Casandra Current, 26**Minneapolis****September 10, 2004**

Police found a horrifying sight when they arrived at a North Minneapolis home, finding a 62 year-old man stabbed to death in his front yard and two women stabbed to death in the basement, Casandra, and her mother, Renee Brown, 44. The man was identified as Brown's stepfather, Wayne Huotari. Nine days before the murder, Current's boyfriend, Bryant Jones, 31, assaulted her. The day after, Current reported to police that he had sexually assaulted her. Jones was wanted on a warrant for the assaults at the time of the murder. He had lived with Casandra's family until he sexually assaulted her. Friends and family reported that Jones was an extremely violent man who had assaulted Casandra numerous times. In 2002, an ex-girlfriend of Jones stated that he strangled her and she served him with a protective order. In February 2003, he pleaded guilty to second-degree burglary of his ex-girlfriend's home and violating the protection order. Instead of being sentenced the recommended 38 months in prison, Jones was ordered to complete chemical dependency treatment and one year in the workhouse, according to Hennepin County court records. Jones spent only 6 months in the workhouse. Minneapolis police said they had offered to take Casandra to a shelter. She declined because she was afraid Jones would harm her family if she went to a battered women's shelter. Cassandra is remembered by her aunt, Karo Adolfo: "She was very softhearted. She'd cry over a TV commercial." Renee's family remembered her as someone happiest when she was taking care of her garden or grilling her famous chicken. Wayne worked for Willman Trucking for many years and was remembered by neighbors as a kind man. Bryant Jones was convicted of 12 counts of first-degree murder. He was sentenced to 3 consecutive life sentences. "If we had known [about the abuse], we would have intervened," said Cassandra's uncle, Bill Lamoreaux.

11. Mary Johnson, 42**Alexandria****October 28, 2004**

The Alexandria Police Department received a call at 6:45 p.m. from Mary, who told the dispatcher that she was being threatened with a gun by her husband, Scott Johnson, 43. When police arrived at the couple's home and failed to make contact with them, the Douglas County SWAT team was called out and set a barricade around the home. After securing the home, the team entered the home and found the couple dead. An autopsy found that Scott Johnson had shot his wife and then turned the gun on himself. The couple was in the process of separating. Mary Johnson is survived by two adult sons.

12. Crystal Lindorff, 22**St. Paul****November 16, 2004**

A St. Paul man who served prison time for stabbing a girlfriend was charged in the fatal strangulation of another girlfriend. Alexander Miller, 32, and Crystal had been arguing all day about his infidelity on November 16th when he reportedly strangled her at the apartment they shared with their 9-month-old son. Lindorff's family told police there was a history of Miller abusing Crystal but that she was afraid to report him to police. Paramedics were summoned to the apartment after a report of a woman not breathing. Crystal was taken to the hospital and pronounced dead. Police arrested Miller at the apartment. Alexander Miller received a 45-month sentence for second-degree assault after he stabbed a girlfriend in 1997. Miller was convicted of second-degree murder in Crystal's death.

13. Stacy Ziegler Smith, 29**Winona****December 16, 2004**

A 21 year-old-man, Paul Gordon, was charged with four counts of first-degree murder; four counts of second-degree murder; first-degree criminal sexual conduct; and first-degree arson in the deaths of Stacy and her daughter Taylor, 10. The murder charges include three counts relating to the death of Smith's unborn child. Rescuers responded to a report of a fire at a Winona apartment complex to find the victims dead. It was determined that Stacy and Taylor were strangled to death and that Taylor was also beaten and sexually assaulted. Police have announced that the fire was deliberately set. Friends of Stacy reported that she and Gordon dated for several months and she was pregnant at the time of her murder. Gordon has an extensive criminal record. He was convicted of fourth-degree sexual assault against a 12-year-old girl in 2004 in Arkansas and was arrested in July in connection with raping and strangling a woman in Bentonville, Arkansas. Gordon was arrested in November in Winona on suspicion of cocaine possession and threatening police officers with a fake plastic gun. Gordon is also suspected of pointing a loaded pistol at another man in December. In the weeks leading up to the slayings, Gordon asked witnesses for rat poison and a syringe and told them that he wanted to get Stacy "off my back." Gordon was sentenced to 3 concurrent life sentences for the murders of Stacy and Taylor.

Children murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was their mother's husband, boyfriend or intimate partner, or was the parent, guardian, baby-sitter, childcare provider, or household/family member of the child.

1. Dennis Guerrero, 3 months Anoka February 6, 2004

Aldrin Guerrero-Munoz, 24, was sentenced to more than 32 years in prison for the murder of his 3-months-old son, Dennis Guerrero. An autopsy showed that Dennis had two broken arms, a broken leg, two skull fractures and hemorrhaging in his brain when he died. "God had sent that little angel, who made my dream of being a mother come true, even if it was a little time. But I am going to see Denny again," said Dennis' mother, Jessica Lopez. "Then nobody is going to bother us."

2. Rose Marie Heden, 3 months Oklee March 1, 2004

John Heden, 32, was charged with second-degree murder and first-degree criminal sexual conduct in the death of his daughter Rose Marie, 3 months. The Pennington County Sheriff's Department received a call from a man who said his infant was not breathing and had blood coming from her nose. When paramedics arrived, they pronounced the baby girl dead at the scene. The Ramsey County Medical Examiner found that Rose Marie had injuries to her scalp, chin, torso, and genitalia. The cause of death was determined to be brain injuries consistent with shaking the baby, as well as significant injuries to the genitalia. Evidence at the scene included blood on the crib, the bedroom floor, a wet wipe in a trashcan, and on a flannel shirt. Heden had a prior conviction for third-degree criminal sexual conduct in 1990, involving molesting a female child. He served 2 years of probation for this conviction. Heden was sentenced to life without possibility of parole.

3. Gustavo Hunt, 7 months St. Paul March 16, 2004

Steven Showcatally, 34, was charged with unintentional second-degree murder in the death of his 7-month-old son, Gustavo. He is accused of losing patience while taking care of his baby and deliberately dropping him in the bathtub. Showcatally took Gustavo to St. Paul Children's Hospital, where he died about three hours later. Doctors determined that the baby suffered multiple skull fractures and hemorrhages beneath his scalp. Showcatally initially told police that he accidentally dropped the boy in the tub and then carried him into the bedroom, not noticing anything unusual. After police challenged this story due to the severity of Gustavo's injuries, the father said he intentionally dropped the child two more times and that he was responsible for the injuries. In January 2005, Showcatally was sentenced to 12½ years in prison. Ramsey County District Judge Salvador Rosas said at sentencing. "There is no justification for your conduct. You took everything [your son] had." The judge also said he wondered how Gustavo's birth mother in Guatemala felt, having given up her son for adoption to a U.S. couple in the hope that he would have a better life.

4. Yasmine Luna, 6 weeks**Rogers****April 9, 2004**

Edward Kurr, 28, was charged with second-degree manslaughter in the death of his 6-week-old baby girl, Yasmine Luna. According to court papers, Kurr said his girlfriend, Lisa Luna, 24, drank a bottle of vodka the night of April 8 before she passed out on a bed in a Super 8 motel room. Kurr also admitted to drinking that evening. He said he left the motel room, where the couple had lived since March, while the baby slept on the bed with Lisa. He returned at 2:30 a.m., fed Yasmine, then placed her between the couple in the bed and fell asleep. When Kurr awoke 30 minutes later, he said Lisa was lying on Yasmine's head and he was lying on the baby's lower body. Kurr said Yasmine was not breathing but had a heartbeat. He said that when he woke up and realized the baby wasn't breathing, he put her in her crib, hoping she would be warm and alive in the morning. He said he knew something was seriously wrong with Yasmine but didn't call 911 because he was afraid he and his girlfriend would get in trouble for drinking. In the morning, Lisa found her baby lifeless and called authorities. Rescue workers were unable to revive Yasmine. Authorities have stated that it is unlikely that Lisa Luna will be charged.

5. Avryonna Hansen, 3 months old**Alexandria****May 2, 2004**

A grand jury indicted Michael Hansen on murder charges in the death of his 3-month old infant girl, Avryonna Hansen. Shortly before noon on May 2nd, police officers responded to a call that a baby had stopped breathing. Attempts to revive Avryonna failed. A preliminary autopsy indicated a skull fracture, said Alexandria Police Chief Chuck Nettlestad. The Ramsey County medical examiner determined that the baby's death was a homicide. Hansen was charged with three counts of murder in the second degree, one count of murder in the third degree and two counts of manslaughter. He was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

6. Newborn Boy**White Bear Lake****May 6, 2004**

An 18-year-old White Bear Lake woman, Amanda Anderson, was arrested for strangling her newborn son after giving birth in the bathroom of her family's apartment. According to the search warrant, the baby appeared to be full term and was found in a white kitchen garbage bag inside a clothes hamper. Anderson, who lived with her family, apparently concealed her pregnancy from her family. "I heard her mother screaming and crying outside," said Charlene Silva, who lives across the hall from the family. "Her mother said she had no idea her daughter was pregnant. [Amanda] was only a month away from graduating from high school." A family friend, who did know that the young woman was pregnant, called police to report that Amanda had given birth and needed help. Anderson pleaded guilty to unintentional second-degree murder and was sentenced to 6 years and 8 months in prison.

7. Mikayla Olson, 5**St. Paul****September 3, 2004**

A motorist in Polk County, Wisconsin, came upon a horrifying sight at midnight on September 3—the bodies of Mikayla Olson, 5 and her father, John Tester, 41, inside a car. Police determined that Tester shot his daughter to death and then turned the gun on himself. Tester and Mikayla's mother had divorced two years before. Despite the fact that John Tester had abused his former wife and was jailed four times for violating the order for protection against him, Tester was given unsupervised visitation rights with his daughter. The murder of his daughter was a premeditated act, driven by a desire for revenge on his former wife. Tester rented a car a few days before the murder, borrowed two handguns from a friend, and wrote a letter to his brothers, detailing how his assets should be distributed after his death. At 8 p.m. the night of the killings, Tester called his ex-wife to say he was "sorry" and had Mikayla speak to her mother and say, "she was going on a long journey with daddy." "I think it was his way at getting back at [his ex-wife]," said Gina Tester, a sister-in-law. Mikayla's mother was afraid for her child's life and hoped to have her former husband's right to unsupervised visitation rescinded by the court. Even Mikayla's daycare provider stated that she was afraid that Tester would harm the little girl. "[Mikayla's mother] lived for this little girl," said Mark Anderson, Mikayla's mother's attorney, "She was a very, very dedicated mother and she did everything she could to protect that little girl from people, but [Tester] was the one guy she could never do anything about because he had court-ordered visitation."

8. Jasmin Bigler, 3 months**Princeton****September 21, 2004**

A 19-year-old Princeton man was arrested in the death his 4-month-old daughter, Jasmin Bigler. The baby died in the early hours of the morning after she was taken to Fairview Northland Regional Hospital. Tiffany Bigler, the baby's mother, said she was asleep in her apartment when her boyfriend, Kelly Braun, 19, woke her. "He came running into the room, holding her and screaming, 'She's not breathing, she's not breathing,'" Bigler said. Bigler said her boyfriend admitted to police that he'd hit Jasmin in the back of the head in frustration. Doctors who treated the baby at Ramsey County Medical Center said that her injuries were consistent with being punched in the head and that she had also suffered 11 rib fractures. A neighbor reported she had called police in the past when she heard Braun assaulting Tiffany Bigler. Tiffany Bigler has stated that Braun hit her so hard while pregnant with Jasmin that she went into early labor. "He used to hit me and yell at me and stuff but he never, I never thought he would do it to his own child," she said. Kelly Braun was convicted of second-degree murder.

9. Katelyn Thongratsamy, 3 St. Michael October 31, 2004

Katelyn Thongratsamy, 3, was found shot to death at her St. Michael home. Her father, Soukanh Thongratsamy, 42, was also found shot in the home. Police determined that the little girl's death was a murder-suicide perpetrated by the father. Deputies responded to a call the afternoon of the 31st after Thongratsamy assaulted his ex-girlfriend, who is also Katelyn's mother. Stacy Doyle of the Wright County Sheriff's Department said that the mother moved out of the house a couple of months before the murder and was back to pick on her daughter after a weekend visit with her father. Doyle said an argument broke out and that the woman was assaulted, threatened with a gun, strangled, and bound before escaping from a basement window and calling police from a neighbor's house. After police responded, they cordoned off the area and unsuccessfully attempted to contact Soukanh Thongratsamy. Police stormed the house, where they found the little girl and her father dead. Katelyn's mother was taken to the hospital and has since recovered from her injuries.

10. Ashanta Chavarria, 3 mos. Worthington November 5, 2004

Lisa Ann Shane, 23, was charged with 2 counts of second-degree murder and felony child neglect in the death of her daughter, Ashanta, 3 months. Ashanta was taken to the hospital on October 28th, after the baby's apnea monitor had activated several times that day. A visiting home nurse noted a small bruise and a scratch on Ashanta earlier in the day. At the hospital, the baby showed brain bleeding and evidence of a stroke, as well as signs of healing fractures on her ribs and signs of head trauma. Ashanta was airlifted to a hospital in Sioux Falls, SD, where she died on November 5. Shane has claimed that the baby's father, Jose Chavarria, had pushed her and she dropped Ashanta. Shane was convicted of second-degree murder.

11. M.H., 2 Maplewood November 25, 2004

Kim Herman, 40, and her boyfriend Terry Bradshaw, 32, were charged with manslaughter in the death of Herman's son, identified only by his initials, M.H. Police were called on a report of a baby not breathing. Herman told investigators that on the day of his death the boy wasn't eating and he had been vomiting a few days before. She said that her son was a "head banger" when asked about a bruise on his forehead. An autopsy revealed that M.H. had died from blunt force trauma to the abdomen and that he had blood in his stomach. He had traces of cocaine in his body. A search of the house shortly after the boy's death revealed marijuana, methamphetamine, and a list of drug contacts. Herman later told police that she and her boyfriend did drugs nonstop and that people were always at their home getting high. In 2005 Bradshaw told police he had been horse-playing with M.H. and fell into him, hitting the boy's stomach with his elbow. Herman and Bradshaw were also charged with first-degree drug sales and child endangerment. M.H. left behind a 6-year-old sister and a twin brother.

12. Taylor Swanson, 10**Winona****December 16, 2004**

A 21 year-old-man, Paul Gordon, was charged with four counts of first-degree murder; four counts of second-degree murder; first-degree criminal sexual conduct; and first-degree arson in the deaths of Stacy and her daughter Taylor, 10. The murder charges include three counts relating to the death of Smith's unborn child. Rescuers responded to a report of a fire at a Winona apartment complex to find the victims dead. It was determined that Stacy and Taylor were strangled to death and that Taylor was also beaten and sexually assaulted. Police have announced that the fire was deliberately set. Friends of Stacy reported that she and Gordon dated for several months and she was pregnant at the time of her murder. Gordon has an extensive criminal record. He was convicted of fourth-degree sexual assault against a 12-year-old girl in 2004 in Arkansas and was arrested in July in connection with raping and strangling a woman in Bentonville, Arkansas. Gordon was arrested in November in Winona on suspicion of cocaine possession and threatening police officers with a fake plastic gun. Gordon is also suspected of pointing a loaded pistol at another man in December. In the weeks leading up to the slayings, Gordon asked witnesses for rat poison and a syringe and told them that he wanted to get Stacy "off my back." Gordon was sentenced to 3 concurrent life sentences for the murders of Stacy and Taylor.

Women murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was an acquaintance of the deceased woman, or was a stranger or an unknown assailant.

1. Satociaree Wilson, 22

Minneapolis

April 11, 2004

was shot to death as she in a car with another woman. The woman sitting with her was also shot, but her injuries were not life threatening. Satociaree's father said she was a "beautiful daughter," who had run into trouble on city streets before. "The only thing we can say to her was, 'Get out of the streets.' She wouldn't do it..." A bicyclist returning home that night came upon the scene moments after the shooting. He described a scene of mayhem as Wilson's friends screamed for help. "There were two women running in the middle of the street, because they were in shock," said the man. No suspect has been identified.

2. Melanie Ross, 40

Minneapolis

July 24, 2004

Melanie was found dead under a bridge in Minneapolis. An autopsy found that she had been strangled. A man was arrested in the case, but is no longer a suspect. A motive for the murder is unknown.

3. Deidria Clapp, 38

Eagan

Body found September 6, 2004

Martin Wolter, 42, was arrested after a search of his Blaine home in connection with the murder of Deidria. A passer-by spotted Clapp's body in 5 feet of water in a rock quarry in Belle Prairie Township, near Little Falls, Minnesota. She apparently died from being beaten with a blunt object on the head and body. Plastic weights were tied to her wrists and feet. Wolter, who has a history of alcohol-related driving arrests, was taken to Anoka County jail after several items connecting him to Clapp were found in his residence. Authorities said that they know Clapp had contact with Wolters on the day she was murdered. Wolter was charged with second-degree intentional and unintentional murder. On September 15, he hanged himself in his jail cell.

4. Octavia Adams, 18

St. Paul

September 15, 2004

Octavia was shot while visiting friends in the basement of a St. Paul home. When police arrived at the home, they found the young woman dead. A 16-year-old boy was arrested in connection with Octavia's death. Octavia graduated from Arlington High Scholl in June and was planning on attending college in the fall. She was popular and well known in her neighborhood, where she was a member of the Falcons Drill Team and Drum Corps. Octavia, said her minister, Rev. Daryl Spence, was "an angel." He added, "I just couldn't see her in a casket—all that spirit and all the fun she used to have. You don't think preachers cry? You don't think men cry?"

5. Suzanne Fischer, 59**Ramsey****September 19, 2004**

Suzanne was fatally shot in the head as she lay in bed, sleeping next to her husband. Authorities say Joshua Krueth, 20, broke into the Fischer house to commit the murder. Suzanne's husband awoke and called 911 to report the shooting as the suspect, who was dressed in camouflage, ran away. There was no connection between Krueth and the Fischers. "It's just hard to understand," said Dave Fischer, Suzanne's brother-in-law, "I think if...if the suspect would have sat down and talked to Sue for five minutes, he certainly wouldn't have pulled the trigger." The suspect has also been connected to the murder of Lawrence Plessel, 60, also of Ramsey, who was shot through the window of his kitchen on September 4. After Fischer's murder, an intense manhunt led to the capture of Krueth and the suspected murder weapon. Police have described Krueth as a "serial killer" and a methamphetamine user. Suzanne Fischer, who worked as a nurse, has been described as the kind of nurse you wanted in a crisis. "She brought a soothing calm and a sense of friendship—skills you just can't teach," said Dave Dahl, a colleague at Unity Hospital, where Fischer worked. "And that's what makes this loss so tragic, even to people who never knew her."

6. Patricia Giles, 26**Minneapolis****October 31, 2004**

Patricia was shot to death as she sat in her husband's car in Minneapolis. A dispute developed between the Giles' vehicle and a car driven by Dedrick Jiles, 21. Jiles' brother, Detrick Jiles, 20, allegedly fired three shots at the Giles' SUV and hit Patricia, fatally shooting her. Patricia died at Hennepin County Medical Center from a single gunshot wound to her head. Dedrick Jiles and Detrick Jiles were charged with second-degree murder but charges were later dropped against Detrick Jiles. Police no longer believe he was in the car at the time of the murder. Dedrick Jiles was convicted of second-degree murder.

7. Yasmin Geele, 32**Minneapolis****November 9, 2004**

Yasmin was shot to death in her Minneapolis apartment. Five people were arrested in connection with the murder. Abdisalam Hussein, 28, had promised his conspirators that it would be an "easy mission" to steal drugs and money from two women. The other woman in the apartment at the time of the murder was not hurt. Abdishakur Haji, Yasmin's half-brother, said his sister didn't sell khat, the drug mentioned as a possible motive, but that she hung out with people who did. Haji described his sister as a "happy girl" who had a lot of friends and worked at a day care center. Hussien, Fuad Dhuh, 22, of Burnsville, and the other men—Abdisalam L. Roble, 19, of Brooklyn Park; Abdisalan M. Abdi, 22, and Ismail M. Ali, 20, both of Minneapolis—are each charged with one count of second-degree murder. Although only Ali is accused of using the gun, all five men are charged with murder because they all were involved in the robbery that resulted in Geelle's death, Klobuchar said. Ali was convicted of second-degree murder. The four others were convicted of lesser charges.

Friends or family members murdered in domestic violence-related situations.

1. Darryl Horton, 48

Minneapolis

March 25, 2004

Joseph Robinson, 46, pleaded guilty to stabbing his ex-girlfriend and killing her boyfriend in March. Robinson spent the evening with victims Laurie Brown and Darryl Horton, 48, at Brown's home. Robinson left, only to return because he said police were looking for him. When Laurie Brown opened the door, Robinson began stabbing her. Horton managed to distract Robinson enough to allow Laurie Brown to escape, but then Joseph Robinson stabbed Darryl Horton to death. Laurie Brown survived her stabbing injuries. Robinson will be sentenced to 12 years and nine months for second-degree unintentional murder.

2. Renee Brown, 44

Minneapolis

September 10, 2004

3. Wayne Huotari, 61

Please see Casandra Current in Women Murdered.

About the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women was founded in 1978 to serve as a unifying voice for battered women and to link battered women's programs in the state with the common purpose of ending domestic violence. MCBW is a statewide membership organization of local, regional, and statewide programs advocating on behalf of battered women and their children.

MCBW promotes social change-- individual, institutional, and cultural. We work to end oppression based on gender, race, age, affectional orientation, class, and disability. The specific work of MCBW involves changing systems and institutions so that they can respond more effectively. MCBW works to empower organizations that serve victims of domestic abuse. MCBW provides widespread networking opportunities for organizations that serve battered women and is the statewide voice on behalf on battered women and provides leadership on a regional, statewide, and national level.

MCBW's activities include resources and referrals for individuals, legislative and public policy advocacy on a statewide and federal level, sponsoring training events for programs that serve battered women, coordinating statewide task force meetings, serving as an information clearinghouse, publishing a quarterly newsletter and web site, and producing community education materials.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women is to provide a voice for battered women and member programs; challenge systems and institutions so they respond more effectively to the needs of battered women and their children; promote social change; and support, educate, and connect member programs.

Vision Statement:

The vision of the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women is to end violence against women and their children and to achieve social justice for all.