

2004 Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report

Published September 2006



Social Change Through Action and Advocacy

Domestic Violence Claimed

33 Lives

in Wisconsin.

“I’ll kill you. If I can’t have you nobody will.”

“It does not matter anyway. I have been thinking about killing her and her mother too.”

“I’m coming back for you, and if I don’t get you, I’m going to get your mom and dad, and I’m going to get your grandparents too.”

“Knock it off. You are going to kill both of us.”

The **Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV)** is a statewide membership organization of domestic abuse programs, formerly battered women, and other individuals who have joined together to speak with one voice against domestic abuse. As a statewide resource center on domestic violence, we offer such services as:

- ⌘ Training and technical assistance to domestic abuse programs;
- ⌘ A quarterly educational journal;
- ⌘ Forums for the involvement of battered women;
- ⌘ Networking and support for programs for battered women and their children and for professionals in related fields;
- ⌘ Training for professionals in legal, health care, social services, child welfare, elder abuse, housing, education, and mental health fields and for employers throughout Wisconsin; and
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Executive Summary

Introduction

Domestic violence has devastating effects on our lives, homes, communities and society. An intimate relationship that ends in homicide starkly illustrates the most catastrophic possible conclusion. Not only has the victim's and at times the perpetrator's life ended, the lives of those around them – children, friends, family members, co-workers – are sometimes taken as well. For surviving family and friends, their lives are forever changed. This report reflects the scope, brutality and lethality of domestic violence as a serious social problem, a human rights issue and a crime.

This report details domestic violence related homicides¹ that occurred in Wisconsin during calendar year (CY) 2004. We have told people's stories in brief. With their stories we hope to educate individuals and systems in communities throughout Wisconsin about what happened to these victims of domestic violence who were killed, in the hope that others will not suffer and die as they did. We have tried to show the nature of domestic violence as it invades a home and family, and escalates to a fatal end. We used the facts available to us to tell these stories as accurately as possible. However, the brief presentation of these stories can in no way capture the detail and complexity of every victim's life. A complete picture of each life can only be gleaned by thoroughly reading all of the available documentation and talking with those left behind.

The picture that emerges from our research is grim. From January to December 2004, the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) reported 149 deaths by homicide to the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS)². WCADV determined there were **26 incidents of domestic violence homicide** in 2004, which resulted in 33 deaths – **28 people were murdered** and 5 perpetrators committed suicide.

- The average rate of domestic violence homicide in Wisconsin in 2004 was 2.3 murders a month. When suicides are included the rate is 2.7 domestic violence related deaths per month.
- In 2004, the Wisconsin death rate was the lowest rate ever reported for the state. There were 149 homicides as compared to 197 in 2003 (24% drop) and 195 in 2002 (24% drop). There was also a drop in domestic violence related homicides in 2004 with 28 murders compared to 45 in 2003 (38% drop) and 38 in 2002 (26% drop).

¹ Homicides were considered "domestic" if the victims and perpetrators were spouses, former spouses, adults with children in common, adults related by blood and adults or teens whom had been in a dating relationship. Homicides of others were also included if the circumstances of murder included intimate partner jealousy or an attempt to protect a domestic violence victim from future harm. This report also details homicides of domestic violence perpetrators that occur as their victims acted in self-defense. *Additional information on definitions and criteria can be found under Methodology on page 13.*

² The source of data for BHI is death certificates filed with the State Registrar, Vital Records Section, BHI, Division of Health Care Financing, DHFS.

The murder victim's range in age was from 5 to 57 and the incidents occurred in 15 counties in Wisconsin, in all regions of the state. In addition to honoring those who were killed through these stories, this report seeks to highlight emerging issues and policy implications. In 2004, as in previous years, these incidents of domestic violence homicide point toward critical issues related to abuser tactics such as use of guns and sexual assault as tools for intimidation. In addition, these stories illustrate the grave danger victims of domestic violence and those around them are in when they seek to end or succeed in ending their relationship.

Our intent with this report is to remember the victims of domestic violence homicide, help our communities understand the dynamics of domestic violence and how it can turn deadly. We want to set a high standard of responsibility for Coordinated Community Response Teams, I-Teams and other critical systems from whom domestic violence victims and perpetrators could seek help, assistance, support and treatment. We all can create opportunities for intervention and prevention. Lastly, we hope to influence the attitudes of community members to inspire them to get involved in the effort to prevent domestic violence.

KEY FINDINGS

In this section, we provide information on the domestic violence homicide death toll. Some of the questions we answer in this section are who died, how did they die, who did the killing and what was their relationship to the homicide victim?

◆ Homicide Victims by Age & Gender

	Female	Male	Total
0-6 years	1	0	1
7-17 years	0	0	0
18-29 years	4	2	6
30-49 years	13	3	16
50 plus years	1	4	5
Total	19	9	28

◆ Race and Ethnicity of Victims and Perpetrators

	Victims	Perpetrators
Caucasian	20	21
African American	5	5
Latino	1	3
Native American	1	1
Unknown	1	1

◆ Weapons and Methods of Killing:

- 11 shot
- 9 stabbed
- 2 beaten, strangled and stabbed
- 1 beaten and strangled
- 2 beaten with blunt object (crowbar and claw hammer)
- 1 beaten
- 1 shaken to death
- 1 intentional drug overdose

◆ Relationship of Perpetrators and Adult Female Victims

Of the 18 adult women killed, 17 were killed by their male partner (either current or former). One woman was killed by the neighbor of her girlfriend.

◆ Relationship of Adult Male Victims to the Homicide Perpetrators

Of the nine adult men killed:

- Two men were killed by their female partners: one in self-defense; one in retaliation for past abuse.
- One was killed by his girlfriend and a group of her friends in retaliation for his past abuse toward her.
- Two were killed by the ex-boyfriend of their current girlfriends.
- Two were bystanders
- One was killed by his male lover
- One was killed by his adult son

◆ Impact on Children

- One child under the age of 18 was murdered by her father during his unsupervised weekend visit with her.
- Twenty-two children under 18 were orphaned, left motherless and/or fatherless due to domestic violence homicide.
- Eleven minor children were present at the scene or found the murder victim.

◆ Leaving Does Not Equal Safety

- In 21 of the 26 homicide incidents, the victim and perpetrator were intimate partners. Of these cases, eight involved victims who were killed after they had left their abusive partners or had discussed divorce or leaving prior to the murder. In these eight incidents, nine people were killed.
- In three other incidents, three people were killed because their mother or girlfriend had left their abusive partner or had discussed divorce.

◆ Prior History Of Domestic Violence

In 19 of the 26 incidents, a prior history of domestic violence was recorded by police or reported by family or friends.

◆ Gender of Perpetrators in Murder/Suicides

All five of the murder/suicides involved male perpetrators killing female or child victims and then committing suicide. Three of the murder/suicides were committed with a gun and two were committed with a knife.

◆ Location of Murders

For 20 of the 28 homicides, the victims were killed in their homes, just outside their homes or at the temporary homes in which they were residing.

ISSUES AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Gun Violence

A gun is the most commonly used weapon in domestic violence homicide in Wisconsin and throughout the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in a recent study that family and intimate assaults with a firearm were three times more likely to result in death than those involving knives or other sharp instruments and 23 times more likely to result in death than assaults involving other weapons or bodily force³. In Wisconsin between 2000 and 2004, 97 people were murdered with a gun in domestic violence related homicides. These murders represented more than those killed by knives, other weapons and bodily force combined. The Violence Policy Center found in an analysis of domestic violence homicide of females (a woman murdered by a spouse, intimate acquaintance, or close relative) that having one or more guns in the home made a woman 7.2 times more likely to be the victim of such a homicide (Violence Poverty Center, 2001).

Noting the heightened risk that guns pose to domestic violence victims, federal law restricts an offender convicted of a domestic violence related misdemeanor crime from possessing a firearm. Similarly, both federal and Wisconsin law prohibits possession of firearms while a person is subject to an active domestic violence restraining order.

In Wisconsin in 2004, 10 individual perpetrators killed their victims using a gun. Of these 10 perpetrators, all were adults at the time of the murder.

- Four of these perpetrators were prohibited from possessing firearms stemming from prior felony convictions.
- One had an active domestic violence restraining order against him which carried a gun prohibition. This perpetrator had been arrested three times for restraining order violations. To commit the murder, he crossed state lines in possession of the prohibited firearm.
- One had a pending domestic violence case against him at the time of the murder.

³ Leonard J. Paulozzi et al, "Surveillance for Homicide Among Intimate Partners – United States, 1981 – 1998," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Surveillance Summaries* 50 (October 12, 2001): 1 – 16.

- Two perpetrators used extreme weaponry – a short barreled shotgun which is illegal to possess in WI and an automatic assault rifle, which until earlier in 2004, had been illegal to possess.

According to several research studies including the National Institute of Justice's 2003 Journal dedicated to Intimate Partner Homicide, when firearms are in homes, an abused woman was six times more likely than other abused women to be killed⁴. A 2004 study found that guns are kept in homes where there is domestic violence more often than in homes that are not violent. In addition, if a gun was present, its use in domestic violence was relatively common⁵. Of the nine incidents that involved gun killings, five (55%) occurred in the victim's home or temporary home which was where the gun was kept.

Guns and murder-suicide have proven to be intrinsically linked. A recent national study by the Violence Policy Center, *American Roulette: The Untold Story of Murder-Suicide in the United States*, found that 73.7% of murder-suicide incidents involved intimate partners. Nearly all (94.5%) of the murder-suicides involved firearms⁶. In Wisconsin, 60% of the domestic violence murder-suicides committed in 2004 involved the use of firearms. Between 2000 – 2004, 94% of the domestic violence murder-suicides involved guns. One Wisconsin study found that for overall suicide, guns were involved in only 49.6% of the incidents⁷.

Risk to Others

While men killing their female current or former intimate partner makes up the largest percentage of domestic violence related homicides, we will miss the full death toll of domestic violence unless we also examine the many other homicides which take place as abusers attempt to control their intimate partners. Not every victim of domestic violence homicide was the victim in the abusive relationship. This report includes five people who were killed by someone with whom they had never been in an intimate relationship. These murders occurred in five separate incidents of domestic violence related homicide:

- Two men were killed by the former boyfriend of their current girlfriend.
- Two men were killed as bystanders to the domestic violence crime that was occurring.
- One woman was killed by the jealous neighbor of her girlfriend.

Domestic violence homicide is devastating to the lives of the children who are left behind. Even more significant are the children whose lives are taken in the cruel effort of abusers to

⁴ Jacquelyn C. Campbell et al, "Assessing Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Homicide," *Intimate Partner Homicide*, National Institute of Justice Journal; November 2003, Issue No. 250: 14-19.

⁵ S.B. Sorenson; D.J. Wiebe, "Weapons in the Lives of Battered Women," *American Journal of Public Health*; August 2004, Vol 94, No. 8: 1412- 1417.

⁶ Violence Policy Center, *American Roulette: The Untold Story of Murder-Suicide in the United States*, 2002.

⁷ Violent Injury Report System of Wisconsin, *Annual Statistical Report Wisconsin 2002 Violent Fatalities*, Spring 2004.

control their adult victim's lives. Nationally it is estimated that between 3.3 and 10 million children are exposed to domestic violence annually⁸. The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse suggests that domestic violence may be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities in the country. While not all of these homicides occur within the context of domestic violence, many do. This was certainly the case in 2004 for one five-year old girl who was killed by her father when she visited him for the weekend. In addition, in 2004 in Wisconsin, twenty-two children under 18 were orphaned, left motherless or fatherless when the domestic violence turned deadly. Eleven of these children were present during the murder or found their parent's dead body.

Leaving the relationship

Every year thousands of battered women make the decision to leave their abusive relationship to make a new and better life for themselves and their children. Tragically, some of those women are in this report. Choosing to leave an abusive relationship is a very difficult, complex decision and is not always the best and safest choice for each individual at any specific time. Most victims of domestic violence leave their abusers, often several times. It may take a number of attempts to permanently separate because abusers may use violence, financial control, or threats about the children or other loved ones to compel victims to return. Though battered women are often blamed for not leaving a relationship when abuse first occurs, it is often more dangerous for battered women as they attempt to leave and after they have left a violent relationship. According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, the rate of domestic violence homicides by husbands was 25 times higher when women were separated from their husbands than when married and cohabitating⁹.

In 21 of the 26 homicide incidents in 2004, the victim and perpetrator were intimate partners. Of these 21 incidents, eight involved a victim who was killed after leaving an abusive partner or having discussed divorce or leaving prior to the murder. In these incidents, nine people were murdered. One woman was beaten, strangled and stabbed in her home in the middle of a dispute over child custody issues just 13 days after she filed for divorce. An additional three people were killed because their girlfriend or mother had ended a relationship. In two additional incidents, two women and a bystander were killed in the act of leaving or asking their abuser to leave following an argument. One woman was killed the night she asked her abuser to leave the apartment and one was shot as she was walking out of the door with a packed bag.

There are many obstacles to leaving a violent relationship. Many domestic violence victims return to abusive relationships due to threats to themselves or their loved ones. Research shows the frequency of threats by an abuser was related to an increased risk of violence for victims who had left their relationship¹⁰. Additionally, research has shown

⁸Carlson, Bonnie E.

⁹Websdale, Neal. *Understanding Domestic Homicide*. Northeastern University Press, Boston, 1999.

¹⁰Fluery, Ruth E., et al. "When Ending the Relationship Does Not End the Violence: Women's Experiences of Violence by Former Partners." *Violence Against Women*, Vol. 6 No. 12, Dec. 2000.

that women are at particularly high risk of experiencing physical and sexual violence when they attempt to leave their abusers for this represents a challenge to their abuser's control. This is reflected in the stories in this report. A woman stated on her domestic abuse temporary restraining order petition that, "many threats to my life were made and promises to find a way to get even with me if I didn't do things his way...". The mother of a five year old murder victim related numerous times in court documents, prior to the homicide, that her ex-husband had threatened her life and she was concerned for her daughter's safety as well. Another perpetrator had told his ex-girlfriend, "I'm coming back for you and if I don't get you, I'm going to get your mom and dad, and I'm going to get your grandparents too." Assessing the lethality of threats is a critical factor in analyzing the risk of leaving a violent relationship.

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is a violent crime, an act of power and control, not a sexual act. Many battered women have reported that husbands have demanded sex directly following a beating, as proof that the woman "forgives" him for beating her¹¹. According to researchers, some women experience physical abuse during the sexual assault while others may experience sexual assault as an abuser's attempt to "make up" with them, all the while using forced sex as a way to maintain power and control over her¹². Studies using clinical samples of battered women reveal that between one third and one half of battered women are raped by their partners at least once¹³. A woman victimized by her intimate partner is more likely to be sexually assaulted multiple times as compared to a survivor of stranger and acquaintance rape.

Sexual assault is the most underreported crime¹⁴. While all sexual assaults are underreported, sexual assaults committed by intimate partners, friends or acquaintances are less likely to be reported to the police than sexual assaults by strangers¹⁵. During a nine-year period (1992- 2000), 41% of sexual assaults committed by strangers were reported to the police, while only 24% of sexual assaults committed by an intimate partner were reported¹⁶. In three out of the 26 incidents of domestic violence homicide in Wisconsin in 2004, the perpetrator had a history of sexual assault. Given that sexual assaults by intimate partners are reported at an average rate of 24%, we can estimate that sexual assault was present in far more than three relationships described in this report. Additionally,

¹¹ Wellesley Centers for Women: The Wife Rape Information Page. July 1998 <http://www.wellesley.edu/WCW/projects/mrape.html>.

¹² Kennedy Bergen, Raquel Ph.D. et al, "Marital Rape", VAWnet Applied Research Forum, 1999.

¹³ Kilpatrick, D.G., Edmunds, C.N. & Seymour A. 1992 Rape in America: A Report to the Nation. National Victim Center.

¹⁴ RAINN, et al, Crime Victimization 2003.

¹⁵ Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, Reporting Crime to the Police, 1992-2000, March 2003.

¹⁶ Bureau of Justice et al, 2003

nearly all of the available data on sexual assault, acquaintance or stranger, is based on data from the criminal justice system, which excludes incidents that were never reported¹⁷.

Browne and Campbell found in their research that batterers who also sexually assault their intimate partners are particularly dangerous men and are more likely to severely injure their wives and potentially escalate the violence to murder¹⁸. *The Danger Assessment*, developed by Campbell, identifies twenty risk factors for victims of domestic violence for increased risk of homicide. One of the risk factors is forced sex¹⁹. Other researchers have found that women who are separated or divorced from their partners are at a higher risk for sexual assault²⁰. In Wisconsin, one abuser sexually assaulted his ex-girlfriend before shooting her. One reason he gave for killing her was he could not face life in prison knowing she was with another man. Another man, while in prison for a prior sexual assault of his ex-girlfriend, had accused his cell mate of sleeping with his ex-girlfriend. While on work release from prison he killed his ex-girlfriend. In addition, two perpetrators killed their ex-girlfriends' new lovers and one attempted to kill his ex-girlfriend as well.

Missed Opportunities – Legal System Response

Domestic violence cases interact with many systems in the community. In the legal system, both criminal and family courts, victims seek assistance and protection in leaving their relationships. This presents an opportunity for the legal system to intercede, protect and support victims and their children that are trapped in abusive relationships. Yet, for too many victims, that opportunity is lost when the legal system does not hold a batterer accountable for his violence or the threat a parent poses to a child or the child's mother is not taken seriously.

Several stories in this report involve perpetrators that were already in the criminal courts and should have been considered extremely dangerous.

- One perpetrator was arrested in 2003 for 4th degree sexual assault, and in 2004 was convicted of attempted sexual assault, a felony. Yet he was in the county jail with Huber work release privileges that included leaving prison for his job when he beat his ex-girlfriend to death.
- One perpetrator pled guilty to Battery in 2003 after an incident in which he beat his wife in the face and head, while telling her he would kill her. Nine months later, he did kill her, stabbing her 20 times, her arms and hands showing that she tried her best to defend herself.
- Prior to murdering his girlfriend, one perpetrator was involved in a number of allegations of domestic abuse—covering four states, (and spanning 20 years),

¹⁷ Kilpatrick et al, 1992.

¹⁸ Kennedy Bergen et al, 1999.

¹⁹ Campbell, Jacquelyn C., Danger Assessment Scale, www.dangerassessment.org.

²⁰ Kennedy Bergen et al, 1999.

although he was only convicted once. His girlfriend had also reported violence, but recanted her original statements.

- One perpetrator was released after serving six of a nine year sentence for burglary. While in prison, he told a psychiatrist “not a day goes by that I don’t have a thought or dream of killing someone.” In the past, he was charged with taking a 14 year old girl to Las Vegas where he had sex with her. He killed his ex-girlfriend after abducting, brutalizing and raping her.

In the family court system, victims often find that almost all domestic abusers are given time with their children, even custody and primary physical placement. This was true for a five year old girl that was killed in 2004. She was shot in the head by her father who was granted unsupervised weekends with her. The girl’s mother had pled with the Minnesota courts to protect her daughter by repeatedly warning of the danger her ex-husband posed. Their case file is filled with domestic abuse charges, order of protection violations and alleged threats. Like Minnesota, Wisconsin legislators have sought to offer protection and support to battered women and their children. In 2004, Wisconsin Act 130 was passed to provide a tool for court systems to consider safety as a high priority in custody and placement determinations. We urge Wisconsin attorneys, judges and court personnel to utilize this legal tool to it’s fullest extent.

Media

Domestic violence is a significant public safety and health issue. Although it occurs between individuals who have a relationship, it has a direct impact on the quality of life in any given community and can be sanctioned by our communities’ and societal response. The media has a crucial role to play in public education about domestic violence. How domestic violence is reported impacts public opinion, which impacts public policy, legislation, and ultimately access to interventions that may help victims and their children to be safe.

Domestic violence is a difficult issue to investigate and a complicated one to report. Researchers have studied news coverage of domestic violence fatalities in Washington and Rhode Island²¹. For the purposes of this report, we conducted an examination of media reports of domestic violence homicides. Our findings mirror those of Washington and Rhode Island.

In compiling this report we read 186 newspaper articles. They varied in length from multiple pages to just a few paragraphs. With few exceptions, regardless of the length or the

²¹ C.F. Bullock and J. Cubert, “Coverage of Domestic Violence Fatalities by Newspapers in Washington State,” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, May 2002, vol. 17, no. 5, 475-499. “Rhode Island Media Study: 1996-1999” in *Domestic Violence: A Handbook for Journalists*, produced by the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2000.

newspaper they appeared in, news reports often failed to provide accurate or serious coverage of domestic violence as a deadly public health issue.

Issue: Domestic violence homicides were rarely labeled as domestic violence or placed in a broader context of domestic violence.

Of the 186 articles reviewed only 10 (5.4%) included references to domestic violence or a similar meaning phrase in the title of the article. In addition, only 26 (14%) specifically labeled the incident as domestic violence. By failing to place the murder in the larger context of domestic violence, the newspapers missed an opportunity to inform the public of the seriousness of domestic violence in their community. These homicides do not happen out of the blue. Instead, they are extreme examples of abusers using power and control over their intimate partners. Because a domestic violence homicide offers a chilling reminder that leaving a violent relationship can be lethal, the media can both help shatter myths about why victims stay in relationships with violent partners and stress the importance of safety planning before leaving an abusive relationship.

Solution: Media could provide a more accurate picture of these homicides by placing the homicide within the context of domestic violence. Fully describing the nature of these homicides and the relationships that they occurred within shows the community that domestic violence is a community wide problem. These homicides provide an opportunity to educate the public about domestic violence and about resources that can help and are available in Wisconsin communities.

Issue: Coverage provided an inaccurate view of domestic violence and reinforced myths

Instead of labeling these homicides as domestic violence or domestic violence-related homicides, often these crimes were given labels that have nothing to do with domestic violence. An examination of the articles can leave a distorted idea of the homicides that are occurring in Wisconsin. For example, one headline reads, “Murder –Suicide Motive Unclear”, yet the victim’s family member reported in the article that the perpetrator had been abusive in the past. Another headline reads, “Husband – Wife Die in Green Bay”, leaving wide open the cause of death instead of zeroing in on the fact that the husband killed his wife and himself while their young children were asleep upstairs. These headlines and other like them remove the actor from the crime. Not only do they fail to clearly categorize the violent act but they lead the reader to believe that the murder was a passive event. A final example includes the headline “Man Held in Oconto Beating Death” and leaves out that it was his ex-girlfriend he beat to death with a crowbar while violating his prison Huber privileges. Several articles describe the violence as something beyond the perpetrators control by labeling the homicide as a “rage crime” or “the slain wife had threatened to leave, angering her husband”. By not naming who committed the homicide and the abusive context of the crime, readers are left with the impression that the crimes were random.

Solution: By finding and reporting the evidence or facts that demonstrate the intentionality and purpose of this domestic violence related crime, the media can further serve to

demystify domestic violence. Careful questioning for a prior history of domestic violence or signs of abuse and inclusion of the perpetrator of the act can help to capture the complete picture.

Issue: Sources shaped the stories and were often limited or poorly chosen

Our study found that domestic violence experts were rarely quoted in stories covering domestic violence fatalities. When reporters do not cover the homicide as domestic violence-related crime, they miss the opportunity to provide the public information and resources that would be available through interviews with domestic violence advocates and batterers' treatment providers. Most typically, reporters interview family, friends and often neighbors of the victim and the perpetrator and leave out the larger context of domestic violence. As a result, the coverage of a man who had been abusive to his ex-wife, killed his young daughter and then himself quotes a neighbor who says, "he appeared to be a very nurturing father". It is critical to be careful using sources emotionally connected to the victim and perpetrator. Family, friends and co-workers may be disinclined to identify or view the relationship as violent and may be reluctant to speak negatively about the perpetrator or see the murder victim as a victim of domestic violence. For loved ones, media interviews can occur within the early stages of grief and shock; a time when they might not present an accurate picture of the history of violence in the relationship²².

Solution: Media should include interviews with local domestic violence and batterers treatment experts and information from credible researchers. Media can also make sure interviews with family and friends are placed within the context of domestic violence. There was comprehensive media coverage of a woman who was killed by her boyfriend in Portage County. Throughout the series of articles that covered the murder, the homicide was defined as domestic violence; police officers described the potential dangers in leaving a violent relationship and urged those in abusive relationships to seek help and the newspaper listed where and how to get help.

Our review mirrors national studies, which found that news stories regarding domestic violence murders often reinforce myths and inaccuracies about domestic violence. They do this by implying victim-blaming or perpetrator excusing attitudes, blaming the act on cultural or class differences, and reinforcing the idea that the fatal violence came out of the blue as opposed to being the culmination of a history of violence and controlling behaviors²³. We must seek accurate and informed coverage and challenge journalism professionals to set a high standard of responsibility to the public including murder victims and their loved ones. When reporters and their media outlets are conscientious and informed in their approach to reporting crimes of domestic violence, they contribute to helping our communities understand the dynamics of domestic violence, how it can turn deadly and where to turn for help.

²² Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, *Covering Domestic Violence: A guide for journalists and other media professionals*, 2004.

²³ IBID

Methodology

Our definition of homicide is the killing of one human being by another. This encompasses criminal, justifiable, self-defense and reckless homicides. Homicides were considered domestic violence related if:

- the victims and perpetrators were spouses, former spouses, adults with children in common, and adults or teens that had been in a dating relationship. We also include cases that involved adults related by blood if dynamics of power and control were demonstrated.
- it was a homicide of a person *other than* the intimate partner and it occurred within the context of domestic violence. This includes cases where the circumstances of the murder included jealousy concerning a current or former partner of the perpetrator or of a person who attempted to protect a domestic violence victim from future harm. It also includes the killing of perpetrators who were a threat to law enforcement or the killing of law enforcement in the line of duty.
- the homicide occurred as an extension of or in response to ongoing abuse between intimate partners. For example, when a partner or estranged partner killed their children in order to exact revenge on his or her partner.

To determine the domestic violence homicides that occurred in Wisconsin in 2004, we examined the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) collected by the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance (OJA). UCRs provide anonymous demographic information about Wisconsin homicides and are submitted by local law enforcement to OJA. From these reports the following information is available: agency that issued the report; county in which the homicide occurred; date, type and location of homicide; age, sex and race of the victim and offender; weapon used; relationship between the perpetrator and victim; and circumstance of the homicide. The UCR does not provide the name of the victim or the offender. The UCRs were reviewed and domestic violence related homicides were identified.

Following the review of all UCRs, we conducted an Internet search for newspaper accounts of the selected homicides and homicides that might not have appeared in UCRs. Finally, if there were gaps in what we learned about a homicide from the newspaper or we needed to verify facts, we contacted one or more of the following: local domestic violence programs, district attorney's offices, adult protective services, law enforcement, medical examiners or coroners and coordinated community response coordinators in the counties where the homicides took place. We also used Wisconsin Circuit Court Access to research the criminal history of the homicide perpetrator and victims.

For each incident, we sought to uniformly report the facts of the case. However, if additional information was not available to us, we reported only the simple demographic information available in the UCR. Reporting on domestic violence related homicides is complicated since we cannot know the exact characteristics of a domestic violence

relationship that ends in death. In the final analysis, our knowledge is limited by the information reported to community systems, friends and family, by the involved parties prior to the homicide, and how much of that knowledge finds its way into the official record²⁴.

The scope of our report is limited to those homicides identifiable through public access. Due to confidentiality laws, WCADV could only obtain records of public access and such data as death certificates were not available to us. We know this methodology is imperfect, and can result in undercounts in at least two areas:

- ***Children killed by domestic violence abusers:*** We include children who were killed as a direct result of a domestic violence incident. We believe this count is low since a homicide of a child is often viewed as an isolated incident of child abuse. An investigation of a child homicide can often overlook past domestic violence or the domestic violence might not be included in the public record. While we believe that a larger number of child deaths are directly related to an ongoing pattern of domestic abuse, our current methods of tracking homicides do not allow us to consistently identify children killed by domestic violence abusers.
- ***Same Sex Relationships:*** It is likely that we undercount domestic violence homicides that occur in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) relationships. Due to the stigma that is placed on LGBT communities, relationships can be hidden and the nature of a relationship might not be accurately identified in the public record of a homicide. An LGBT relationship might be coded as “friend”, “roommate” or “other known to victim”.

In compiling our summary data, we sought to include the total number of homicides committed in 2004 in Wisconsin. This figure is available from several sources including the Bureau of Health Information (BHI), Office of Justice (OJA) and the Firearm Injury Center Violence Injury Reporting System (FIC-VIRS), however the figures differ²⁵. Each agency compiles their data from various reporting methods including death certificates, police reports, coroner, medical examiner and hospital records. We chose to use the figure reported by the Bureau of Health Information as noted in our Executive Summary, page 2.

In each case of homicide-suicide, we chose to list the murdered person in our heading as we recognized this person as the homicide victim. When we knew the information, we included the number and ages at the time of the homicide of children that survived their parent(s).

²⁴ Websdale, Neil, Ph.D., Lethality Assessment Tools: A Critical Analysis, *National Resource Center on Domestic Violence*, 1999.

²⁵ BHI reports 149 homicide related deaths in “Wisconsin Deaths 2004” and OJA reports 154 homicides in “Wisconsin Crime and Arrests 2003”.

Domestic Violence Homicides

January 1

**Vickie
Buttke-Peterson**
30 years old

Neillsville
Clark County

Vickie Buttke-Peterson was stabbed to death by her husband, Daniel Peterson, 32. A friend was concerned when they did not arrive at a New Year's Eve party and called the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff's deputies and local police went to the Peterson home and found Vickie's body stabbed multiple times and her two month old son crying but unharmed. Daniel and Vickie were married in June of 2003. There was no documented history of domestic violence.

After killing his wife, Daniel drove to Black River Falls and then hitchhiked to Illinois. He was arrested in Des Plaines, Illinois after he attempted to rob a bank branch in a grocery store. Daniel resisted arrest and threatened two police officers with a large knife. One of the officers shot Daniel twice while defending another officer from him.

After spending two years imprisoned in Illinois, Daniel reached a plea deal with state prosecutors. He was transferred to Wisconsin from Illinois where he pled to reduced charges of Attempted Aggravated Battery of a police officer and Attempted Armed Robbery. He was sentenced to six years of additional prison time.

In Wisconsin, Daniel Peterson has been charged with First Degree Intentional Homicide in Vickie's death. The case is still open in Clark County and Daniel is being held in jail on one million dollars bail.

Vickie is survived by her son, who was two months old at the time of the killing.

February 24

Nicole Blake
20 years old

Milwaukee
Milwaukee County

Nicole Blake was shot by Quenton Thompson, 23. He shot her point blank in the face while they were in the hallway of her apartment building. She was eight months pregnant at the time of the homicide. Her four year old son witnessed the murder.

On the afternoon of the homicide, Quenton had been arguing with Nicole about money. Quentin told his friends

that he was going inside to “pop” her for wasting his money. Instead of waiting, his friends left the scene.

Nicole and Quenton had been together for about three months. Their relationship had been off and on in the weeks prior to the homicide. Police report a past history of domestic violence contacts with Nicole and Quenton. Quenton was also abusive in past relationships. An ex-girlfriend filed a temporary restraining order against him. He was physically violent toward her and made numerous threats against her family.

During Quenton’s murder trial, Nicole’s four year old son testified against him and positively identified Quenton as his mother’s murderer. Upon realizing that the child could testify against him, Quenton told a cellmate, “It should have been 3, not 2” homicides.

Quenton Thompson was convicted of First Degree Intentional Homicide, First Degree Intentional Homicide of a Fetus, and Use of a Dangerous Weapon by a jury and sentenced to life in prison.

Nicole is survived by her four year old son.

February 25

**Colette D.
Larson**
42 years old

Portage
Columbia County

Colette D. Larson was beaten to death by her estranged husband, Alan Larson, 39. On the evening of the murder, Colette and Alan reportedly argued about custody issues related to their 18 month old son. Alan then beat her, breaking numerous ribs, and strangled her. As she was dying, he stabbed her multiple times in the neck with a pair of scissors and left her to die.

Colette’s 14 year old daughter arrived home from church and found her mother in the room adjoining the kitchen, barely alive. She got help from a family friend who had just given her a ride home. The friend called 911 and attempted to revive Colette with CPR. When police arrived on the scene, Colette’s daughter told them, “I bet Al did this, he hates my mom.” Colette’s 18 month old son was upstairs at the time of her murder and was unharmed.

After Alan murdered Colette, he went to a bar and played a video game. He then drove to his residence where he was found by police with blood on his clothing, glasses and money

and fresh cuts on his hand. Colette and Alan had been married for two years. She had filed for divorce 13 days prior to the homicide and Alan moved out a few days later. He was reportedly upset about their pending divorce. A week before the murder, a bartender overheard him say, “People don’t know what I’m capable of” in reference to his divorce.

Alan had been charged twice with domestic battery in the last ten years. In March of 2003, he was convicted of Disorderly Conduct against Colette and received a fine. In 1994, he was convicted of striking a different woman, throwing her down a flight of stairs and fleeing from police officers. He received four months in jail and two years of probation for that incident.

No trial was held in Colette’s murder because Alan Larson pled no contest to First Degree Intentional Homicide. He received life imprisonment with no possibility of extended supervision.

Colette’s 14 year old daughter is living with family friends and her 18 month old son is in the care of her sister.

February 28

**Jurice
McConnell**
40 years old

**Milwaukee
Milwaukee
County**

Jurice McConnell was stabbed to death by her boyfriend, Tracy Wainright, 41. They were fighting in the hallway outside their apartment at the time of the homicide.

The night of the homicide they were drinking with friends and relatives in the apartment building where they lived. They began to argue because Jurice thought Tracy was interested in another woman. During the argument, Jurice followed him into the hallway. She accused him of cheating on her and pushed him. According to eyewitness accounts, he said that if she pushed him again he would kill her. Jurice drew a small knife and stabbed him in the arm. He had a larger knife and with an over hand grip stabbed her in the chest.

Jurice and Tracy had been in a relationship for 12 years and were living together for the last 8 years. There was a history of domestic violence in their relationship. Family members heard Tracy threaten to kill Jurice on several occasions. Two years earlier, Tracy stabbed Jurice which sent her to the hospital. According to the police report from that incident, he said, “I’ll kill you. If I can’t have you nobody will”. A week before the homicide, while talking to Jurice on the phone, her daughter heard Tracy yelling, “you’re getting on my nerves, you ain’t gonna stop until I kill you”.

Tracy Wainright was charged and convicted of Second Degree Reckless Homicide and sentenced to five years in prison with five years extended supervision.

March 6**Bridgette L.
Crawford**
32 years old**Milwaukee
Milwaukee County**

Bridgette L. Crawford was fatally shot by her boyfriend, Davon Terrell Smith, 26, during a fight at a party. He shot her four times in the hallway of the apartment building where the party was occurring.

Bridgette and Davon were having an argument while he was on the balcony and she was downstairs in the courtyard. She headed upstairs with a knife to confront him, and friends tried to stop her. While she was going upstairs, Davon borrowed a gun from his cousin. As she kicked the door open, she held her knife at shoulder level. Eyewitnesses disagree as to whether she approached him swinging the knife and then he shot her or if he was waiting for her to enter the room and shot her immediately. After he shot her, Davon ran out, stepping over her body.

Bridgette and Davon had been dating off and on for less than a year. They argued and fought a lot. In addition, Davon had a history of violence to others including a Battery and Criminal Damage to Property charge in a domestic incident involving a woman that he had recently dated. This charge required that he have no contact with her. Davon's violence toward this woman included threats to kill her and her children.

Davon Terrell Smith was charged with Second Degree Intentional Homicide and Possession of a Firearm by a Felon. He was found guilty by a jury and sentenced to a total of 19 years in prison and 14 years extended supervision. At the same time, he was convicted of the Criminal Damage to Property charge from the recent incident against another woman.

Bridgette is survived by six children.

March 7**Jane Hamann**
56 years old**Greenfield
Milwaukee County**

Jane Hamann was shot in the head by her boyfriend, Joseph Bach, 49. She had been watching television with her father when Joseph entered the living room, walked up to her and shot her from a foot away. Her father told police officers he saw Joseph go into the bedroom and return to the living room with a handgun. He pointed it at his daughter's head and shot.

Jane and Joseph lived together in an apartment with her father. On the night of the homicide, the police department received two 'open line' 911 calls. When the first call came in and no one was on the line, the dispatcher called back and spoke to Jane who "sounded hesitant when she said nothing was wrong" and that she meant to dial 411. Five minutes later, a second call came in from the house and no one was on the line. Police were quickly dispatched and arrived at the apartment where they found Jane dead.

According to the police department, Jane had asked Joseph to leave the apartment on the night of the homicide. He had a history of being verbally abusive toward Jane.

March 12**Sissy Nava
Flores**
21 years old

Sissy Nava Flores was stabbed to death by her husband, Vicente Nava Flores, 24, while lying in bed. Sissy was stabbed more than 20 times in the upper torso with a kitchen knife while the couple's two daughters, ages three and four, and Vicente's 20-year-old brother, were in the home sleeping. Scratches on Vicente's face showed that Sissy struggled during the attack. Vicente then fatally stabbed himself.

**Green Bay
Brown County**

Sissy and Vicente were high school sweethearts and dated for three years before they married. Court records show that Vicente was violent toward Sissy during their marriage. In 2003, he had attacked Sissy while she was sleeping, beating her and threatening to kill her. At that time, he pled guilty to Battery and was sentenced to a year of probation and "anger counseling", which he was still completing at the time of the murder.

In the days leading up to her murder, Sissy was actively trying to leave Vicente. She had contacted her family for help but was worried about having enough money and Vicente's reaction to her leaving. The day before the homicide, family members went with her to pack clothes for herself and her two daughters.

Sissy is survived by her two daughters, ages three and four.

March 19**Gail A.
Schreiner**
44 years old

Gail Schreiner was shot by her boyfriend, Kent Head, 44, in the downstairs bedroom of their home. Kent shot Gail with a handgun seven times in different parts of her body including her breast, abdomen, cheek, jaw, and ear. After a lapse in time, he killed himself with a single shot from a different gun. Gail was also found to have bruising on her hand and knee.

**Caledonia Township
Columbia County**

Before going to school that morning, Gail's daughter knocked on her mother's bedroom door but she did not answer. From behind the door, Kent told her to go away and would not let her in. Gail's daughter called a family friend because she was concerned about her mother and Kent's response. She then went to school. After Gail's daughter left the house, Kent shot himself. The friend went to the house to check on Gail and contacted police after no one answered the door.

Gail had recently asked Kent to move out of her home.

Gail is survived by her fourteen year old daughter.

April 25

Tia O'Bryan
37 years old

**Chippewa Falls,
Chippewa County**

Tia O'Bryan died of a drug overdose given to her by her fiancé, Joseph G. Califf, 45, while they were at her home. Joseph called 911 to report that Tia was not breathing, and was bleeding from the mouth and nose. She died later at a hospital.

After Tia was transported to the hospital, officers helped put furniture back in place and found a syringe and needles on the couch. Officers noticed that Joseph's eyes were glossy, his speech was slurred and when they questioned him, he would go into a trance-like state, close his eyes and breathe heavily.

Joseph had been arrested in a domestic incident in April of 2003 that involved disorderly contact, bail jumping and breaking the mandatory arrest law that prohibits contact with the victim for 72 hours following arrest. His ex-wife had filed two domestic abuse temporary restraining orders against him, one in May of 1997 and one in August of 1998.

He was charged with First Degree Reckless Homicide by Administering Drugs with a 10 year enhancer for Habitual Criminality, four other drug related charges, and Bail Jumping. He pled no contest to Second Degree Reckless Injury and Possession of Narcotic Drugs and was sentenced to two years in prison and seven years extended supervision. This sentence was stayed and he was put on probation for eight years. He was also ordered to complete jail time for an offense he was serving.

May 5**Terrance Bradley****57 years old****Green Bay
Brown County**

Terrance Bradley was beaten to death with a claw hammer by his son, Matthew Bradley, 23. Matthew attacked his father as Terrance lay in his bed in the apartment they shared.

Neighbors reported yelling and bumping coming from the apartment and called 911 after hearing someone plead for their life. When police arrived, they had to be let into the apartment by the landlord as there was no answer. They found a huge amount of blood in the bedroom and Matthew crouched in a fetal position in the shower covered in blood. He admitted to punching, kicking, and beating his father. Wounds on Terrance's hands and arms showed that he tried to defend himself against his son's attack.

Matthew has a history of domestic violence against his ex-girlfriend and mother of his child. In November 2002, he committed two separate attacks of her just five days apart. He was first charged with Disorderly Conduct for threatening and harassing her. Five days later he was arrested for Battery. During this attack, Matthew kicked her, threw her on the ground and punched her in the back of the head before fleeing the police. These two incidents were joined by the courts and he was convicted and sentenced to 18 months of probation. In February 2003, his probation was revoked and he was ordered to serve 120 days in jail. In May 2005, this former girlfriend was granted a domestic abuse restraining order against Matthew.

Matthew had been living with his father for about a year because he was unable to find work. Terrance was a disabled veteran with ongoing health problems.

Matthew Bradley was charged with First Degree Intentional Homicide and pled no contest to Second Degree Intentional Homicide by reason of mental disease or defect. Following his arrest, Matthew refused to talk. In September 2005, he was committed for up to 40 years for psychiatric treatment.

Anonymous male
40 years old

An anonymous male was killed by his male lover. We are keeping his name, county and the date of the homicide anonymous because he was not openly gay.

May 21**Helen B. Davis**
39 years old**Madison**
Dane County

Helen B. Davis was stabbed to death by her boyfriend, Henry M. Borjas, 43, in her bedroom in the home they shared. After stabbing Helen multiple times, Henry then turned the knife on himself and inflicted one fatal stab wound. He left a suicide note.

Helen and Henry had been living together for a year and a half in the home she owned. Prior to the murder, Helen had broken up with him. Two months before the murder, Helen had been trying to get Henry to move out but he would not. In Henry's writing, he indicated he was suicidal and upset over a financial dispute he was having with Helen over a car.

Helen's brother, who was in town for the weekend and sleeping in the next bedroom, never heard anything. He discovered their bodies the following day.

There was no prior documented history of domestic violence by Henry.

May 24**Ruben Guzman**
27 years old**Racine**
Racine County

Ruben Guzman was stabbed to death by his girlfriend, Vicky Gomez, 34, in the home they shared. According to police, Ruben punched and head-butted Vicky in her forehead and then Vicky stabbed Ruben in the upper left chest area with a plastic utility knife.

On the morning of the homicide, Vicky's mother (who lived in the downstairs apartment) went upstairs to investigate pounding noises she heard on her ceiling. When she got to Vicky and Ruben's apartment, she saw Ruben pinning Vicky to the floor. She panicked and ran back down the stairs. When she returned to her daughter's apartment, she saw Ruben lying on the floor, realized he was wounded and called 911.

There are no documented domestic violence charges against Ruben. However, both Vicky and her family reported to police a long history of domestic violence by Ruben against Vicky.

Vicky Gomez was initially charged with Second Degree Intentional Homicide. Charges were later dismissed based on a finding of self defense.

June 24**David Ramm**
54 years oldWausau
Marathon County

David Ramm was fatally shot in the head by his wife of 31 years, Rebecca Ramm, 53. According to Rebecca's statement, on the morning of the homicide, she and David were having a "heated discussion" in bed, he criticized her and motioned like he was going to hit her. She "felt herself snap", found and loaded their gun and returned to the bedroom. While his back was turned, she fired a fatal shot into the back of his head. She covered his body in clothes and went to work. She returned later that evening, rolled his body into a sleeping bag and dragged him into the adjoining bedroom, used for storage. That is where David's body remained for the next five months prior to Rebecca's arrest.

In October, Rebecca moved into a motel because the bank had placed a foreclosure on her home. Rebecca asked her friend, who had been helping her move, to help her move David's body. The friend immediately called the police and Rebecca was arrested later that day.

Rebecca endured years of physical and emotional abuse from David during their marriage. Friends and family said that David was abusive to Rebecca and co-workers witnessed her coming to work with black eyes and bruises. Rebecca told police that David would smash furniture, throw things and punch walls. He hit her with bamboo poles, metal rods and baseball bats. A common saying of his was, "Let's get Mr. Bat". Their two children both witnessed David's violence against their mother and experienced the abuse directly. Rebecca reported to police that she had spoken with the local domestic abuse shelter to find out about services.

Rebecca Ramm was charged with First Degree Intentional Homicide. She pled guilty to the charge of Second Degree Intentional Homicide and Hiding a Corpse. Rebecca was sentenced to a total of eight years of prison and twenty-two years of extended supervision for both crimes.

David is survived by two adult children.

July 24**Pamela Noble**
35 years oldMilwaukee
Milwaukee County

Pamela Noble was stabbed to death in her home by Vincent Davis, 41, her ex-boyfriend and the father of her three children. He stabbed her in her abdomen and neck, leaving a broken knife blade stuck there. She also had wounds on her hands, forearms and face. Her three children were in the house at the time of the murder and one child witnessed his mother's killing.

Pamela and Vincent had been together for 16 years. They had been separated for a couple of weeks at the time of the homicide. He had come to visit the children and become angry when Pamela refused to

allow him to move back in. He hit her, grabbed a knife and attacked her. Her children were upstairs and heard Pamela screaming, “No. I’ll let you stay. I love you.” One child ran next door to call the police. A second child came downstairs and saw Vincent on top of his mother with the knife and screamed, “No”. Vincent looked at the child and then stabbed Pamela.

According to friends and family, Vincent was physically and verbally abusive to Pamela and threatened her if she left him. He had a prior conviction for failure to pay child support and was on probation at the time of the homicide.

Vincent Davis was charged with First Degree Intentional Homicide, pled guilty to First Degree Reckless Homicide and was sentenced to 40 years in prison, plus 20 years of extended supervision.

Pamela is survived by her three children, ages 6, 10 and 14.

August 1

**Thomas A.
Burns**
54 years old

**Westby
Vernon County**

Thomas “Tommy” Burns was found dead the morning after he was violently shaken by Terry M. Peterson, 41. Terry broke into the home of his former girlfriend and saw her and Tommy sleeping in bed together. The woman said that Terry tore off her underwear, called her names and dragged her out of bed. She then heard the sound of a punch. She also said that Terry violently shook Tommy by the shoulders. The woman attempted to call the police and Terry ripped the cord out of the phone. Terry pushed the woman into another room and punched her. She ran from her home and hid, but Terry found her. A neighbor intervened and told Terry to leave. The woman returned to her home to check on Tommy and heard him snoring but spent the night at her neighbor’s house because she feared Terry would return. The next morning the neighbor checked on Tommy and found him dead. An autopsy indicated that he suffered traumatic hemorrhaging and died of brain injuries similar to those seen in babies with shaken infant syndrome.

There was a history of domestic violence by Terry against his former girlfriend. They had a child together and had ongoing problems with visitation and child care. Terry was charged with child neglect in February, 2004 but the charges were later dropped. At the preliminary hearing for the murder, the former girlfriend testified that she had lived with Terry for four years but she had moved out in October 2003. She said that Terry had a key to her home because he had stolen it from her car.

In incidents with a different former girlfriend, Terry was convicted of Knowingly Violating a Domestic Abuse Order in 1999, violating a

Temporary Restraining Order in 1998, and Battery in 1998 and 1996. At the time of the murder, he was on probation for Resisting an Officer.

Terry M. Peterson was initially charged with First Degree Reckless Homicide, three counts of Battery, Criminal Trespass to a Dwelling, Intimidation of a Victim and eight counts of Bail Jumping. The first count was reduced to Aggravated Battery - Intended Bodily Harm because prosecutors could not prove that he went to his ex-girlfriend's home with the intent to kill Tommy. He pled no contest and was sentenced to eight years in prison and sixteen years of extended supervision.

August 7

**Donna
Peterson**
43 years old

**Lac du Flambeau
Vilas County**

Donna Peterson was beaten to death by her boyfriend, John Scherer, 39, in the home that they shared. John claims they were arguing about his drinking and ending their relationship when he attacked Donna. He pushed Donna backwards into a dresser, kicked her in the chest and stomach, and dropped both of his knees down onto her torso. Donna had significant head injuries, thirteen fractured ribs, and severe internal injuries. After killing Donna, John took a drive to think about what he had just done. When he returned, he wrapped Donna's body in a sleeping bag and placed it under two mattresses and two box springs in the basement. John left Donna's body there for ten days.

Neighbors had witnessed John's violence toward Donna. Donna had filed a police report stating that John had injured her, which she later recanted. John was also involved in a number of allegations of domestic abuse – covering four states and spanning over twenty years, though he was only convicted once. John was married twice and domestic violence was cited as the reason for divorce in at least one of these relationships.

In 2004, Donna's son was in an altercation with John while trying to intervene in a fight between John and Donna. In this incident, Donna's son was arrested, convicted and ordered to attend domestic abuse/battery counseling. John was not.

John Scherer was charged with First Degree Intentional Homicide and Hiding a Corpse and found guilty by a jury. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole in the year 2030.

Donna is survived by two adult sons.

September 4

**Roschelle
Dalebroux
33 years old**

**Howard
Brown County**

Roschelle Dalebroux was shot by her husband, Gary Dalebroux, 52, in the kitchen of their new home. After shooting his wife multiple times, Gary turned the gun on himself. Their bodies were found by Roschelle's two sons, ages 12 and 13, who were in the basement of the home during the murder-suicide.

The day of the shooting, Roschelle's two sons reported hearing arguing between Roschelle and Gary. Her 13 year old son, in particular, reported hearing his mother warn Gary on the morning of the shooting, "Knock it off. You are going to kill both of us." They heard the gun shots from the basement.

Roschelle and Gary had been married for two years. Roschelle filed for divorce in March 2003, but closed the case less than two weeks later. In July 2004, Gary filed for divorce. At this time, Roschelle moved out of the home and into an apartment near her sister's home. She took Gary's handgun, stored it at her sister's house and planned to sell it. Gary called Roschelle constantly trying to get the gun back, and eventually the couple reconciled. They picked the gun up from Roschelle's sister's home just ten days before the murder.

Roschelle's family reported that Gary had been abusive in the past. In February, Gary hit Roschelle in the face so hard that her earrings were ripped out. After this incident, Roschelle stayed with her sister, who reported that this was not the first time Gary had hurt Roschelle physically. Gary did not let Roschelle go anywhere alone.

Roschelle is survived by her four children.

September 5

Mikayla Tester
5 years old

Alden Township
Polk County

Mikayla Tester died after being shot in the head by her father, John Tester, 41, who then killed himself. Both Mikayla and John were from St. Paul, Minnesota where Mikayla had been the center of a long custody dispute between her parents and most recently a dispute over child support.

Mikayla's parents were granted joint legal custody, with her mother having sole physical custody. Prior to the murder, John picked Mikayla up for their weekend visitation and they went boating on Saturday with his brother. In the evening, John called his ex-wife to tell her he was sorry and Mikayla told her she and John were going on a journey in a new car. Mikayla's mom was alarmed by this conversation and called the St. Paul police, who were searching for John's car, when a motorist found the bodies around midnight in Wisconsin. There were indications that John had been planning the murder-suicide for some time and had written several notes in advance for his family and authorities.

Mikayla's mother had long been afraid for her and Mikayla's safety. She related numerous occasions when John threatened her life. She had two different protection orders during their marriage, and in court documents she had written, "I worry about our daughter if she happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time when he goes into a rage". John had been arrested three times, twice for violating the order of protection and once for interfering with a 911 call. At the time of the homicide, he had an order of protection against him stating he was not to possess a firearm. Mikayla's day care provider said that she worried that John might hurt Mikayla.

September 13**Scott Schrader**
32 years old**Rhinelanders**
Oneida County

Scott Schrader died at a campsite east of Rhinelanders. He was strangled, beaten, kicked, shot with a pellet gun and burned with a cigarette by five people he knew – Charles Boos (19), Amanda Johnson (21), David Lukasko(18), Todd Matson (23), and Nicole Waas (26). Nicole had a child with Scott and was pregnant at the time of the homicide. The group claimed they had only intended to injure Scott, not kill him, in retaliation for Scott’s abuse toward Nicole. He had been arrested for domestic violence toward Nicole two and a half weeks before the homicide and charged with Disorderly Conduct as a habitual criminal.

The homicide occurred after the group made a plan that left Charles and one of the other men at the campsite to wait for Scott. Nicole then drove Scott, Amanda, and one of the other men back. Scott was lured to the woods for a bonfire but he was immediately jumped, beaten and strangled by one of the men. Charles admitted shooting Scott in the leg with a pellet gun in retaliation for threats Scott had made to him the previous day. The men tried to make Scott say specifically what he had done to Nicole when assaulting her.

Scott had a lengthy criminal history that included convictions for Sexual Assault, Lewd and Lascivious Behavior, Battery, Disorderly Conduct and Criminal Damage to Property. In January 2004, he had been ordered to attend an “anger management/family counseling” program.

All of the defendants except Nicole were on probation when they killed Scott. Nicole Waas was charged with Second Degree Reckless Homicide with a Party to a Crime (PTAC) modifier. She was sentenced to ten years in prison and ten years extended supervision. Charles Boos was charged with First Degree Intentional Homicide with a PTAC modifier. The charge was amended to Second Degree Reckless Homicide with a PTAC modifier and he was sentenced to 13 years in prison and eight years extended supervision. Amanda Johnson was charged with Second Degree Reckless Homicide with a PTAC modifier and sentenced to six years in prison and five years extended supervision. David Lukasko was charged with First Degree Intentional Homicide with a PTAC modifier and was amended to Second Degree Reckless Homicide with a PTAC modifier and was sentenced to 12 years of prison and eight years extended supervision. Todd Matson was charged with First Degree Reckless Homicide with a PTAC modifier, pled no contest and was sentenced to 35 years in prison and 30 years extended supervision.

Scott is survived by a child.

September 28

Francine Malindzak
47 years old

Commonwealth
Florence County

Francine Malindzak was stabbed to death by Kevin E. Kirsch, 41, outside his home. Kevin stabbed Francine approximately 12 times causing excessive wounds to her face with the fatal wound to the chest. Kevin's neighbor, Dawn Merhalsk, 40, was dating Francine for about one month prior to the murder. Dawn and Kevin lived approximately half a block away, through the woods. Kevin wanted and said he had had an intimate relationship with Dawn, although Dawn denied that they were ever intimate and reported that they were only neighbors and friends.

Francine had been visiting Dawn for a week prior to the murder and had several confrontations with Kevin in which threats were made to both Dawn and Francine that included Kevin saying, "I'm going to kill and cut you up". Although Dawn did not take the threats seriously, at the insistence of her sister, she reported the threat to police. Dawn and Kevin had phone exchanges in which she taunted him about his jealousy.

On the night of the murder, Kevin called and threatened Dawn. Dawn and Francine went over to Kevin's house with a 3-foot machete. Kevin was outside having a campfire on his front lawn when they arrived. Dawn, Francine and Kevin exchanged words, Kevin went inside his house, got a knife and began stabbing Francine.

Kevin had an extensive criminal history including multiple Battery charges. Dawn had pleaded guilty/no contest to a Domestic Violence Disorderly Conduct charge eight months prior to the homicide.

Kevin Kirsch was found guilty by a jury of First Degree Reckless Homicide in Francine's death and he was sentenced to eight years in prison and 12 years of extended supervision. Dawn Merhalski was also charged with First Degree Reckless Endangering Safety and pled no contest to Second Degree Recklessly Endangering Safety. She was sentenced to two years in prison and three years extended supervision.

October 20

Nathan Naibert

21 years old

Green Bay

Brown County

Michael Holz, 26, fatally stabbed Nathan Naibert when he found him in bed with his ex-girlfriend. Michael's ex-girlfriend was woken up to find him standing in her bedroom, yelling at her and Nathan that they both deserved to die and he was going to be the one to kill them. Michael got a knife from the kitchen and stabbed Nathan in the right side of his chest, severing his pulmonary artery. He then put the knife in the bedroom door. While Michael's ex-girlfriend was on the phone getting medical advice from the 911 dispatcher, Michael stabbed her in the back. She went back into the bedroom, locked the door and waited for help.

Michael's ex-girlfriend and Nathan, who lived together as friends at the time of the murder, had dated previously. Michael was unwilling to accept the breakup with his ex-girlfriend and thought the two of them could "work things out".

Michael Holz was charged with First Degree Intentional Homicide and Attempted First Degree Intentional Homicide and pled guilty to a lesser charge of Second Degree Intentional Homicide and Attempted Homicide. He was sentenced to 45 years in prison and 20 years extended supervision for both charges.

October 23**Sandra Dufek****39 years old****Pensaukee****Oconto County**

Sandra Dufek was beaten to death in her home with a crowbar by her ex-boyfriend, David Roger, 40. At the time of Sandra's murder, David was in jail for assaulting her but had Huber work privileges. On the day of her homicide, David was on work release and Sandra picked him up at work and they drove to her house. When David did not return to jail at the expected time, police went to Sandra's house to locate him and check on Sandra's welfare, since he had made threatening comments toward her. They found Sandra's body on the kitchen floor. The next day, police found David driving Sandra's car in Green Bay.

In September 2003, David attacked Sandra and was charged with 4th Degree Sexual Assault. While this case was pending, David assaulted Sandra again in February of 2004 and he was charged with Disorderly Conduct, Battery, Second Degree Sexual Assault/Use of Force and Bail Jumping. On the day of the assault Sandra filed a Domestic Abuse Temporary Restraining Order against David and subsequently the Restraining Order was granted for two years. In her petition she described different ways that David had verbally and physically threatened and abused her. According to Sandra, "many threats to my life were made and promises to find a way to get even with me if I didn't do things his way or tried to get rid of him." She believed he would carry out his threats and also worried about him hurting her family. He told her he had done jail time before and had no problem doing it again.

In May 2004, five months before the homicide, he pled no contest attempted Second Degree Sexual Assault and the other charges were dismissed. He was ordered to serve one year in jail with Huber work privileges to be followed by three years of probation. He was required to undergo alcohol assessment and counseling and register as a convicted sex offender. During these five months David used his Huber privileges to stalk Sandra and her mother. Just a few days after David's sentence, Sandra vacated the two year Restraining Order. A few days before killing Sandra, a fellow inmate of David's, stated that David accused him of sleeping with Sandra. In response to his denial of this accusation, David said, "It does not matter anyway. I have been thinking about killing her and her mother too."

David Rogers was charged with First Degree Intentional Homicide, pled guilty and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of extended supervision. While he awaited sentencing for the murder, his probation for the February assault was revoked and he was sentenced to 12.5 years in prison with 7.5 years of extended supervision. This sentence is to run concurrent with his sentence of life in prison.

November 2

John Romberg
50 years old

Baraboo
Sauk County

November 3

Jennifer Hitchcock
22 years old

Middleton
Dane Country

Jennifer Hitchcock and John Romberg were shot by Maurice Mason, 37, and Bennie Firer, 24, in murders that were part of a nine-day kidnapping crime spree. Maurice was the ex-boyfriend of Jennifer and Bennie was Maurice's nephew.

Jennifer met Maurice in Lincoln, Nebraska during the summer of 2003. They lived together for about one year. In the summer of 2004, Jennifer attempted to end their then long distance relationship. Soon after, Maurice convinced Jennifer to meet him and brought her to Wisconsin to meet his family. Jennifer's family members claim he held her against her will. They called the police, who found them in a hotel on October 21. Jennifer asked her family to come to Wisconsin to bring her home. As Jennifer and her family returned to Lincoln so did Maurice. The next day she met with him and he beat her with a brick, broke a glass beer bottle over her head, forced her face into a pan of motor oil waste and strangled her. He put her into the trunk of her car overnight. The following morning, Maurice picked up Bennie and they took Jennifer to a hotel in Lincoln, where they cleaned her up. They then drove her to Wisconsin, against her will.

In Wisconsin, they kidnapped a man they knew had money. They took him to a rural, remote area, robbed him, tied him up and left him in a farm shed. They then forced Jennifer out of the trunk and made her view the man. (The man was located eight days later, near death. Due to being bound in the shed, both of his arms were amputated.) Maurice and Bennie then forced Jennifer to accompany them to Madison, where Bennie purchased a 12 gauge shotgun at Walmart.

Maurice and Bennie kept Jennifer under their control for the next week, keeping her in a hotel and friend's homes. An acquaintance of Maurice's saw Jennifer during this time and commented that she thought Jennifer was wearing a Halloween mask.

On November 2, Maurice got Jennifer's car stuck in the sand in Sauk County. He, Bennie and Jennifer walked to a nearby bar and called for a cab ride into Baraboo. Once the cab brought them into Baraboo, Maurice shot and killed the cab driver, John Romberg, in Bennie and Jennifer's presence.

The following day, Maurice, Bennie and Jennifer received a ride to Middleton. Maurice and Bennie took Jennifer to a remote area. Maurice and Bennie both sexually assaulted Jennifer, then Bennie shot Jennifer in the back of the head from close range with the 12 gauge shotgun, killing her instantly. Maurice and Bennie then walked to a nearby hotel, ate a meal of steak and lobster and then turned themselves in. When Jennifer's body was found, she had a broken nose, bruises on her jaw and the sides of her neck, and cuts on her face.

While Maurice and Jennifer dated, he often forbid her from leaving her own home without him. According to family members, prior to her kidnapping, Maurice told Jennifer, "I'm coming back for you, and if I don't get you, I'm going to get your mom and dad, and I'm going to get your grandparents too". After he was arrested, Maurice stated one reason he killed her was that he couldn't face life in prison thinking of her with another man.

Maurice was a habitual criminal and spent a number of years in jail before he met Jennifer. In 1994, Maurice burglarized his sister's home and took a 17 year old girl out of state. He was caught and convicted of Burglary and sentenced to nine years in prison. He was released in 2000 after serving six years, sent back in 2001 for violating the terms of his release and then re-released in 2002. He was not on supervised release.

Maurice Mason pled no contest to First Degree Intentional Homicide, Kidnapping, Possession of a Weapon and Felon in Possession of a Firearm. Charges of Second Degree Sexual Assault were dropped as part of his plea bargain. He was sentenced to life in prison. Bennie Frier pled no contest to First Degree Reckless Homicide and Second Degree Sexual Assault and was sentenced to 60 years in prison for his role in the crimes against Jennifer. Maurice was charged with First Degree Intentional Homicide for John Romberg's murder and was sentenced to life in prison.

November 5

**Sandra
Wisniewski**
23 years old

Anton Uebelhoer
43 years old

**Oak Creek
Milwaukee County**

Sandra Wisniewski was shot to death by her boyfriend, Gregg Phillips, 25, in the hotel room they were temporarily living in. As she attempted to leave the hotel, he grabbed her, pushed her to the ground and shot her. Gregg then went out into the hallway and fatally shot Anton Uebelhoer, a hotel guest and the first person he encountered. Gregg shot Anton seven times and shot and wounded two other hotel guests. He held another man hostage as he telephoned several people, including his mother. Gregg finally surrendered to a SWAT team after a 30-minute standoff. He was wearing body armor and using an automatic assault rifle throughout the attacks.

Sandra and Gregg were in a relationship for over four years and lived together. According to Sandra's friends and family, he was physically and verbally abusive toward her. They were staying at a hotel at the time of the murder because Gregg was trying to avoid some men over a money issue. On the evening of the homicide, Gregg was confronted by the men he was hiding from.

Following this confrontation, Gregg accused Sandra of setting him up and telling the men where to find him. Sometime after midnight Sandra called a friend very upset and told her that Gregg thought she was lying and that he was threatening her. Her friend tried to calm Gregg down over the phone but he hung up on her. At 2 a.m. Sandra called her sister and said, "I need to be picked up now". Sandra told Gregg she was leaving and packed a bag of clothes. He shot her as she tried to leave. By the time her sister and cousin were able to get to the hotel it was surrounded by police and Sandra was already dead.

Gregg Phillips was found guilty by a jury of two counts of First Degree Intentional Homicide, Attempted First Degree Intentional Homicide, First Degree Reckless Injury, Taking a Hostage, Felon in Possession of a Firearm. Gregg was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences with 85 years in prison to run concurrent with the life sentences.

December 11

Daphne Vann
42 years old

Milwaukee
Milwaukee County

Daphne Vann was beaten, stabbed and strangled to death by her ex-husband, Lawrence Washington, 46, in the apartment they shared. She was found with puncture wounds, blood caking her body and clumps of hair spread out over the bedroom floor. He left her body where she fell on the floor for a week before he notified authorities. He told no one of her death, even having dinner with her father the night before her body was found.

Their relationship included a lengthy history of domestic violence with three arrests of Lawrence. In 1998, shortly after they were married, Lawrence assaulted Daphne in front of her children, strangled her until she coughed up blood, and threatened to kill her. On another occasion, Lawrence stabbed Daphne and she reported that he burned her. Lawrence was sentenced to three years in prison and while he was incarcerated, they divorced. Daphne stated in her journal that Lawrence had almost killed her three times. Family members saw her with bruises and redness on her face.

Three months before the homicide, Lawrence was again arrested for strangling Daphne, putting her in a headlock and dragging her through their apartment. Lawrence stalked her, following her everywhere and wanting to know where she was at all times. She was fearful for her safety and told her niece a month before her death, "If anything were to happen to me, it was Lawrence."

In 1997 and 1998, two different women filed for temporary restraining orders against Lawrence.

Lawrence Washington was charged with First Degree Reckless Homicide, pled guilty and was sentenced to 25 years in prison and seven years extended supervision.

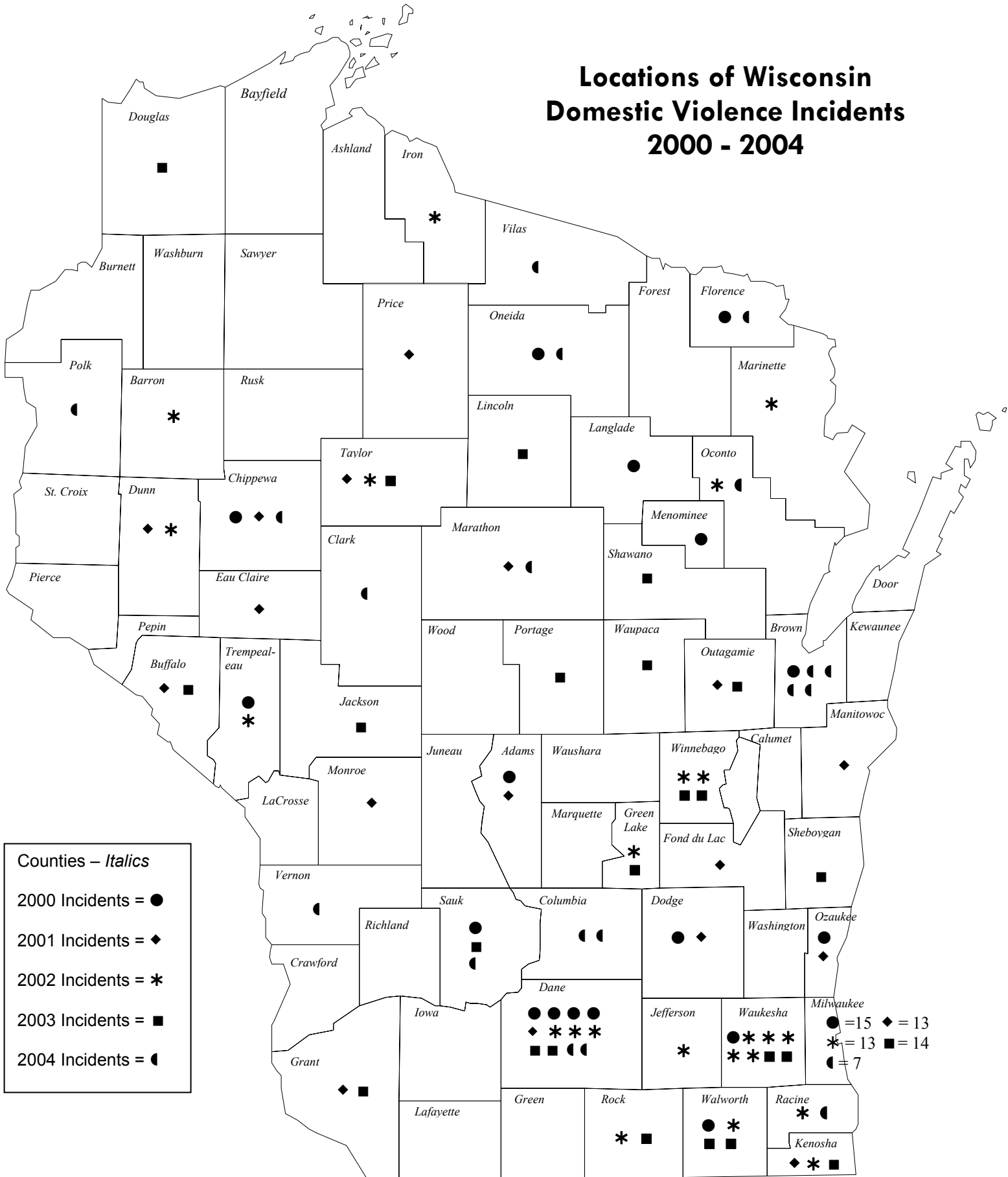
Daphne is survived by her six adult children.

Domestic Violence Homicides by County

We included one domestic violence homicide incident as anonymous in the 2004 full report and as part of most of the aggregate data. We chose not to include the anonymous case in this section as naming the county could point to the identities involved.

County	Victim's Name	Date of Incident
Brown	Sissy Nava Flores	March 12
	Terrance Bradley	May 5
	Roschelle Dalebroux	September 4
	Nathan Naibert	October 20
Chippewa	Tia O'Bryan	April 25
Clark	Vicki Buttke-Peterson	January 1
Columbia	Colette D. Larson	February 25
	Gail Schreiner	March 19
Dane	Helen B. Davis	May 21
	Jennifer Hitchcock	November 3
Florence	Francine Malindzak	September 28
Marathon	David Ramm	June 24
Milwaukee	Nicole Blake	February 24
	Jurice McConnell	February 28
	Bridgette L. Crawford	March 6
	Jane Hamann	March 7
	Pamela Noble	July 24
	Sandra Wisniewski	November 5
	Anton Uebelhoer	November 5
Daphne Vann	December 11	
Oconto	Sandra Dufek	October 23
Oneida	Scott Schrader	September 13
Polk	Mikayla Tester	September 5
Racine	Ruben Guzman	May 24
Sauk Vernon Vilas	John Romberg	November 2
	Thomas A. Burns	August 1
	Donna Peterson	August 7

Locations of Wisconsin Domestic Violence Incidents 2000 - 2004



Rockford, IL/Dane County ◆



Social Change Through Action and Advocacy

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