

## **MGHS NATIONAL DATABASE OF LGBT HOMICIDES USED IN ACTIVE, SERIAL HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION**

**A** five-year investigation of a nationwide serial homicide offender is getting significant assistance from the Minnesota Gay Homicide Study and its national database of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender homicides.

In the spring of 2003, the Minnesota Gay Homicide Study was contacted by investigators from a multi-agency task force seeking resources in an active, serial homicide investigation. The task force is comprised of law enforcement officials from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the state police from several eastern states, and officials from local jurisdictions in New Jersey and New York.

The task force is investigating a serial homicide offender who is believed to have operated in as many as 25 states over the last 30 years. The suspect was extremely mobile and may have committed homicides across the United States from California to New York and as far south as Florida. The task force has evidence linking the suspect to five homicides, but believes that he may be responsible for up to 30 homicides.

In March 2003, the chief investigator of the Joint Task Force, Detective Matt Kuehn, Major Crimes Unit, New Jersey State Police, contacted MGHS Principle Researcher Dallas Drake to discuss the serial homicide case and seek input. Detective Kuehn was initially unaware of the Study's national database of LGBT homicide cases and the resources available at MGHS, and shared only limited information about the investigation with Drake.

However, after only a few minutes of discussion on the telephone, Drake presented Kuehn with information that could be very useful to the active investigation. Detective Kuehn and Drake began planning to meet at the task force's headquarters in Tom's River, New Jersey to use the MGHS

national LGBT homicide database and resources to assist in the investigation.

The creation of the national homicide database began in the summer of 2002. MGHS expanded its research of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender homicide cases to include cases in all 50 states and the four U.S. territories over the last 30 years. The national database is modeled after the Minnesota database of LGBT homicides. By the spring of 2003, approximately 1,200 cases had been identified and basic information on these cases had been coded into the national database. The meeting with the Joint Task Force would be one of the first tests of the usefulness of this information tool.

Ultimately, Drake spent four days in New Jersey meeting with investigators of the Joint Task Force. Much of the time was spent reviewing the investigators' detailed timelines of the suspect's travel patterns and whereabouts over the last 30 years. This information was then used to query the MGHS national database to see if there were unsolved gay homicides in those areas.

Over 100 potential homicide cases were identified that met these initial criteria. Investigators from the Joint Task Force are using these new leads to follow up with local law enforcement agencies.

Drake and Detective Kuehn also spent considerable time educating each other on the particular details of this serial investigation and about the nature of gay homicide. Drake

presented some of MGHS' research findings on homosexual homicide using information derived from national homicide data sources such as the FBI's Supplemental Homicide Reports of the Uniform Crime Reports.

The Joint Task Force and MGHS continue to collaborate on this ongoing investigation. ☛

**Over 100 new leads were generated for Joint Task Force investigators using the Minnesota Gay Homicide Study's national database of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender homicide cases.**

## HOMICIDE RESEARCH WORKING GROUP PROVIDES EXPERIENCE, EXPERTISE AND ACCESS

Researchers Dallas Drake and Joe Shulka attended the summer meeting of the Homicide Research Working Group (HRWG) held in Sacramento California from June 5-8. HRWG members include noted homicide researchers from across the United States, Europe, Canada and Australia.

The HRWG conference is a place for networking and testing of ideas about homicide research. Much of the important work happens behind the scenes and in the hallways of the hotel where researchers discuss how to solve problems that arise during their work. Several crucial developments occurred during this year's research meeting.

Drake received detailed guidance from noted criminologist and author, Kathleen Hiede, about how to serve as an expert witness within the criminal court system. Hiede has much experience on this topic and provided excellent background on what to expect and how to prepare. This comes at a time when Drake is expected to be called upon by the courts in the state of Florida.

Another discussion evolved out of a breakfast meeting with noted researcher Eric Monkkonen. Monkkonen conducts historical research on homicide and has published about homicide in New York City. Shulka, Drake, and Monkkonen discussed knife violence and strategies for obtaining historical homicide data. Since Drake is searching for cases over several years, this was a timely and useful discussion.

At the conference, Drake presented "Evaluating Arson-associated Homicide in Chicago - 1965-1995", in collaboration with co-author Carolyn Rebecca Block, Ph.D., senior crime analyst with the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Under Block's mentorship, the two are producing one of the first arson-homicide studies in the U.S. Drake has received permission to make several presentations of the data to fire service arson investigators in an effort to solicit their ideas and input. Drake and Block expect to submit the final paper for publication shortly.



Principal Researcher Dallas Drake presenting at the 2003 HRWG conference

The Minnesota Gay Homicide Study also presented a work-in-progress during the poster session. This included handouts about the organization and introduced the National GLBT Homicide Database to the members of HRWG for feedback. Both the presentation paper and the poster session will be finalized and submitted for publication in the proceedings of the conference. 🐼

## MGHS CONDUCTS RESEARCH, TRAINING AND EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA

While in California for the HRWG conference, MGHS researchers actively shared resources and conducted research to identify local gay homicide cases.

### Research

Sacramento is the home of the Lavender Library, Archive and Cultural Exchange (LLACE). Researchers spent over 20 hours conducting research in the LLACE archives to identify local gay homicide cases. Researchers also conducted research at the San Francisco Public Library to identify homicide cases in the San Francisco area.

### Training

MGHS researchers provided two trainings while in Sacramento. The first training was to LGBT youth at the Lambda Community Center. Approximately 25 youth attended this session that addressed prevention and education on gay homicide issues. The second training was a two-hour presentation about gay homicide to law enforcement, criminal justice professionals, LGBT community leaders, and crime victim advocates from the Sacramento area.

### Community Education

MGHS researchers spent considerable time meeting with LGBT leaders in both Sacramento and San Francisco providing information and resources on gay homicide issues.

### Educating and Informing Political Leaders

MGHS researchers also met with a variety of political leaders from the state of California, including Christine Kehoe, Speaker pro Tempore, California State Assembly; Assemblyman Mark Leno, Chair, Committee on Public Safety; and Mark Chekal-Bain, Legislative Advocate, Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General.

### Media Relations

MGHS researchers also provided local media with an opportunity to learn more about the research and to educate the community about LGBT homicide. Reporters from the *San Francisco Examiner* and the Sacramento gay community newspaper *MGW* interviewed MGHS researchers. The researchers also appeared on the long-running Sacramento TV program, *Being Gay Today*, hosted by Marghe Covino.

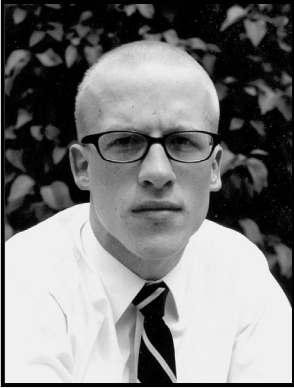
### Interdisciplinary Information Sharing

Because gay homicide issues require input from several different areas of expertise, MGHS researchers met with a variety of researchers and professionals to provide resources and foster relationships. MGHS staff met with representatives from the FBI, the Centers for Disease Control; UCLA School of Public Health; the National Sexuality Resource Center; and the San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center. 🐼

## NEW MGHS INTERNS PROVIDE VALUABLE SKILLS

As an all-volunteer organization, MGHS depends upon the talents and skills of a wide variety of individuals and organizations to fulfill its mission. Most notable among these volunteers are our interns. During the spring of 2003, two new interns became involved with the Study.

### JOE RIEMANN

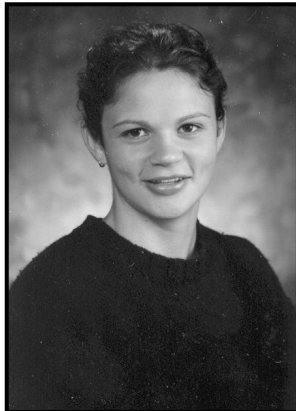


Joe Riemann joined the staff of the Minnesota Gay Homicide Study in April 2003 as a research intern. Riemann already has a BA in Political Science from the University of Minnesota and is again enrolled at the U of M pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in sociology. He is an honors student at U of M.

Joe brings an eclectic background to his research at MGHS, including experience as a corrections officer. He has been working closely with Principal Researcher Dallas Drake on the national database of LGBT homicides and with proving the Minnesota database of gay homicides.

### ERIN DOOLIN

Erin Doolin is a new summer intern with the MGHS. She is a senior at Southwest State University in Marshall, Minnesota and is majoring in psychology. Erin learned of the work of MGHS following a presentation earlier this spring at SSU. She has experience in both qualitative and quantitative research methods.



Erin will be conducting research while living in Ohio during the summer. She will be identifying LGBT homicide cases for the national database using resources at the Cincinnati Gay/Lesbian Archives, the Ohio Lesbian Archives, and other locations.

### INTERESTED IN INTERNING OR VOLUNTEERING WITH MGHS?

A variety of opportunities are available for people interested in assisting with the research and operations of the Study. For a list of opportunities, check out the MGHS website at [www.mngayhomicide.org](http://www.mngayhomicide.org). Click on Volunteers/Internships. ☛

## NEW RESEARCH BEGINS ON USE OF KNIVES IN GAY HOMICIDES

MGHS researchers Barbara Hutchins, Ph.D. and Dallas Drake will begin working on a new project regarding knife violence. The analysis grew out of previous work which showed a high use of knives in gay male and perhaps transgender lethal violence. Knives are usually the weapon used by female offenders. Most homicides in the United States are committed with a firearm, not a knife. The disparity in weapon use is not as pronounced in countries such as Australia where firearms are not as available as in the U.S. Prior to the 1840s before the development of mass produced firearms, knife use in the U.S. was common. Knife use is also common in sexual homicides.

The analysis will be conducted using the FBI's Supplemental Homicide Reports aggregated over several years. This is necessary in order to construct a large enough sample of LGBT homicides to study. Researchers will use computer software designed specifically to conduct this type of analysis. Unfortunately, the way in which the FBI collects its data, bisexual and transsexual homicides are not broken out in the coding scheme. Hutchins and Drake hope to find another way of obtaining data on those cases. Even with the common shortcomings of the FBI data, Hutchins and Drake will seek to publish their work early next year. ☛

## CONFIDENTIAL CASE REVIEW CONTINUES TO BE VALUABLE SERVICE

One of the most frequently used services of MGHS is confidential case review of suspected gay homicide cases. Approximately one case review is conducted every two to three weeks for law enforcement professionals, crime victims' liaisons, prosecutors, and detectives. A case review provides the opportunity for an impartial resource (MGHS) to review the homicide case facts, and to provide assistance and additional resources. To request a confidential case review, contact Dallas Drake at 612/827-4658 or at [dallas.drake@mindspring.com](mailto:dallas.drake@mindspring.com). ☛

## BOARD POSITIONS AVAILABLE

The Board of Directors of the Minnesota Gay Homicide Study is seeking applications for expanded positions on the Board. People of color, women, and transgender people are encouraged to apply. Experience in fundraising, research, finance, communications, criminal justice, and/or community relations are helpful, but not required. Previous experience on nonprofit boards is not required. For more information, contact Joe Shulka, MGHS Board President, at [joeshulka@earthlink.net](mailto:joeshulka@earthlink.net). ☛

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAININGS

For most folks, summer means relaxation, but not at MGHS. The research, training and outreach schedule for the volunteers at MGHS kick into high gear when warm weather arrives.

### AREA GAY PRIDE EVENTS

MGHS will be at various LGBT Pride events in the Midwest to provide information and resources to the LGBT community.

**GLBT Pride/Twin Cities** June 28-29  
Loring Park – Minneapolis Booth 619

**GLBTA PrideFest Celebration** July 19  
Central Park – Rochester

### FLORIDA AND LOUISIANA TRAININGS PLANNED

MGHS researchers will be traveling to Florida and Louisiana in July to conduct research and to provide specialized trainings to law enforcement personnel, medical examiners, and coroners on gay homicide issues.

**Solving Homosexual Homicides** July 24  
University of New Orleans 9 a.m. - Noon  
New Orleans, Louisiana

The training date(s) for Florida have not yet been finalized.

For further information on these trainings, visit the MGHS website at [www.mngayhomicide.org](http://www.mngayhomicide.org). Click on Seminars. 🐾

## IS MGHS UNDER CYBER ATTACK?

The Internet provides the Minnesota Gay Homicide Study with the opportunity to reach an audience across Minnesota and the world, and has enabled hundreds of agencies and individuals to access our unique resources. However, not all those who find us are friendly.

Over the last several months, MGHS e-mail accounts have been bombarded with hundreds of virus-laden e-mails, some containing hate-filled messages. There have also been numerous attempts to surreptitiously gain access to our computer systems.

Early in its work, MGHS anticipated that not all who learned of our work would be friendly. Thus protections have been in place since Day #1. The judicious use of virus protection software, a solid firewall, and copious offsite data backups provide protection.

Although the virus-filled e-mails may be the result of normal “spambots” and programs designed to disperse viruses, the sheer volume and the continued attempts to breach the firewall are suspicious and concerning.

It begs the question: *Who is out there that wants to hinder this important work?* 🐾

## TRAINING AND EDUCATION RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The researchers and volunteers from MGHS are available to provide training to staff and volunteers on the subjects of gay homicide and LGBT crime. As a stand-alone training or part of a more comprehensive education session, the resources at MGHS can assist nonprofit organizations and law enforcement agencies in developing expertise and awareness about the complex and difficult issues of gay homicide and LGBT crime. MGHS can develop customized trainings to meet the unique needs of many organizations.

For further information, contact Dallas Drake at 612/827-4658 or via e-mail at [dallas.drake@mindspring.com](mailto:dallas.drake@mindspring.com). 🐾

## GROWING PAINS – A GOOD THING

The Study has been very fortunate to operate in donated space. But as the work expands and more volunteers become involved, things are getting a bit tight. A recent reconfiguration of our office space now provides more storage, a resource library and the ability for up to three volunteers to work simultaneously on site at separate computer work stations. But the day may come soon where larger, more flexible space is needed. 🐾

### ABOUT THE MINNESOTA GAY HOMICIDE STUDY

The Minnesota Gay Homicide Study is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the capacity of the LGBT community, criminal justice professionals, and law enforcement to become more effective in identifying, solving and preventing gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender homicides in Minnesota.

Begun in 1992 and incorporated in 1999 as a nonprofit, the MGHS is an independent response to LGBT homicide.

The mission of the Minnesota Gay Homicide Study is to promote greater knowledge and understanding of the unique nature of LGBT homicide through sound empirical research, critical analysis and effective community partnerships.

**MINNESOTA GAY HOMICIDE STUDY**  
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