



Progress Report '04

Vol. 5 Issue 2

December 2004

CENTER HELPS SOLVE SECOND GAY HOMICIDE IN A YEAR

For the second time in 12 months, the Center for Homicide Research has been credited with helping solve a gay homicide. This latest case took place in Peoria, Arizona, a suburb of Phoenix.

In mid-July, the victim, an older gay man, was found murdered in his home. He had suffered blunt force trauma to the head and was stabbed multiple times. There was little physical evidence at the scene and few leads to go on.

The investigating officer, Detective Chris Boughey of the Peoria, Arizona Police Department, recognized the case as a homosexual homicide because of the level of violence perpetrated on the victim and the manner in which he had been killed.

“All of these signs led me to believe that this was an ‘overkill’ situation,” said Det. Boughey, “typical in many of these types of investigations.”

With little to go on, Det. Boughey began researching homosexual homicide on the Internet and found the Center’s Web site. The information provided very important resources for the investigation, and was instrumental in constructing a profile of the possible suspect.

Just days after the homicide, Det. Boughey contacted Principal Research Dallas Drake for a case review and

consultation on the active homicide case. The Center provides numerous resources to active homicide investigations, including case reviews.

Through a series of telephone calls and e-mails, Drake provided the detective with information to further his profile of a suspect. Drake also provided information that was instrumental in formulating a line of questioning for a possible suspect.

In mid-August, the investigation led to California where a suspect was identified, apprehended, and interviewed. It was during the questioning that the Center’s information became invaluable.

Det. Boughey’s interview with the suspect yielded a full confession to the homicide. The suspect was indicted and charged with one count of First Degree Murder, one count of Robbery and one count of Theft of a Means of Transportation.

“The Peoria case and the homicide last fall in New Zealand demonstrate that the resources of the Center are very valuable to law enforcement,” said Dallas Drake.

“Working in partnership, we can solve gay homicide cases.”

In the words of Det. Boughey, “Your foundation is a valuable resource for law enforcement, and it should be commended for its tireless work and dedication.”

“Keeping much of the information you provided to me in mind while conducting my interview, I was able to elicit a full confession from the suspect.”

*Detective Chris Boughey
Peoria, Arizona
Police Department*

CHR - MINNEAPOLIS POLICE PARTNERSHIP STALLS

The proposed partnership between the Center for Homicide Research and the Minneapolis Police Department's Homicide Division has been put on hold. The Center has been working with MPD to gain access to 10 years worth of homicide data to develop a comprehensive dataset for analysis.

Discussions and preparation for the proposed research project began in the fall of 2002. The project was slated to begin in early June 2004 and was reported in the last issue of this newsletter. The preparation went so far as Dallas Drake, the Center's Principal Researcher, submitting to and passing department background checks, and being advised to arrive for fingerprinting and other security tasks that would enable access to computerized data management system that houses the homicide data.

Just three days before beginning the research, the Center received a telephone call from Lt. Mike Carlson, Chief of the Homicide Division informing us that the project had been stopped in the eleventh hour by the Minneapolis City Attorney's Office.


"At this point, it's very disappointing. We've invested hundreds of hours of research to lead us up to this point."

- Dallas Drake

The City Attorney raised issues regarding access to data that the city considers privileged. The Center had requested access to unsolved as well as solved cases for the research. The City considers data on unsolved cases as privileged as part of an active on-going investigation.

Similar issues have been raised in other cities. However, these concerns have been overcome using protocols to ensure security and privacy, and the development of confidentiality contracts between the partners.

Considerable research and effort was undertaken to prepare for this research effort. A comprehensive coding scheme was developed by Drake, Joe Shulka and others. It was developed with input from Robert Keppel, director of the Center for Crime Assessment and Profiling in Texas. Keppel is best known for his work with serial killers Ted Bundy and Green River Killer Gary Leon Ridgway. Assistance also came from Cheryl Maxon, University of California-Irvine, who specializes in gang homicides, and Carolyn Rebecca Block, Senior Crime Analyst, at the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

Minneapolis City Councilmember Dan Niziolek is working to clarify the MPD's concerns and assist in problem-solving. The Center is continuing to work with Councilmember Niziolek and with the new administration at the MPD to restart this public-private partnership for 2005. 

CENTER WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER


Joanne Sitt has joined the Board of Directors for the Center for Homicide Research. Sitt is a very active community volunteer and is a Manager in the Real Estate Department of Target Corporation.

Sitt brings a wealth of community and volunteer experience to the Center's Board. She is also a member of the Board of Directors for CORP, a social service nonprofit organization and Hidden Theater, an arts organization.



Sitt has been involved in many volunteer activities, including heading the Real Estate Department Adopt a Family programs at Target for a number of years. She has also participated in various other volunteer opportunities including Meals on Wheels, Memorial Blood Bank, and Blankets for Babies.

Sitt is active as a mentor and sponsor for women who have been in difficult situations because of life choices and enjoys seeing their lives turn around as they go from being a victim to a survivor to a life participant continuing the circle as they mentor others.

Sitt joins existing Board members Joe Shulka, Dallas Drake and Jon Mikolajczak. Her first Board meeting was in October 2004. 

2004 TRAININGS & PRESENTATIONS

GLBT Homicide Issues; University of St. Thomas; Minneapolis

New Directions in GLBT Public Policy; Minnesota Social Service Conference, Bloomington

Crime Scenes as Mediums of Expression; Sociology Research Institute; University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Perceptions and Procedures: A Research Study of the Solvability Rates of Gay Homicides in Minneapolis; Homicide Research Working Group, Ann Arbor, MI

National Database of GLBT Homicide: 1970 - 2003; Homicide Research Working Group, Ann Arbor, MI

Crime-scene Message Construction: Exploring Offender Use of Symbolic Interaction in Homicide Incident Communication; Homicide Research Working Group, Ann Arbor, MI

Crime in an Emergent Community: A Study in GLBT Social Disorganization, American Society of Criminology, Nashville, TN

CASE REVIEWS OF GLBT HOMICIDES PROVIDE VALUABLE RESOURCES FOR INVESTIGATORS

Case reviews and confidential consultations on active homicide cases are valuable services the Center for Homicide Research provides for law enforcement. The Center offers homicide detectives and investigators a unique opportunity to speak with an expert knowledgeable in homicide, GLBT culture and identity, and violence.

The free service offers law enforcement an opportunity to learn about the aspects of the GLBT community, as well as gain an understanding of the unique phenomena of GLBT homicide and violence. Because the service is confidential, investigators may be more comfortable asking specific questions about sexuality or illicit activities that may have been involved in the crime.

Homicide researchers at the Center also benefit by providing this service in that they can learn first-hand the struggles homicide investigators face. Each time a case is reviewed it provides new insights into how to improve the research.

Two additional Center staff members have now received basic training in homicide investigation, including Bridget Graw and Joe Shulka. Dallas Drake has advanced training and Joe Riemann has significant criminological knowledge about GLBT homicide based on his extensive work with case data.

Case reviews commonly cover a medley of topics. The initial phase is to determine that the death is in fact a homicide. This is not always a particularly easy determination. Normally this judgment is made by a coroner or medical examiner, but police commonly assist in making that decision. Next is to develop a list of potential suspects. Each is evaluated for motive, opportunity, and intent. From here the review can go in many directions from evaluating forensic evidence to analyzing offender behavior.

Lastly, researchers offer input on interviewing of suspects. It is during this phase that the detective secures the case for a successful prosecution and helps assure the maximum penalty possible.

Over the past 5 years, the Center has provided case reviews and consultation in both active investigations and “cold cases.” The consultations are often paired with resources available on the Center’s website – www.CHRonline.org.

For more information on homicide case reviews, contact CHR Principal Researcher Dallas Drake at 612/827-4658 or by e-mail at dallas.drake@mindspring.com.

Donating to the Center in 2005 is Easy: If you donate through your local United Way or Community Solutions Fund (CSF) campaign, you can designate all or part of your gift to the Center for Homicide Research. Even though CHR is not a member agency of the United Way, we can receive contributions through them if you specifically designate us when making your gift. Ask for a donor directed form and include the Center in your workplace giving!

COMMUNITY DISORGANIZATION AND ITS CONNECTION TO GLBT CRIME AND HOMICIDE

Principal Researcher Dallas Drake recently presented a paper at the American Society of Criminology’s annual meeting in Nashville, Tennessee titled “Crime in an Emergent Community: A Study in GLBT Social Disorganization.” In the paper, Drake proposes that the inability of many GLBT communities to organize adequately greatly affects crime in the GLBT community and that strengthening organizations could reduce the incidence and severity of crime in the GLBT community.

“Social disorganization greatly impacts the GLBT community,” says Drake. “Despite good intentions, the GLBT community has a poor understanding of the impact of crime on its members. We don’t know how many homicides, assaults, robberies, or rapes occur to members of the GLBT community.”

Drake continues, “Despite repeated attempts, this information is not adequately catalogued anywhere in the United States locally or nationally. How can we make ourselves safer if we don’t even know what’s happening to us?”

Drake is concerned that the GLBT community’s response to crime has stalled and that limited resources may not be being used most effectively. He also details how ineffective organizational capacity in these organizations bolsters criminal activities from outside the community as well as from within.

“Gay people often think that the only people out to cause them harm are from outside the GLBT community,” says Drake. “That is simply not the case. From murderers to embezzlers, the gay community has its share of criminals. Our community has not even begun to acknowledge that threats come from within as well as from outside.”

Drake’s paper was part of a panel of presentations at the American Society of Criminology meeting called “Crime and Victimization Among Sexual Minorities (GLBT) in America.” The meeting is attended by over 2,500 criminologists from across the globe.

INTERESTED IN INTERNING OR VOLUNTEERING WITH CHR?

A variety of opportunities are available for people interested in assisting with the research and operations of the Center for Homicide Research.

For more information, contact Joe Shulka, CHR Board President, at joeshulka@CHRonline.org or look for list of new opportunities on the CHR website in January.

2004 CONTRIBUTORS

Leadership Circle

Jim Denton
Gill Foundation *
Brook Glaefke *
Thomas Knopf-Bigelow
PFund Foundation *
Lavender Media, Inc. *
Joe Shulka & Dallas Drake *
Phyllis Wiener & Shayna Berkowitz

Executive Circle

Alan Braun
Miriam Drake in honor of Dallas Drake *
Sigrid Glasoe in memory of John Berglund *
Gary Gleason
Joan Higinbotham *
Kevin Horne
Paul Kaminski & Richard Bonnin in memory of
David Madson
Susan Torkelson *
James & Laurie Wellman

Director's Circle

Cordelia Anderson & John Humlekör
Walter H. Bera *
Marvin & Ginna Calvin
Compact Against Hate Crime *
Catherine Croghan & Kathy Robbins *
David Cummer
Marta Drury
Jason & Lisa Emrick *
Michael Garrett & Tony Scornavacco
Mark Hager
James Hartsoe
ING Community & Volunteer Matching Gifts Programs
Evan Kelley
Vern Maetzold
Judy & Paul Mikolajczak *
Rod Nelson in honor of our efforts
David Olson
Tom Paulson *
Milo Pinkerton
Allen Saeks *
William Schafer
Tom Scott, MD
Susan Sorenson *
Jody & Kevin Swanson in memory of Matthew Shepard
Erin Thompson
Tom Trisko & John Rittman
Ann Turnbull
David & Ruth Waterbury
Darrel Waters

Advocates

Dewan Barnes in memory of Greg Barnes
Scott Fearing
Jacqueline Gohdes
Barb Hutchins

Advocates (continued)

Myra & Lionel Greenberg in memory of Jon M. Greenberg
Tom Hennem & Mary Lenhardt
Arthur Higinbotham
Minnesota Lavender Bar Association
Jon Mikolajczak
Tamara & Tom Sherman
Joanne Sitt
Neal Thoeke *
Jack Thompson & Jeff Longnecker
David Trieff
Denis Tucker
Donald Whipple Fox
Jenny & Heidi Wrenson

* multiple gifts

Donations received from December 1, 2003 to December 1, 2004

2004 VOLUNTEERS & INTERNS

Dorothy Burandt	Jon Mikolajczak
William Carter	Phil Miner
David Cummer	Rebecca Moskow
Dallas Drake	Joe Riemann
Bridget Graw	Michael Ronn
Kevin Horne	Joe Shulka
Barb Hutchins	Joanne Sitt
Scott Kaiser	Nenise Smith
Kris Larson	Joronne Williamson

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR HOMICIDE RESEARCH

The Center for Homicide Research is an independent, volunteer-driven, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the capacity of the GLBT community, criminal justice professionals, and law enforcement to become more effective in identifying, solving and preventing gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender homicides.

Research began in 1992 and incorporated in 1999 as a nonprofit organization called the Minnesota Gay Homicide Study. In 2004, the name was changed to the Center for Homicide Research.

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

CENTER FOR HOMICIDE RESEARCH
115 West 36th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55408-4314
612/827-4658
www.CHRonline.org