

Domestic Violence Claimed

**58 Lives**

in Wisconsin in 2010

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# Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report 2010

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*They were so much to so many people*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Continuing with the work launched in 2000 with publication of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence's first Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report, this edition details domestic violence-related homicides in the calendar year 2010.<sup>1</sup> This brief accounting in no way represents the victims' full lives. That would require a far more detailed inquiry, in-depth study of official case records, and conversations with family and friends left behind. Within the limitations of readily available public information we have endeavored to construct as accurate a description as possible of key events and circumstances related to each homicide. Readers should note that there may have been homicides that were unreported or unidentified and are therefore not represented in this report.<sup>2</sup>

In 2010 there were 39 domestic violence homicide incidents resulting in 58 deaths: 51 homicides and 7 perpetrator suicides. Domestic violence homicides were 29% of all homicides in Wisconsin in 2010.<sup>3</sup> Six homicides were the result of legal intervention by responding law enforcement.<sup>4</sup> Six multiple homicide incidents accounted for 18 of 45 homicides (excluding homicides as a result of legal intervention).

2010 compared to 2009 <sup>5</sup>	2010	2009
Incidents of domestic violence-related homicide	39	47
Victims of domestic violence homicide (excluding by legal intervention)	45	51
Homicides by legal intervention (responding law enforcement)	6	1
All domestic violence-related homicides	51	52
Perpetrator suicide (excluding by legal intervention)	7	15
Total deaths (victim and perpetrator)	58	67

### Other aspects of domestic violence-related homicide during 2010 include:

- There was an average of four domestic violence homicide deaths per month in Wisconsin. When perpetrator suicides and deaths in conjunction with homicides are included, the rate was almost five domestic violence-related deaths per month.
- Perpetrators of domestic violence homicide incidents were overwhelmingly male: 86% (30 of 35, excluding homicides by legal intervention).
- When all homicides are considered, 57% of victims were female (29 of 51). When homicides excluding legal intervention are considered, 64% of victims were female (29 of 45). Males were victims in all of the homicides by legal intervention. Most males who were murdered were killed by another male—81% (10 of 11)—either by their father, in the case of child homicides, an adult son, or in conjunction with an attack on or in relation to a current or former female partner.
- Intimate partner violence characterizes the majority of domestic violence homicides included in this report: 30 of 39 incidents (77%). Victims were current or former partners, children or family members of a current or estranged partner, or someone connected to a former female partner.
- Half of the intimate-partner-related homicide incidents (16 of 30) involved a victim or someone close to the victim who had left the relationship or was taking action to end the relationship, such as moving out or filing for divorce.

<sup>1</sup> Homicides were considered "domestic" if the victims and perpetrators were spouses or partners, former spouses or former partners, adults with children in common, adults or teens who had been in a dating relationship, or adult family members (e.g., parents killed by an adult child). Homicides of others were also included if the circumstances of the murder included a perpetrator's attack on someone connected with a current or former partner, such as a new partner or friend or family member. The report also includes homicides of domestic violence perpetrators that occur as their victims acted in self-defense, as well as those that occurred as a result of legal intervention (i.e., police killing a suspect). See *Methodology* for additional information on definitions and criteria.

<sup>2</sup> Primary sources include news media (print and Internet editions) and Wisconsin Circuit Court Access records.

<sup>3</sup> The domestic violence homicide rate of 29% is based on 45 of 156 homicides statewide, using data from the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance (OJA). OJA uses Uniform Crime Report data submitted by law enforcement agencies and excludes homicides by legal intervention. See *Methodology*.

<sup>4</sup> "Legal intervention" is when a suspect is killed by law enforcement officers responding to a domestic violence-related call, i.e., where they have legal authority to use deadly force. This is the highest number since 2005, the year for which homicide report data can be most readily retrieved. In comparison, there were three homicides by legal intervention between 2005 and 2009.

<sup>5</sup> See the 2000 through 2010 comparison and statewide maps at the conclusion of the report.

- Victims reflected the span of life, from less than one year old to 87.
- Victims were from 17 counties across all regions of the state.
- At least 12 minor children were left orphaned or without a mother as a result of a domestic violence homicide.
- Past history of domestic violence involving either the victim, a victim's family member (e.g., a daughter or sister) or friend, or another person remains largely unknown and unexplored in published accounts of domestic violence homicides. In 2010, there was a known prior history of violence with the homicide perpetrator and victim in seven incidents and between the perpetrator and other victims in four. There was a known history of domestic violence by all six of the suspects killed by legal intervention.
- When perpetrators had a record of arrest on domestic abuse-related charges (e.g., battering, restraining order or harassment order violations, or intimidating a victim) such charges were often dismissed or reduced to disorderly conduct, which may mean the perpetrator was not subject to the federal domestic violence firearms prohibition.
- Excluding homicides by legal intervention, 61% (20 of 33) of domestic violence homicide incidents involved a firearm as the primary method of killing or a related weapon. In three of the six homicides by legal intervention, the suspect fired a weapon at responding officers.
- Together the 2010 cases reflect the factors that research has found to be particularly associated with lethal violence and the risk of violence.<sup>6</sup> These include, among other factors: stalking, strangulation, threats to kill the victim and threats to kill that the victim believes, threats to kill that are conveyed to others, serious injury to the victim, access to or use of weapons, violence outside the home, a victim who is attempting a permanent break, obsessive jealousy, and prior arrests, police calls and/or restraining orders. Active restraining or no-contact orders were in place at the time of seven of the homicide incidents.

While intimate partner homicide rates overall have declined nationally for all race and gender groups in the past thirty-five years, the decline has varied significantly for different populations. According to data compiled by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1976 and 2005, “the number of black males killed by intimates dropped by 83%, white males by 61%, black females by 52%, and white females by 6%.” This downward trend has been attributed to increased awareness, services, and intervention. Nevertheless, of all female murder victims, the proportion killed by an intimate partner has been increasing and for white women in the relationship of girlfriend the intimate partner homicide rate is higher than it was in 1976. While the rate has declined for black women in the relationship of girlfriend, it remains higher for them than for any other group, followed by American Indian/Alaska Native women.<sup>7</sup>

Several key themes emerged across the 2010 cases and are addressed in detail in the report. These include: the reach of domestic violence homicide into later life; homicides occurring as or after leaving a relationship with an intimate partner; the persistent role of firearms in domestic violence homicides; help-seeking by victims of ongoing abuse and the efforts of family members to protect; missed opportunities to intervene; and the wide reach of domestic violence into all corners of the state and into all kinds of lives. These themes have been common since the report was first published in 2000. A distinctive theme in 2010 was the high number of cases where the homicide occurred when law enforcement officers responded to a domestic violence-related emergency call. The 2010 report also updates cases included in prior years where final disposition of criminal charges was pending at the time of publication.

Our intent with this report is to honor the victims of domestic violence homicide and help Wisconsin communities create opportunities for intervention and prevention. We want to expand the understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence among Coordinated Community Response Teams, Elder Abuse Interdisciplinary Teams, and other critical systems where victims and perpetrators might seek help, assistance, support, and treatment. We hope to inspire community members to get involved in efforts to prevent domestic violence.

<sup>6</sup> For a summary of key factors, see the “Practitioners’ Guide to Risk and Danger in Domestic Violence Cases,” in *The Blueprint for Safety: An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes*, Praxis International, 2010; [www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org).

<sup>7</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Homicide Trends in the U.S., Intimate Partner Homicide*, available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/homicide/intimates.htm>.

## A CALL TO ACTION

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WCADV has published the domestic violence homicide report since 2000. In that time, at least 532 people lost their lives as victims of homicide, suicide, or legal intervention related to domestic violence, with 425 of those deaths from homicide. Over the past decade, domestic violence homicides have comprised anywhere from 18% to 36% of all homicides in the state. Since 2008, one-third (31%) of all homicides in the state have been domestic violence related.<sup>8</sup> Headed into another decade, we are drawing on what we have learned to issue a call to action—a call to action to help prevent homicide and to prevent and diminish the overall harm cause by violence and abuse.

Fortunately, not all domestic violence ends in homicide. If it did, our state would see thousands of deaths each year. But many people—mostly women in heterosexual relationships, but others as well—live each day with intense, ongoing intimidation, coercion, and physical and sexual violence that erode their safety, health, and well-being. Children must navigate this reality alongside their mothers and fathers, learning many lessons about adult relationships, power and control, and the strategies and consequences of trying to resist and stay safe. The “near-homicides” that the report has begun to examine have opened the window even farther onto the pervasive presence of everyday violence and abuse in people’s intimate lives and families.

Below are five essential areas of change that can be readily articulated—i.e., “counted on one hand”—and that have both institutional and individual dimensions. For any one battered woman or other person trying to survive violence and abuse at the hands of an intimate partner or family member, the individual response of family, friends, advocates, police, prosecutors, and courts can make a difference. The systemic response of institutions—from legal to health to economic—must in turn provide meaningful help that accounts for victims’ distinct and diverse identities, experiences, and needs. To change the cultural and social underpinnings of domestic violence—the assumptions about relationships, gender, roles, power, and violence—requires attention to both institutional and individual change.

### ENGAGE AND CONNECT

Isolation is both a core tactic and a primary impact of abuse. The extent to which that isolation can be interrupted is a large part of building a foundation of safety. Engaging and connecting with those who are living with abuse—from the kinds of daily restriction and domination that often go unrecognized by anyone else to obvious acts of physical violence—is essential. A respectful, nonjudgmental approach can go far in persuading someone that a particular individual or institution can be trusted to understand what they are facing and will stand alongside them and take action.

To engage and connect means that we stop judging survivors and start listening to and talking with them—not at them. It means letting go of our assumptions about “the classic battered woman” and desires for an uncomplicated “good victim” or an “easy case.” It means building dialogue at every turn and opportunity and staying engaged over time. It means asking: Tell me about . . . How are you? What do you need? What are you concerned about? What are you afraid of? What have you tried? What ideas do you have? Who can you count on among your friends, family, and community? How can I help? How can this agency or organization help? What can we do together?

To engage and connect also means that we recognize the ways in which peoples’ unique cultures and identities can both strengthen and impede safety from abuse and violence, sometimes simultaneously. It requires that we recognize and challenge oppression and how forms of oppression—including gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, class, age—interrelate to create systemic social inequality that impacts the safety and well-

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<sup>8</sup> Based on data compiled by the Office of Justice Assistance and WCADV.

being of individuals facing domestic violence, as well as entire groups of people and communities. While no one person is entirely immune from the possibility of abuse—particularly as it extends across the life span—oppression and social standing and life circumstance have a great deal to do with the options for safety and the availability and impact of interventions.

## **PAY ATTENTION**

We are learning more and more about the signs of potentially lethal violence and ongoing abuse, particularly in intimate partner relationship—from stalking and obsessive jealousy, to carrying or having access to weapons, to escalating frequency, severity, and types of violence. We know that attempting to make a permanent break in the relationship and violence with a pattern of coercion—whether financial, physical, sexual, or in relation to children—are serious markers of high risk violence. Too often, however, we are inept at “connecting the dots” and see only individual, isolated incidents, rather than the pattern of ongoing coercion, intimidation, and violence. We must get better at building recognition of and attention to risk and danger into every point of intervention, and crafting strategies to respond and to engage and problem-solve with those who are at risk.

We must also get better at approaching safety planning as a process and not a product or a piece of paper to be carried around in a pocket or purse. Risks and threats are constantly changing according to events and the complex circumstances of people’s lives. Safety planning cannot be limited to a paper form and the expectation that a victim will be able to locate and carry with her or have readily available everything from birth certificates to bank records to children’s immunization school records.

Safety planning must fit an individual victim’s needs and life, designed via a process of engagement, connection, and partnership. It must also be understood and structured as a responsibility not only of community-based advocates, but of the many institutions that victims and abusers encounter, from law enforcement and courts to health care and welfare. It must include widely available information to friends and family members on the most helpful and protective ways to play a role.

## **MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVOCACY AND INTERVENTION**

Every door that a victim opens, however slightly, should be an open door that leads to survivor-centered advocacy, accurate information, and well-informed intervention. Every door that an abuser opens, however slightly, should be an open door to opportunities for change, along with certain and fair consequences for the harm that has been done. This includes seizing opportunities to intervene in ways that fit an individual victim’s needs or to utilize legitimate sanctions and consequences for violent and abusive behavior. In the past decade, the domestic violence homicide report has cited far too many examples of missed opportunities, including: misinformation about restraining orders and who could obtain one, underutilizing enforcement of no-contact orders and restraining orders, and a range of settings—from restraining order hearings to family court to conditions of pretrial release—where well-established signs of danger went largely unexplored and unheeded.

Maximizing opportunities for advocacy and intervention also requires providing and sustaining the resources that anchor many aspects of safety and opportunities to change, from emergency shelter and legal advocacy to housing and employment support and help for individuals in examining and preventing abusive behavior.



## UNDERSTAND THE INTERSECTING ISSUES AND DYNAMICS

In building attention to what we have come to call “domestic violence” over the past thirty years, we have tended to include many kinds of violence involving intimate partners and family members under that phrase, without necessarily understanding its different dimensions. Yet a one-size-fits-all kind of response can impede our intended interventions. We must develop a more nuanced understanding of what we mean by domestic violence and how it is intertwined with other types of violence and oppression in order to provide meaningful support and safety planning to victims, place legitimate sanctions on abusive behavior and provide opportunities to change that behavior, and ensure an overall effective response. Such awareness includes not only the familiar range of tactics and dynamics that characterize patterns of ongoing intimidation, coercion, and violence—often referred to as battering—but what resistance to that violence can look like. Such awareness includes understanding how violence within intimate and family relationships can have different meanings, intents, and impacts—and the interventions that are likely to be most protective and to have the greatest impact on preventing violence and abuse, for individuals and for the next generation.

## SPEAK UP

We have the responsibility—individually and institutionally—to speak up and to hold one another and our communities accountable for the ways we intervene or fail to intervene. This collective speaking up has made a difference in the past thirty-five years. Wisconsin has built a foundation of emergency assistance and shelter, ongoing legal advocacy, and civil and criminal legal system intervention that has made a difference in the lives of many survivors of intimate partner violence and their children, as well as in the lives of survivors of abuse across the life span. Sanctions and consequences for violence against an intimate partner or family member are routinely and widely used, beyond anything that was possible in 1976.

We have accomplished much, but our work is by no means complete, as the stories in this report reveal. As a proportion of all homicides in the state, domestic violence homicides have been steadily increasing. During the first three years of this report (2000 – 2002), they comprised 21% of all homicides; over the past three years (2008 – 2010), 31% of all Wisconsin homicides were domestic violence related. We are still a society flooded with images and tacit if not outright acceptance of violence and abuse in many forms. Images of men’s violence against women are still readily found in media and popular culture, as is reinforcement of violence and degradation based on age, race, ability, and sexual orientation and gender identity. Avenues of support and safety are being closed to victims and survivors as public resources are withdrawn or frozen and economic inequality expands. There remains a persistent assumption that “just leaving” is the solution. Domestic violence is a learned behavior supported by multiple messages and norms in our society. We as individuals, communities, and society can speak up for replacing these violent norms with positive and healthy messages. Domestic violence—and its multigenerational impact—can be prevented before it even starts.

None of the five action points stand alone, nor are they a sequential set of steps. They are intertwined and interconnected, in the same way that our response and solutions must be.

## KEY FINDINGS – 2010

The following tables provide snapshots of the number and characteristics of victims and perpetrators, homicide methods and location, and factors related to domestic violence homicide, such as prior history of domestic violence and whether the victim tried to leave the relationship.

### Overview

<b>Domestic violence homicide incidents</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Victims of domestic violence homicide (excluding by legal intervention)</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Homicides by legal intervention (responding law enforcement)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>All domestic violence-related homicides</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Homicide incidents with perpetrator suicide</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total deaths (victim and perpetrator)</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Homicide incidents with two or more victims</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Female victims</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Male victims</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Female perpetrators</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Male perpetrators</b>	<b>30</b>

- The six multiple homicide incidents accounted for 18 of 45 homicides (excluding legal intervention).
- Most male victims were killed by a male perpetrator acting alone (11) or responding law enforcement (6).  
Three of the 22 male victims were killed by a female acting alone; two (both children) were killed by multiple perpetrators in the same incident (two male and one female).
- Perpetrator count (35) includes multiple perpetrators and excludes responding law enforcement officer

### Age and gender of victims

<b>0-6 years</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7-17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>18-29</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>30-49</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>50-59</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>60 and older</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>51</b>

- Includes homicides by legal intervention (6).
- Of the victims age 60 or older, one was 79 and one 87.

## Age and gender of perpetrators

Age	Female	Male	Total by age
under 18	--	1	1
18-29	2	11	13
30-49	3	11	14
50-59	--	3	3
60 and older	--	4	4
Total	5	30	35

- Perpetrator count excludes homicide by legal intervention (6).
- Of the perpetrators age 60 and older, one was age 83.

## Race or ethnicity of victims and perpetrators

	Victims		Perpetrators	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Caucasian	14	11	2	18
African American	12	8	3	11
Multi-racial	1	2	--	--
Asian	1	--	--	1
Latino or Hispanic	1	--	--	--
Native American	1	--	--	--
Other or unknown	--	--	--	--

- Race and ethnicity listed according to identification in an official record or news report.
- Perpetrator count does not include responding law enforcement officers.

## Methods of killing

A homicide often involved multiple methods of assault. The following figures reflect the primary method contributing to the victim's death.

By number of victims killed by each method	
Shot (other than legal intervention)	29
Stabbed	4
Beaten or assaulted by being punched, pushed, bludgeoned	7
Strangled or asphyxiated	4
Unspecified	1
Shot by responding law enforcement	6

- Excluding legal intervention, 20 of 33 incidents of homicide and homicide-suicide involved a firearm as a primary method of killing or a related weapon. In 3 of 6 homicides by legal intervention, the suspect fired a weapon at responding officers.

## Relationship of victim to male perpetrator

When perpetrator was male, victim was:	
Current female partner	10
Former or estranged female partner	5
Perpetrator's child ( <u>and</u> child of current or former female partner)	5
Family member of female partner	1
New male partner or male otherwise known to the perpetrator's former or estranged female partner	4
Mother	5
Father	4
Niece	2
Cousin	1
Someone who had rebuffed perpetrator	1

- Perpetrator count does not include responding law enforcement officers.

## Relationship of victim to female perpetrator

When perpetrator was female, victim was:	
Current male partner	3
Current female partner	1
Woman who had a male intimate partner in common with the perpetrator; her two children were also killed. (Female perpetrator with two male accomplices.)	3

- Perpetrator count does not include responding law enforcement officers.

## Homicide-suicide

Homicide incidents with perpetrator suicide	7
Number of victims in homicide with perpetrator suicide	9
Homicide-suicide incidents involving firearms	7
Male perpetrator/suicide	7
Female perpetrator/suicide	--

- In 2010, one of the homicide-suicide cases involved multiple homicides (3 victims).
- In 5 of 7 homicide-suicide cases, the homicide victim was the perpetrator's current or former female partner (and in one case his children, too).
- Two of the homicides by legal intervention have the characteristics of "suicide by cop."

## Multiple homicides

Multiple homicide incidents	6
Number of victims in multiple homicides	18
Multiple homicide incidents with perpetrator suicide	1
Multiple homicide incidents involving firearms	6
Male perpetrator (by incident)	5
Female perpetrator	--
Multiple perpetrators (female and two males)	1

## Impact on children

Children killed (under age 18)	9
Children at the scene of an adult homicide	26
Minor children orphaned	5
Minor children left motherless	7
Minor children left fatherless	0

- The number of children killed is most likely an undercount, as are the numbers of children left orphaned or without a parent. See Methodology.

## Prior history of domestic violence

By incident	
Known prior history with homicide victim	7
Known prior history with other victim(s)	4
Prior history with this or any victim was unknown	22
Known history of domestic violence by suspect killed during legal intervention	6

## Ending an intimate partner or dating relationship

By incident (intimate partner related)	
Divorced, pending divorce, or separation	5
Unmarried and separated or ending/leaving the relationship	11
Unknown if action to end/leave the relationship	14

- Ending the relationship means that the victim in the homicide or someone the victim was connected to, such as a new partner or family member, had taken some step to end the relationship, such as moving out temporarily or filing for divorce, or an action that was perceived by the perpetrator as ending the relationship.
- In 2010, 30 of 39 incidents were intimate partner related; 10 involved non-intimate-partner relationships, primarily a parent or parents killed by an adult son.

## Homicide location

By incident	
Victim's home or shared home with perpetrator	25
Public location (e.g., yard, street, park, motel, parking lot, medical facility)	8
Perpetrator's home	1
Home of victim's family member	2
Home of perpetrator's family member	1
Home where officers were responding to a 911 call	1
Unknown (body found in woods)	1

## 2010 HOMICIDES

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*...she was a person, she wasn't just a victim of a crime. [Her daughter] wasn't just some little girl that was killed. They were people. They were so much to so many people.*

*They were people who had lives and people who cared for them.*

All accounts and discussions of the homicides included in this report should be read with these words from surviving family members in mind. It is far too easy to reduce peoples' lives to the sensational story.

The accounts of the domestic violence homicides included in this year's report, as in past years, are compiled from information that is readily available via public sources and limited follow-up inquiries. The amount of attention such sources pay to one domestic-violence-related homicide in comparison to another varies greatly. Hence, the detail available to address each homicide varies greatly. Clearly these brief descriptions in no way reflect the complexity and circumstances of each person's death, and they certainly do not capture the complexities and fullness of their lives and the impact that each homicide and suicide has on surviving family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, communities, and those responding and attempting to help.

NOTE: Perpetrators and defendants are identified according to news accounts and public records, including persons charged with a crime where the case remains open. Case status reflects information available at the time of publication of this report. The current status of an open case can be found via Wisconsin Circuit Court Access.<sup>9</sup> Individuals' ages are listed as of the date of the homicide.

### County

### In the death of...

#### Adams

#### **Marcella Clark, 79, Friendship – July 1**

Larry Clark, 59, has been charged with first-degree intentional homicide, hiding a corpse, forgery, and other crimes in the death of his mother. Authorities were contacted in November 2010 by a friend of Marcella Clark's who had not heard from her since June. Investigators discovered her decomposed body on top of a trap set in a tree-lined area of the property.

#### Brown

#### **Nyja Sengkhamee, 55, Pulaski – September 26**

Beaten and stabbed by her husband, Khay Sengkhamee, 63, who committed suicide. Family members discovered the deaths. Nyja Sengkhamee suffered severe trauma to her head, neck and chest after being stabbed with a kitchen knife and beaten with a two-foot length tree branch. She spent the night prior to her death with one of her children and had returned to her home that morning to retrieve personal property. Family members became concerned when they went to the residence later that day and discovered a vehicle door left open and no interior lights on in the home.

#### Chippewa

#### **Kyle Ryba, 24, Boyd – April 3**

Shot by William Andru Ball, 21, the estranged husband of a woman that Kyle Ryba was dating. There were eleven or more people present in the home where the homicide occurred, including William Ball's two-year-old child and other children. He also shot and injured his estranged wife. Investigators found eleven shell casings at the scene. William Ball committed suicide by asphyxiation while being held in the Chippewa County Jail pending sentencing. A jury had convicted him of first-degree intentional homicide and first-degree recklessly endangering safety.

<sup>9</sup> To check the status of an open case, search under the defendant's name at <http://wcca.wicourts.gov/index.xsl>.

## County

## In the death of...

### Chippewa

#### ***Christopher Farmer, 41, Cadott – May 13***

Shot by William F. Vollbrecht, 32, the former boyfriend of a woman Christopher Farmer was dating. William Vollbrecht traveled to Cadott from North Dakota, where he had been working, and went first to his former girlfriend's home. He fired a shot outside her home and then went on to Christopher Farmer's residence. After shooting him in the neck, William struggled with his former girlfriend. According to authorities, when sheriff's deputies arrived at the scene they found him choking her. A jury convicted William Vollbrecht of first-degree intentional homicide and armed burglary and acquitted him of one count of strangulation/suffocation. He was sentenced to life in prison, with eligibility to petition for extended supervision after twenty-five years.

### Columbia

#### ***Kelly J. Bishell, 21, Town of Marcellon – November 14***

Shot by Columbia County Sheriff's Office deputies responding to a report from a family member that he was threatening to kill himself and his dog. After obtaining permission from the homeowner to go inside, deputies entered and found Kelly Bishell on the stairs with a handgun. Gunshots were exchanged; one deputy received a superficial grazing wound and the other deputy's shirt was grazed with a bullet. The day prior to the homicide, there were two calls to law enforcement: one reported an armed and hostile man inside the home where the homicide occurred and the second reported a domestic battery at the same address involving Kelly Bishell and his estranged wife. At the time of the homicide, he was the subject of domestic abuse restraining order with a firearm prohibition. According to authorities, he was also the subject of outstanding warrants—one had been issued in conjunction with charges of domestic battery—that included a caution indicator indicating that he was armed and not going back to jail.

### Dane

#### ***Twanda Thompson, 19, Madison – April 14***

#### ***Unborn child of Twanda Thompson***

#### ***Jihad Larry, 7 months***

#### ***Keleasha Larry, 3, Chicago***

#### ***Keyshai Fields, 16***

#### ***Leona Larry, 57 (died on May 2)***

Note: Twanda Thompson and James Larry were residents of Madison. The homicides occurred at his mother's home in Chicago.

James Larry, 32, fatally shot his pregnant wife, Twanda Thompson, who had also been beaten before she was killed. He also shot his infant son, Jihad; mother, Leona Larry; and two nieces, Keleasha and Keyshai. He injured his 13-year-old nephew, fired at another 12-year-old niece as she fled the home, and attempted to shoot another adult in the home. In November 2009, James Larry pled no-contest to a battery charge in Dane County stemming from an assault on his wife in a store parking lot. Witnesses reported that he grabbed her by the face and squeezed her cheeks, covering her nose and mouth, and then pushed her against a van, yelling, "What would you do if your woman was acting like this?" Family members described James Larry as controlling and said that Twanda Thompson resisted dressing as he wanted her to. They



## County

## In the death of...

### Dane

reported that he wanted her and other family members to follow his religious beliefs and practices. James Larry pled guilty in Cook County to multiple counts of homicide and attempted homicide. He was sentenced to five life sentences in prison and additional time on the other counts.

#### ***Scott Stevens, 47, McFarland – July 20***

Shot by Dane County Sheriff's Office deputies with the Tactical Response and Hostage Negotiation Teams who had been called to the scene after he had barricaded himself in his home with several firearms. Local police had gone to the home to arrest him for domestic disorderly conduct in conjunction with an incident involving his stepfather. In March of 2010 he had been charged with incest and third-degree criminal assault, and on June 24 the case was bound over for trial, with arraignment scheduled for July 27. He was also under investigation for another felony sexual assault charge. Scott Stevens fired on deputies when they broke a window in an attempt to lower a video camera into the room. One of the shots hit a shield held by an officer positioned outside the window. Officers responded with gunfire, and one of the four shots that struck him was fatal. During the standoff he sent text communications threatening suicide and indicating that he did not plan to leave the house.

#### ***William Sorenson, 42, Town of Dunkirk – July 28***

Shot by Dane County Sheriff's Office deputies responding to a domestic abuse-related call from his estranged wife. She reported that he was intoxicated and causing a disturbance and that she wanted him removed from the home. She told 911 that he was outside and might have a gun. When deputies arrived, William Sorenson emerged from the garage with a shotgun. Deputies warned him to put down the gun and fired a non-lethal bean bag shot in an attempt to disarm him. He fired at deputies and was killed when deputies returned fire. While in the garage, he called a friend and said that he was armed and intended to die. He had a reported history of prior domestic abuse-related calls to law enforcement.

#### ***Eugene J. Walker, 25, Town of Madison – October 12***

Shot by a Dane County Sheriff's Office deputy responding to a report that he had threatened his former girlfriend with a gun. The woman told police that Eugene Walker had entered her home uninvited through an unlocked door, argued about the end of their relationship, and pointed a gun at her head. He fled the residence before police arrived, but was located a few miles away by a deputy, who was on foot searching the area that evening with other law enforcement officers. The deputy drew his gun and Eugene Walker head butted and knocked him to the ground, then struck him in the face repeatedly before the deputy fired his gun. The deputy was later treated for head and face injuries. Eugene Walker was unarmed at the time of his death. At the time of the homicide, a no-contact order in a disorderly conduct case prohibited Eugene from having contact with his former girlfriend.

## County

## In the death of...

### Douglas

#### ***April Oles Magdzas, 26, Superior – August 17***

##### ***Lila, 13 months***

##### ***Annah, Unborn daughter***

Matthew Magdzas, 23, shot and killed his estranged wife and 13-month-old daughter, Lila, and their three dogs before killing himself. April Oles Magdzas was almost nine-months pregnant. She had moved out and was living with relatives in the weeks before her death, but had gone to the house for a marriage counseling session scheduled for that afternoon at the church the couple attended. The deaths were discovered by her mother. As a member of the National Guard, Matthew Magdzas volunteered for a tour of duty in Iraq and was deployed for twelve months, returning in July 2007. He had been treated for post-traumatic stress disorder and had been flagged as a suicide risk by the Veteran's Administration. In 2008, while living in Minnesota, police responded to a domestic abuse call and seized a semi-automatic military-style rifle and other firearms belonging to him. A family member reported that he carried a pistol in spite of being denied a concealed carry permit in Minnesota. Investigators discovered notes on April Oles Magdzas's computer that detailed her concerns about her husband's behavior, which included sleeping with a loaded gun in his bed, and insistence on having loaded guns unlocked in their bedroom.

### Eau Claire

#### ***Renee D. Maki, 51, Town of Union – November 18***

Randolph W. Melsness, 51, has been charged with first-degree intentional homicide and operating a firearm while intoxicated in connection with the beating death of his girlfriend, Renee Maki. A jury trial is scheduled for September 6, 2011. Law enforcement officers responded to a call from his brother, who reported that Randolph Melsness was firing a gun in the basement of the home and was threatening him and their mother. An arrest was made and in searching the property for weapons, officers found Renee's body on the floor of the motor home where the couple lived.

#### ***Stella Triplett, 5 months, Eau Claire – November 24***

Tyreece Triplett, 19, pled no-contest to second-degree reckless homicide in the death of his daughter, which included multiple skull fractures and internal bleeding. Other charges in the homicide case, including obstructing an officer, and domestic abuse battery and disorderly conduct were dismissed but read in for consideration in sentencing. Sentencing is scheduled for October 20, 2011. He admitted to investigators that he was alone with the child when she started crying and he shook her and threw her against a wall. At the time of the homicide, a no-contact order was in effect because of charges of domestic abuse battery. The order prohibited Tyreece Triplett from contact with his child's mother or the residence where the homicide occurred. The child's mother has been charged with neglecting a child and obstructing an officer. According to the complaint, when officers first interviewed her, following her call to 911, she claimed that Tyreece Triplett had not been in the apartment and that she was home alone when the child fell off the couch.

## County

## In the death of...

### Kenosha

#### ***Alaina Caudill, 26, Kenosha – May 1***

Alaina Caudill was shot and killed by her former boyfriend, Christopher Stuart, 26, as her current boyfriend was walking her to her residence. Christopher Stuart had been hiding in the garage and confronted the couple, pointing a gun at her boyfriend and threatening to kill him. The boyfriend fled and called police. Christopher Stuart then shot Alaina Caudill in the head. A few hours after the shooting, police found him dead in a bedroom of his home from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. A week prior to the homicide, Alaina Caudill had reported to police that he had threatened her with a knife and hacked into her cell phone records. Investigators found evidence indicating that he had been plotting the murder for more than a week prior to the shooting. Alaina Caudill had planned to file a restraining order, but reportedly received misinformation that led her to believe that she could not get one because she had been dating Christopher Stuart, but had not lived with him ("dating relationships" qualify for domestic abuse restraining orders in Wisconsin and harassment restraining orders are available regardless of the relationship between the petitioner and respondent). According to her mother, the couple had dated for about five months when her daughter ended the relationship because of his obsessive behavior.

#### ***Michael B. Novak, 59, Kenosha – September 1***

Brian M. Novak, 36, has been charged with first-degree intentional homicide in the beating death of his father. A jury trial is scheduled for December 6, 2011. Michael Novak's body was discovered in the basement of his home on September 3, after police received a call to check on the welfare of a man at that address. Brian Novak was arrested in Antioch, IL, after police found his car at his mother's house.

### La Crosse

#### ***Merna Koula, 65, West Salem – May 24*** ***Dennis Koula, 68***

Eric Koula, 40, has been charged with two counts of first-degree intentional homicide and forgery in the shooting deaths of his parents. A jury trial is scheduled for December 5, 2011. Three days after the homicides, Eric Koula called 911 and reported discovering his parents' bodies in their home. Family members had been notified when Merna Koula did not appear for a substitute teaching assignment. Eric Koula has also been charged with depositing a forged check from his father's investment account the day after the homicides.

## County

## In the death of...

### Lincoln

#### ***Sally Pergolski, 63, Gleason – June 6***

Chase M. A. Boruch, 24, has been charged with first-degree intentional homicide in the death of his mother. A jury trial is scheduled for October 11, 2011. Sally Pergolski was pronounced dead by rescue personnel on the shores of Lake Moraine after her son called 911, saying his mother had accidentally drove into the lake where the two planned to go fishing. According to investigators, Sally had a severe brain injury that would have left her unconscious at least two hours before the crash. They also report that approximately a month before her death, her son had helped her take out \$1-million in insurance policies that named him as the sole beneficiary. Chase Boruch enlisted in the U.S. Army after high school and spent more than a year in Iraq, returning in 2007.

### Manitowoc

#### ***Michelle Jaeger, 39, Manitowoc – January 9***

Killed by blunt force trauma to the back of her head. Her boyfriend, Roger Rosenthal, 52, pled guilty on August 16, 2011, to second-degree reckless homicide, strangulation and suffocation, and hiding a corpse. A sentencing hearing is scheduled for November 17, 2011. Michelle Jaeger was missing for about two weeks before two hunters discovered a body in the woods after seeing sled tracks leading to an area where Roger Rosenthal was known to hunt. The day prior to her disappearance, Michelle Jaeger told a friend that she wanted out of the relationship. After not receiving a response to numerous voicemails left over a period of twelve days, the friend contacted police. A woman whom Roger Rosenthal was having a relationship with told investigators that he had told Michelle Jaeger to move out.

### Milwaukee

#### ***Sarah Rosio, 24, Wauwatosa – January 13***

Strangled by her former boyfriend, Benjamin Germano, 32, in front of the couple's one-year-old daughter. Eight days later, he called friends and told them he had killed her and asked them to care for the child. Sarah Rosio's body was found frozen in a shipping container with a bag over her head. Benjamin Germano fled the state and was arrested in Colorado in late January after a high-speed chase. Allegations of strangulation were made in at least one of the domestic violence cases brought against him between 2008 and the date of the homicide. In 2008 he was charged with strangulation and suffocation; the case was dismissed when Sarah Rosio did not appear at the trial. She had testified at the preliminary hearing. There was an initial no-contact order in place as a condition of bond and the court later ordered GPS supervision and was "reminded he is to have NO CONTACT with the victim," according to court records. Records show a history of five restraining orders filed against Benjamin in the fifteen months prior to the homicide, at least one of which was obtained by Sarah (petitioners are unidentified in the others). A disorderly conduct charge had been filed one month prior and was pending at the time of the homicide. It included a no-contact order.

## County

## In the death of...

### Milwaukee

#### ***Joseph D. McGowan, 39, Milwaukee – February 2***

Shot by his cousin, Brian A. Patterson, 33. At the time of the homicide, Brian Patterson was under a domestic abuse restraining order with a firearms prohibition, obtained by a woman in 2006 that was due to expire later in the month. A jury found Brian Patterson guilty of first-degree reckless homicide, and he was sentenced to twenty-five years in prison and ten years extended supervision.

#### ***Pamela Kucharski, 57, Milwaukee – February 7*** ***Ralph Kucharski, 57***

Shot by their son, Corey Kucharski, 34, who then called the police, telling the dispatcher that “they’re in a better place.” The home included a gun collection belonging to Ralph and police recovered a shotgun, assault rifle, other rifles, pistols, swords, and ammunition. Corey Kucharski was charged with two counts of first-degree intentional homicide and pled not guilty by reason of mental disease. In the second phase of the trial, the court ruled that he was able to conform his conduct to the law and was legally responsible for the deaths. He was found guilty of both counts and faces life in prison. A sentencing hearing is scheduled for November 4, 2011. Since being charged, the court has ordered three competency examinations and after reviewing each evaluation has ruled that Corey Kucharski has been competent to proceed. The court has ordered another evaluation to determine his competency to proceed with the sentencing.

#### ***Mae J. Helm, 58, Milwaukee – February 8***

Stabbed by her boyfriend, William J. Bowden, 60. Mae Helm had called police reporting that William Bowden had a knife and would not leave the home. When police arrived on the scene they found her in the rear hallway of her apartment. She was pronounced dead at the scene. William Bowden pled guilty to one count of homicide by negligent handling of a dangerous weapon and one count of aggravated battery. He was sentenced to consecutive terms of three years in prison and three years of extended supervision on each count.

#### ***Sherry Jackson, 28, Milwaukee – February 16*** ***Mario Brown, 25***

Jonah Agnew, 28, has been charged with two counts of first-degree intentional homicide and use of a dangerous weapon in the shooting deaths of his former girlfriend, Sherry Jackson, with whom he had a child in common, and Mario Brown. A jury trial is scheduled for October 17, 2011. Sherry Jackson had ended her relationship with Jonah Agnew in January, but he had kept a key to her apartment and used it to let himself in. She was found in the bedroom, with thirteen gunshot wounds. Mario Brown was found in the kitchen, with twelve gunshot wounds. According to investigators, Jonah used two different handguns in the assault and three ammunition clips were found outside the crime scene.

## County

## In the death of...

### Milwaukee

***Rachel Thompson, 24, Milwaukee – February 26***  
***Torian Thompson-Carter, 5***  
***Jaden Thompson-Carter, 3***

In the deaths of Rachel Thompson and her children, Desmond D. Laster, 24, was found guilty by a jury of three counts of first-degree intentional homicide, arson, and other charges. He was sentenced to four consecutive life terms in prison. Anthony Edward Barnes, 24, pled guilty to three counts of felony murder-armed robbery and one count of first-degree intentional homicide. He was sentenced to four concurrent terms of forty years in prison plus ten years of extended supervision. Both men were also charged and convicted of homicide in the death of Brittney Robertson, an accomplice in the murders of Rachel Thompson and her children. Trial testimony described Brittney's "vengeful jealousy of Thompson" as setting the crimes in motion. Both women had recently had children in common with a man they had each been dating. Brittney's son died in December 2009 after a premature birth. Rachel's son was six weeks old. That child was unharmed and was left on the sidewalk outside of a church after the murders.

The three tied Rachel Thompson and her children with duct tape and covered their eyes with tape. Brittney Robertson stabbed her multiple times, at one point breaking a knife and getting another one to continue the attack. Desmond Laster slashed Rachel Thompson's throat and Anthony Barnes shot her before setting the house on fire as they left. The fire was reported by a neighbor and the deaths were discovered by responding firefighters. Torian's hands and legs were bound with tape, a plastic bag taped over his head, and tape over his face. Jaden was bound with tape and a plastic bag taped over his head. The two men killed Brittney Robertson the day following the murders after police broadcast her photo, saying that she may be in danger.

At the time of the homicides, Brittney Robertson was the subject of a domestic abuse restraining order with firearm restriction, obtained by her mother in March 2009 on the grounds that her daughter beat her repeatedly and threatened her life. When she was six years old, Rachel Thompson witnessed her mother and grandmother stabbed to death by her mother's boyfriend and subsequently testified against him.

***Alvin J. Bradberry, 29, Milwaukee – April 4***

Shot by his sister's boyfriend, Lathmer D. Torres, 27, after trying to convince his sister to leave him because of his violence toward her. Alvin Bradberry was shot at least eight times and fourteen shell casings were found at the scene. His sister told investigators that Lathmer Torres had been violent with her and had been arrested for domestic violence/battery numerous times. Court records show one battery charge that was dismissed when the victim did not appear at trial. At the time of the homicide, he was the subject of a harassment restraining order without a firearm restriction, issued in 2007 (petitioner was not Alvin Bradberry's sister).

## County

## In the death of...

### Milwaukee

#### ***Eddie Lee Jones, 48, Milwaukee – April 28***

Shot by Milwaukee Police Department officers responding to a domestic abuse call. Police were called to the home of a woman who reported that Eddie Lee Jones was there in violation of a restraining order issued on April 6. Upon arrival, the police saw him threatening the woman with a knife and ordered him to drop the knife. When he did not obey the order, officers opened fire. Ten days prior to the homicide, Eddie Lee Jones had been charged with violating the restraining order and under a criminal no-contact order in that case.

#### ***Esther L. Dawe, 87, Milwaukee – May 10***

Shot by John E. Camm, 83. Esther Dawe's family told investigators that John Camm wanted to take their relationship farther than friendship, but that she did not. The two lived in the same retirement community. Other residents told investigators that Esther Dawe had told John that she could no longer take care of him. The deaths were discovered in her apartment by nursing staff after John Camm missed a doctor's appointment and his son called to follow up.

#### ***Elmore Bell, 69, Milwaukee – August 4***

Stabbed by his girlfriend, Charlotte D. Brown, 40. In 2008, Elmore Bell had obtained a domestic abuse restraining order against Charlotte Brown that was in effect at the time of the homicide and active until November 2010. She told investigators that prior to the homicide she consumed a large amount of drugs and alcohol and that Elmore Bell had refused to give her additional money. She said that she grabbed a knife while they were in the kitchen and stabbed him after he began hitting her in the leg with a skillet and tried to choke her. In May of 2009 she had been charged with violating the restraining order; the charge was dismissed in April 2010. Charlotte Brown pled guilty to an amended charge of homicide by negligent handling of a dangerous weapon and was sentenced to three years in prison and four years extended supervision.

#### ***Lisa Lock, 45, Milwaukee – August 12***

Beaten and possibly asphyxiated by her boyfriend, Michael Grandberry, 39. He told investigators that he remembers punching her in the head and chest after entering her apartment building and seeing her talking with a man whom he said Lisa Lock once described as someone who "had feelings for her." After waking and finding her unresponsive, he went to his mother's house and called police. Michael Grandberry pled guilty to an amended charge of first-degree reckless homicide. He was sentenced to twenty-nine years in prison and ten years of extended supervision.



## County

## In the death of...

### Milwaukee

#### ***Sabrina R. Junior, 43, Milwaukee – August 24***

Eddie Lee Anthony, 63, has been charged with first-degree intentional homicide in the stabbing death of his girlfriend. A jury trial is scheduled for September 12, 2011. According to the criminal complaint, the couple's eleven-year-old daughter reported hiding in a closet with her two younger sisters while their parents were arguing. Eddie Lee left the residence as Sabrina Junior's seventeen-year-old daughter was arriving. She discovered her mother's body on a bed and her distraught younger sisters in the room. Eddie Lee Anthony was arrested in Illinois.

#### ***Rosalind Ross, 30, Milwaukee – September 15***

On August 25, 2011, Malika Willoughby, 27, entered a guilty plea to an amended charge of first-degree homicide with a dangerous weapon in the shooting death of her girlfriend. Sentencing is scheduled for November 18. Rosalind Ross was shot and killed while the couple was sitting in her car in a restaurant parking lot. Family members reported that they had been concerned for Rosalind Ross and described Malika Willoughby as "overly possessive." The couple had been arguing more in the week prior to the homicide, and Rosalind Ross's mother believed that her daughter was ending the relationship at the time of the homicide.

#### ***Joseph Hall, 52, Milwaukee – September 16***

Brian J. Anderson, 26, has been charged with first-degree intentional homicide and use of a dangerous weapon in the shooting death of Joseph Hall. A jury trial is scheduled for November 7, 2011. According to the criminal complaint, Brian Anderson shot Joseph Hall in the chest with a shotgun after confronting him about a rumor that he had been seeing Brian Anderson's fiancé. The two men were roommates, and the homicide occurred in the kitchen of their apartment.

#### ***Lonnie Gray, 55, Milwaukee – November 3***

Anna Marie Hughes, 47, pled guilty to second-degree reckless homicide in the stabbing death of her boyfriend. Sentencing is scheduled for October 24, 2011. At the time of his death, charges of domestic battery were pending against Lonnie Gray and he was ordered to have no contact with Anna Marie Hughes as a condition of his bond. He was arrested in August 2010 after Anna Marie Hughes called police to report that he had attacked and strangled her. On August 12 a domestic abuse TRO was filed against him and dismissed two weeks later when the petitioner did not appear for the hearing.



## County

## In the death of...

### Milwaukee

#### ***Grace Krejci, 23, West Allis – November 16***

Shot by her estranged husband, Matthew Krejci, 27, who then committed suicide. The shootings occurred in the home of Grace Krejci's sister, where she had been living since separating from her husband. Their three-year-old daughter was in the home at the time. The deaths were discovered by Grace Krejci's father, who had come to the home because the couple's five-year-old son had not been picked up from school. Grace Krejci had filed for divorce in July, and the final hearing was scheduled for December 2. At the time of the homicide, Matthew Krejci was subject to a harassment restraining order issued in September 2009 that prohibited contact with Grace Krejci. He was also under a no-contact order with a firearm prohibition as a condition of probation after being convicted of violating the harassment order. He had repeatedly called and sent text messages to her in violation of the order. Matthew Krejci had made a prior suicide attempt while caring for his daughter, and he was charged with child neglect. A jury trial was pending in that case at the time of the homicide.

#### ***Shannon Dorsey, 44, Milwaukee – November 26***

Strangled with a belt by her boyfriend, Garron Lewis, 46. Her body was discovered after a family friend grew worried about her and her step-daughter and son called the police and asked that they check on her. The police went to the home and found her dead on a basement bed. Garron Lewis pled guilty to amended charges of second-degree reckless homicide and second-degree recklessly endangering safety. He was sentenced to fifteen years prison and ten years extended supervision on the homicide charge and a concurrent sentence of five years prison and five years of supervision on the other count.

### Monroe

#### ***Vance Evans, 53, Tomah – April 27***

Shot by Tammy S. Cole, 46, who had been in a relationship with Vance Evans when he lived in Illinois. Prior to the homicide, Tammy called Vance's current girlfriend and told her, "I'm going to kill you. I'm going to shoot you dead." That woman went to Vance's home and discovered his body near the front door and noticed the smell of leaking gas. He had been killed by a single gunshot to the back of his head. Investigators found a damaged copper tube at the rear of the gas stove and lighted candle in the house. A jury found Tammy Cole guilty of first-degree intentional homicide and attempted arson. She was sentenced to life in prison with eligibility for parole and extended supervision after thirty years and a consecutive sentence of seven years on the arson charge.

## County

## In the death of...

### Oneida

#### ***Lori J. Schmidt, 44, Minocqua – June 17***

William R. Schmidt, 40, has been charged with first-degree intentional homicide in the death of his wife. Her decomposing body was discovered after her parents called police out of concern for their daughter's safety. They usually had contact with Lori Schmidt at least once a day but had not heard from her since June 12. They became further concerned when they were told she had not shown up for work or called in. They visited the couple's home and discovered Lori Schmidt's cell phone left on the counter and her cats neglected. Officers made a welfare check to the home and found Lori Schmidt's body, wrapped in a blanket in the closet. On June 24, William turned himself in from his parents' home in Sheboygan County.

### Outagamie

#### ***Armando Aponte, 35, Appleton – November 8***

Shot by Appleton Police Department officers responding to a domestic violence call from his wife. She called 911 and whispered that her husband was drunk and violent. When officers arrived at the house they heard Armando Aponte shooting inside. They were able to get his wife and four of his children out of the front door and attempted to find another way to enter the house to evacuate a one-year-old child. Officers encountered him in the living room; he was carrying a large sword in each hand. They attempted to calm him and ordered him to drop the weapons. He charged within fifteen feet of the officers and they responded by firing nine shots. Armando Aponte died instantly. He had a history of domestic violence, including one conviction involving a dangerous weapon. Police had responded to prior domestic abuse-related calls involving Armando in Appleton and in another city where he had lived.

### Racine

#### ***Starkeesha Wilkins, 25, Racine – March 25***

Shot to death by her boyfriend, Fredrick Bolden, 34, who then killed himself. Neighbors heard a series of gunshots and discovered the bodies. The couple's three children were at school at the time of the murder-suicide.

### Sauk

#### ***Angelo Crisafulli, 55, Delton – January 19***

Angelo Crisafulli's thirteen-year-old son, M.C., has been charged in adult court with first-degree intentional homicide in the shooting death of his father. Case proceedings were suspended on March 11, 2010, when the defendant was ruled incompetent to stand trial. Proceedings may resume at a future time depending upon treatment and reevaluation of his competency. There have been custody actions regarding M.C. in the seven years since his parents divorced. At the time of the divorce in 2002, his mother obtained a domestic abuse restraining order against his father which was extended in 2003. Her later petition for harassment injunction in 2007 was denied. Angelo Crisafulli filed child abuse restraining orders against the maternal grandparents in 2004, which were denied. In 2006, both parents made allegations of child abuse against the other in family court proceedings.

# A CLOSER LOOK: The Wide, Deep, Lifelong Reach of Domestic Violence in 2010

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2010 marks the start of the second decade of the domestic violence homicide report.<sup>10</sup> As we began to analyze the data, we started asking our usual questions about which deaths to include in the report. While domestic violence is often considered synonymous with intimate partner violence, it is also broader in range, including violence of adult children toward parents or violence between siblings, as reflected in the language of Wisconsin law.<sup>11</sup> Deaths on both end of the life span got us thinking and talking about the range and focus of the report as we head into the next decade. Each edition of the report has included many discussions back and forth about whether to include child deaths and 2010 was no exception. Similar discussions were sparked by the number of incidents involving an adult son killing one or both parents. Most domestic violence is intimate partner related, but what do we miss in our understanding of the reach of violence in our lives and communities if we keep our gaze there without considering violence within other kinds of family relationships?

## CHILDREN

Since it was first published in 2000, this report has included children who were killed as a direct result of a domestic violence incident, such as children killed along with their mother. Because of the pervasive use and abuse of children as a tactic of battering, we have also included children killed when there are indications that one parent has abused the other. The odds are high, however, that even when there is no apparent indication of ongoing adult abuse, it is likely to be part of the context of a child's death. Research estimates in the overlap between adult domestic violence and child maltreatment at 30% to 60%.<sup>12</sup> Our current methods of tracking homicides do not allow us to consistently identify children killed by perpetrators of adult domestic violence. The interconnection, however, may warrant another look in future years at including all child homicides by a family member or parent's intimate partner as part of the wide, deep, lifelong reach of violence within relationships and families.

The 2010 child deaths included in the report occurred in the context of a relationship to intimate partner violence. Nearly 18% of the homicides were children under the age of eighteen (9 of 51) and all but one of the victims were under seven years of age.

- Two girls were shot to death by their uncle at the same time he killed his wife, children, and mother.
- Two boys were bound with duct tape and suffocated in an attack that also killed their mother, who as a six-year-old had witnessed her mother's boyfriend kill her mother and grandmother.
- One father committed suicide after shooting his children, their mother, and the family's dogs.
- Another father who has been charged with killing his infant daughter by shaking her and throwing her against a wall was under a no-contact order at the time of the homicide because of violence against his daughter's mother.

Living with domestic violence has a profound effect on children, particularly when it leads to homicide. Some children see a parent murdered or commit suicide. Some children are themselves attacked. Some try to protect a parent during the assault. Surviving children not only face the aftermath of losing a parent, but the added trauma of having seen or heard the killing—often a killing at the hands of their other parent or a stepparent. Homicides that occur in a public setting may be witnessed by children who live next door, pass on the street, or play in the park.

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<sup>10</sup> See the 2009 report, available at [www.wcadv.org](http://www.wcadv.org), for a comprehensive review of data compiled between 2000 and 2009, including discussions of the impact of domestic violence homicide on diverse communities and the impact on domestic abuse programs, along with attention to post-separation danger, stalking, contrasts between male and female perpetrators, abuse in later life, and gun violence.

<sup>11</sup> For example, domestic abuse includes defined acts engaged in by an "adult family member or adult household member against another adult family member or adult household member, by an adult against his or her adult former spouse or by an adult against an adult with whom the person has a child in common" (§813.12).

<sup>12</sup> *Domestic Violence and the Child Welfare System*, Child Welfare Information Gateway, October 2009. Available at [http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/domestic\\_violence/domesticviolence.pdf](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/domestic_violence/domesticviolence.pdf).

Along with the children who were killed, at least 26 minor children, ranging in age from one to seventeen, were at the scene of homicides in 2010.

- Children who did not see the attack itself heard the gunshots.
- One twelve-year-old escaped a home with her uncle shooting at her. Her thirteen-year-old cousin was shot in the face and critically wounded.
- A seventeen-year-old girl returned home to find her mother's body and her distraught younger sisters emerging from the closet where they had been hiding in the room when their mother was stabbed to death.
- Five children were at the scene of one of the homicides by legal intervention. Police were able to get four of the children and their mother out safely. They were attempting to locate the fifth child when the shooting occurred.

Domestic violence homicide also means that many children lose one or both parents through homicide and often a related suicide. While the tally cannot be precise and is most certainly an undercount, in 2010 at least five minor children were orphaned and seven left without a mother.

There is a growing understanding of the ways in which batterers use children to coerce and control their mothers, including threatening to abduct or kill the children, particularly if a woman tries to leave the relationship.<sup>13</sup> News media reporting often refers to a “custody battle,” without any closer examination of how killing a child is perhaps the most powerful form of coercion and control. When one parent has been abusive toward the other, decisions related to custody and visitation occur at a volatile and dangerous time. Custody issues remain largely unexamined and unreported in coverage of domestic violence homicide. In the 2010 homicides, there was little attention or reference to child custody in the published accounts, although half of the homicides that were intimate-partner-related involved a relationship that had ended or was ending and several of those involved minor children. Nationally, based on estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey, among households with a female intimate partner victim, 38% had children under age 12 living in the home.<sup>14</sup>

In 2010, a thirteen-year-old boy was charged in adult court with first-degree intentional homicide in the shooting death of his father. There have been custody actions regarding him in the seven years since his parents divorced and both parents have made allegations of child abuse against the other in family court proceedings. At the time of his parents' divorce, his mother had obtained a domestic abuse restraining order.

## LATER LIFE

Since this report was first published in 2000, it has also paid specific attention to homicides of persons age fifty and older, which have comprised 17% of homicides in the past decade.<sup>15</sup> In the past three years, that percentage has grown significantly, however. Between 2008 and 2010, 29% of domestic violence homicide victims were age fifty and older. This is likely to continue as the population ages.

In past years, this report has rarely included homicides committed by an adult child or grandchild. It has paid primary attention to later-life homicides that were somehow connected to an intimate partner relationship. Homicides involving other adult family members appeared only “if dynamics of power and control were demonstrated,” as noted in the methodology. In 2010, eight homicide deaths of parents at the hand of a son (adult sons, with the exception of one youth) raised the challenge of understanding the reach of domestic violence in our lives and communities. They raised the challenge of recognizing that the kinds of coercion, intimidation, and abuse used by an adult child against a parent may differ from those used in intimate partner relationships. If each case required a definitive demonstration of “power and control”—beyond the ultimate exercise of

<sup>13</sup> See David Adams, *Why Do They Kill? Men Who Murder Their Intimate Partners*, Vanderbilt University Press, 2007. Also, Lundy Bancroft and Jay G. Silverman, *The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence on Family Dynamics*, Sage Publications, 2002.

<sup>14</sup> *Female Victims of Violence*, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> The 2009 report includes an analysis of data between 2005 and 2009, the years for which it is most readily retrieved. All of the homicide reports are available via WCADV: [www.wcadv.org](http://www.wcadv.org).

power and control in taking someone's life—this report would be unlikely to include many domestic violence homicides under any intimate partner or family relationship. As one advocate put it, “we’re not ever going to have access to what’s really been going on.” And often the only person who could truly tell us what has been going on no longer has a voice.

Beginning with this report, later-life homicides committed by other family members will be included, with a closer look at how factors of financial dependency, chronic alcohol or drug dependency, or mental illness—or combination thereof, within the limitations of what news media sources report—can in effect function as a form of control of a parent or grandparent. While intimate partner relationships are likely to remain the primary type related to domestic violence homicides, paying attention to the killing of parents or grandparents will expand our understanding of the lifelong reach of violence in our lives.

In 2010, fifteen incidents resulted in the homicides of seventeen victims age fifty or older. Just over half were killed in an intimate partner related homicide (9 of 17). The other deaths (8 of 17) involved a son killing one or both parents. Other characteristics of later-life homicides in 2010 include:

- None of the homicide victims age fifty or older were killed by legal intervention.
- When the victim was age fifty or older, the perpetrator was male in 80% of the incidents (12 of 15)
- Of the five female perpetrators in 2010, three committed homicides against an intimate partner who was age fifty or older. Two victims were stabbed to death and one was shot. One victim, age sixty-nine, was twenty years older than the perpetrator and had obtained a domestic abuse injunction against her in 2008 that was in force at the time of the homicide. The perpetrator reported that she grabbed a knife that was in the kitchen after the victim tried to choke her. In the other incident, domestic abuse battery charges were pending against the victim, and he was under a no-contact order at the time of the homicide. The third involved a woman whose relationship had ended with the victim and who also threatened the victim's new girlfriend.
- Three of the intimate partner related homicides involved couples in long-term relationships. All included signs of steps taken to end or otherwise change the relationship in the months prior to the homicide. These included obtaining or attempting to obtain restraining orders or temporarily moving out.
- Of the victims killed by a son, four of eight were killed by an adult son in two multiple homicide incidents where both parents were killed. Of the remaining four, the perpetrator was an adult son in three deaths and a thirteen-year-old in the fourth. In homicides committed by a son against one or more parents, four mothers and four fathers were killed.
- In five of the incidents involving the homicide of someone age fifty or older, the perpetrator was also age fifty or older. Four were intimate partner related and one involved a son (age 59) and mother (age 79).
- Two of the perpetrators committed suicide (two of seven suicides, other than by legal intervention). Both occurred in intimate partner related cases where the victim and perpetrator were over age fifty. In past years, this homicide-suicide link has been pronounced. Between 2005 and 2010, perpetrators committed suicide in 14 of the 24 homicides (58%) in which the victim and perpetrator were age fifty or older.
- Two homicides involved a perpetrator who was age fifty or older and a younger victim. Both were intimate partner related and involved an age difference of ten years or more (ages 63 and 43 in one case; 52 and 39 in the other).

Unlike previous years, and 2009 in particular, none of the 2010 homicides that came to our attention involved “mercy killings” or “acts of love”—as characterized by the perpetrator or surviving family members or news media—when the victim is physically or mentally ill or living with some kind of dementia. In past years this has characterized several intimate partner homicides where the victim was age 70 or older. (See the 2009 report for a more detailed discussion of this and other issues related to later-life homicides.)

## CONVERSATIONS WITH ADVOCATES

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The questions presented by the homicides of parents by adult sons led us to a conversation with domestic violence advocates about who is coming through their programs' doors and what they are seeing in their communities. Advocates were invited to participate in one of two conference calls with WCADV staff and sixteen advocates from around the state joined in. The discussions were wide-ranging and led us to think about domestic violence more broadly as the homicide report moves into its second decade. The advocates also suggested other areas of consideration in attention to the deep, wide, lifelong reach of domestic violence.

- For those in Wisconsin's LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) communities who experience violence by an intimate partner, finding an open door and building safety can be very difficult.

Between 2005 and 2010 (the years for which data can be most easily retrieved), the homicide report has included two deaths related to LGBT intimate partner violence. This is most likely an undercount. LGBT relationships can be hidden and inaccurately identified in the public record as "roommate" or "friend" or "acquaintance." In such cases, we make contacts in the community and with investigators in an effort to learn the nature of the relationship, but even those assessments can be inaccurate, particularly if the victim and perpetrator were isolated or closeted. In addition, murders where the victim was reported as single and there was no apparent forced entry to the home or scene might involve LGBT intimate partner violence in some cases, but go entirely unrecognized as such.

Perpetrators often use highly specific forms of abuse based on LGBT identity and community dynamics. This includes such actions and threats as: "outing" a partner's sexual orientation or gender identity; reinforcing fears that no one will help the victim because of her/his sexual orientation; justifying the abuse and isolating the victim by assertions that she/he is not "really" LGBT; asserting that abusive behavior is a normal part of LGBT relationships; monopolizing support resources by manipulating friends and family supports in order to cut off these resources to the survivor; or portraying the violence as mutual, consensual, or as an expression of desirable masculinity or other traits.<sup>16</sup>

Reports published by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs address police misconduct and treatment of LGBT survivors as another obstacle in access to safety. Police abuse and misconduct toward LGBT people generally has included verbal, sexual, and physical abuse and cruel and degrading treatment during arrest, searches, and detention. Transgender people, and in particular low-income transgender people of color, have experienced some of the most horrific abuse.<sup>17</sup> In its 2009 report, NCAVP noted an increase in survivors accessing police assistance, but also an increase in misarrest (i.e., arresting the victim or dual arrest) and police misconduct.<sup>18</sup> In 2008, the Anti-Violence Project at the Milwaukee LGBT Center, a CAVP partner, reported that "it was rare that any [individual seeking advocacy] sought any assistance from the police." The reasons cited included survivors' fear of arrest or dual arrest, fear of harassment and assault, a feeling they could handle the situation on their own, and wanting to retain their privacy.<sup>19</sup>

Survivors may also find that the advocacy and community-based intervention that is available does not recognize the complexity of their needs and the barriers they face—at best—or disregards them or responds with homophobic or transphobic responses about LGBT people and their relationships.

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16 "Special Issues in LGBT Domestic Violence," National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP), available at <http://www.ncavp.org/issues/DomesticViolence.aspx>. See also, "Barriers in Addressing LGBT Domestic Violence."

17 See *Stonewalled: Police Abuse and Misconduct Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People in the U.S.*, Amnesty International, September 2005.

18 *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence in the United States in 2009*, 2010 Release Edition, NCAVP; [www.ncavp.org](http://www.ncavp.org). The 2010 report is due to be released in October 2011. Fifteen NCAVP member organizations contributed to the report, including the Anti-Violence Project at the Milwaukee LGBT Center. NCAVP reports on hate-motivated violence and rape and sexual assault are also available via the Web site.

19 NCAVP 2008 Report, p. 58.



- Many advocacy organizations—particularly in smaller communities, but not exclusively—are increasingly seen by community members as the place to go if they have a problem with any kind of personal violence, whether it involves an intimate partner, another family member, or a roommate.

Wisconsin domestic abuse programs still work primarily with younger heterosexual women who are experiencing intimate partner violence. At the same time, according to our conversations with advocates, many also find themselves responding to walk-ins, helpline calls, or other requests from older battered women, elder parents concerned about how an adult child is treating them, mothers who are afraid of their teenage sons, someone who is afraid of a roommate (which may be “just roommates” or in reality be a LGBT relationship), and men (usually heterosexual). Domestic abuse programs are also increasingly where community members go or get sent as the source of information on harassment restraining orders.

Such requests acknowledge the expertise that domestic abuse programs have built in responding to violence and suggest that community members may not be able to or interested in drawing a bright line between intimate partner violence and what they are experiencing at the hands of a family or household member. Such requests require a new attention and perhaps new knowledge about how to best respond in ways that are helpful and that ultimately promote the broadest community safety. It may be that it is not the role of a particular advocacy program to work directly with the person seeking help—given its mission, philosophy, and resources—but knowing how and where to make a meaningful connection with who can is essential.

## KEY THEMES

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Since 2000, the homicide report has examined themes that in any given year may be more or less pronounced than in other years, but that have reoccurred frequently over the decade.

### MULTIPLE HOMICIDES

Multiple homicides, where a single perpetrator kills more than one person, immediately illustrate the wide-reaching harm caused by domestic violence. The circle of people directly touched by the attack and resulting deaths expands greatly and there is often much media attention to the event.<sup>20</sup> Sometimes family members and friends who have tried to help and support a victim are also the targets. Often the attack includes or is directed at the perpetrator's children. Almost always the homicides include or are directed at a current or former intimate partner, such as killing the children, but leaving their mother alive. The overwhelming majority of multiple killings in domestic violence homicides are perpetrated by men, as are most homicide-suicides.<sup>21</sup> Between 2005 and 2009 in Wisconsin, the years for which data is most readily retrieved, 25 incidents of multiple homicide resulted in the deaths of 67 people. All but two of the perpetrators were men.

In 2010 there were six incidents involving multiple homicides, with a total of 18 victims. Two men killed their pregnant wives and children and, in one case, other family members, accounting for nine of the homicides; one perpetrator committed suicide. Two of the incidents involved an adult son who killed both parents. Another included a mother and two children who were killed by multiple perpetrators, including the woman whose jealousy of the victim precipitated the attack. In the sixth multiple homicide, a woman and her boyfriend were killed by her former partner.

### POST-SEPARATION DANGER

Every year thousands of battered women make decisions to leave their abusive partners and make new and better lives for themselves and their children. Leaving an abusive relationship is often a very difficult, complex, and dangerous process, complicated by aspects of life circumstances and the intersection of oppression.

Research has found that a woman's attempt to leave was the precipitating factor in 45% of intimate partner homicides of women.<sup>22</sup> Leaving means weighing and reweighing threats to themselves and their loved ones. The frequency of such threats is related to an increased risk of violence for victims who had left their relationship.<sup>23</sup> The work of Jacquelyn Campbell and others shows that women whose partners threatened them with murder were 15 times more likely than other women to be killed.<sup>24</sup> Nearly half of domestic violence homicides occur a month or more after a couple has separated.<sup>25</sup>

Many of the homicides described earlier in this report illustrate the frequent connection between leaving a relationship and homicide. Of the 39 incidents in 2010, 41% (16/39) involved a marriage or other intimate partner relationship where a woman had ended or was taking action to leave the relationship. In the remainder of the intimate partner related cases it was unknown whether a victim was taking any steps to leave.

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<sup>20</sup> This media attention is often highly sensational and lacking in its understanding of domestic violence. Past editions of the *Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report* have paid specific attention to media accounts of domestic violence homicides (e.g., see the 2004 and 2003 reports). They identified the following issues in media coverage of domestic violence homicides: (1) the homicides are rarely labeled as or placed in the broader context of domestic violence; (2) coverage provides an inaccurate view of domestic violence and reinforces myths; and, (3) sources that shape the stories are often limited or poorly chosen.

<sup>21</sup> Bernie Auchter, "Men Who Murder Their Families: What the Research Tells Us," *NIJ Journal*, Issue 266, June 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Carolyn Rebecca Block, "How Can Practitioners Help an Abused Woman Lower Her Risk of Death?" *NIJ Journal*, Issue 250, November 2003. See also, Neil Websdale, *Understanding Domestic Violence Homicide*, Northeastern University Press, 1999.

<sup>23</sup> Ruth E. Fluery et al., "When Ending the Relationship Does Not End the Violence: Women's Experiences of Violence by Former Partners," *Violence Against Women*, December 2000.

<sup>24</sup> Campbell et al., "Assessing Risk Factors."

<sup>25</sup> Jacquelyn Campbell et al., "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multi-site Case Control Study," *American Journal of Public Health*, 2003.



## STALKING

Stalking has a lengthy legal definition under Wisconsin law.<sup>26</sup> To paraphrase, it is a pattern of unwanted conduct that carries an implied or explicit threat that causes fear in the person who is the target of the behavior. It can include “following me” and “checking up on me,” behaviors that victims often describe. It can include repeated hang-up calls, e-mail, or appearing at someone’s place of work. It can include leaving a bouquet of flowers on a doorstep. Changes in technology—such as global positioning tracking devices, text messaging, and the proliferations of databases with personal identifying information—have expanded the ways in which stalking can occur. In one study of victims of battering who survived a homicide attempt, every woman reported some kind of stalking behavior by the abusive partner with a significant escalation prior to the final assault. Other research has found that perpetrators of domestic violence homicide are twice as likely to have used stalking behaviors.<sup>27</sup> Stalking often escalates as someone is trying to leave an abusive relationship.

The 2010 homicides included several examples of stalking behavior, including: perpetrators who appeared at the victim’s home in spite of being under a restraining order or no-contact order; following a former boyfriend who had moved to Wisconsin from another state; returning to Wisconsin from another state to appear at a former girlfriend’s home; following victims; and repeated phone calls and text messages.

## CONTRASTS BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE PERPETRATORS

As in past years, in 2010 there was a contrast between men and women as perpetrators in the level of brutality involved in the homicide and the method of homicide. Most homicide victims were shot to death. Where the method of homicide was beating or strangulation, all of the perpetrators were men. The attacks often involved multiple injuries and severe trauma.<sup>28</sup> The victims of homicides perpetrated by men were women, children, men killed because of their relationship with or proximity to a woman who was the focus of the attack or the perpetrator’s prior violence and threats, and one or more of the perpetrator’s parents. To the extent that information was available about the past history of domestic violence in the relationship and risk factors for intimate partner homicide, homicides committed by men were often preceded by stalking, more frequent violence, or pending charges or restraining orders in effect prior to the homicide.

Over the past ten years of this report, the domestic violence homicides committed by women have typically involved a single stab wound or gun shot. Female perpetrators have rarely engaged in the patterns of prior stalking, strangulation, increased and more severe violence, forced sex, threats to kill, and other coercive behavior that have characterized the homicides committed by men. Homicides committed by women were often preceded by some kind of immediate or anticipated attack on the woman or a long history of abuse by the homicide victim.

Of the five homicides committed by women in 2010, three followed the pattern of a single gunshot or stab wound. One involved stalking of the perpetrator’s former boyfriend prior to the homicide. One woman killed her female partner; three women killed their male partners. The fifth homicide involved a brutal assault that has been uncharacteristic of homicides committed by women. The perpetrator repeatedly stabbed a woman after binding her arms and legs with duct tape and taping her eyes shut and participated in smothering the victim’s young children with duct tape and plastic bags. The perpetrator was jealous of the victim’s relationship with a man they had each had a child with.

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<sup>26</sup>§940.32, Wisconsin Statutes

<sup>27</sup> Adams, *Why Do they Kill?* and Campbell et al., cited in Adams.

<sup>28</sup> Adams makes this observation: “Our research suggests that killers denigrate and blame their partners even more than abusers who don’t kill. Perhaps the most surprising single finding about these men was how much rage they still held toward the women they had killed.” *Why Do They Kill?* p.30.

## STRANGULATION

Strangulation is a tactic that can signal severe or fatal violence. Block and Campbell have found that past attempts to strangle (or, as victims often refer to this kind of attack, “choke”) are key indicators of risk.<sup>29</sup> When strangulation is the cause of a domestic violence homicide, it is unlikely to be the first occurrence.

In 2010 there were four homicides by strangulation or asphyxiation, two of which involved young children who were smothered by duct tape and plastic bags placed over the heads. In both of the adult deaths there were known acts of strangulation type behavior by the perpetrator against the victim prior to the homicide. Several of the near-homicides discussed later in the report included a pattern of combined assault: beating a victim’s head against a wall or door, dragging her by the hair, and strangulation.

## GUN VIOLENCE

A gun is the most commonly used weapon in domestic violence homicide in the United States.<sup>30</sup> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported 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 twenty-three times more likely to result in death than assaults involving other weapons or bodily force.<sup>31</sup>

In 2010 in Wisconsin, 29 of 51 (59%) domestic violence homicide victims were killed by guns (excluding individuals killed by law enforcement intervention). The guns used ranged from a variety of small to large caliber handguns to a shotgun. Guns were used in one of the two multiple homicide incidents. The seven perpetrators who committed suicide died from gunshot wounds. Excluding legal intervention, 20 of 33 incidents (61%) involved a firearm as a primary method of killing or a related weapon. In three of the six homicides by legal intervention, the suspect fired a gun at responding officers.

Guns continue to be the most likely weapon used in a domestic violence homicide in Wisconsin. Between 2000 and 2010, 213 people were murdered with a gun in domestic violence related homicides. This is more than those killed by knives, other weapons, beating, strangulation, and other methods of killing combined (194).

In response to 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 2010, at least six perpetrators who used a gun as the method of homicide should not have had access to firearms under either felony or domestic abuse–related convictions or an active domestic abuse restraining order.

According to various research studies, when firearms are in homes, an abused woman was six times more likely than other abused women to be killed.<sup>32</sup> Guns are kept in homes where there is domestic violence more often than in homes that are not violent. In addition, if a gun is present, its use in domestic violence situations is relatively common.<sup>33</sup> In 2008, 21 of the 29 firearm-involved incidents occurred in the victim or perpetrator’s home, a home in common, or the home where a victim was staying temporarily.

Between 2005 and 2009 in Wisconsin, 80% of multiple domestic violence homicide incidents (20 of 25), resulting in 58 deaths, involved a firearm. Guns and murder-suicide are closely linked. A study by the Violence Policy Center found that 73.7% of murder-suicide incidents involved intimate partners and nearly all

29 Block, *How Can Practitioners Help?* and Campbell, *Assessing Risk Factors*. Investigators make a distinction between “strangulation,” as external force applied to someone’s throat, and “choking” as an obstruction in the airway. Common usage does not distinguish, however, and the words are often used synonymously.

30 Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Homicide Trends in the United States: Trends in Intimate Homicide*.

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

32 Jacquelyn C. Campbell et al., “Assessing Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Homicide,” *NIJ Journal*, National Institute of Justice, Issue 250, November 2003.

33 S.B. Sorenson and D.J. Wiebe, “Weapons in the Lives of Battered Women,” *American Journal of Public Health*, August 2005, 94:1412- 1417.

(94.5%) of the murder-suicides involved firearms.<sup>34</sup> In 2010, all of the seven perpetrators who committed suicide used a gun. Two of the legal intervention homicides included actions by the suspect suggesting that he might have intended for police to take his life in what is often referred to as a “suicide by cop.” In one incident, officers were responding to a report that the suspect was threatening to kill himself and his dog. In the other, the suspect sent text communications threatening suicide while barricaded in his home.

## HOMICIDES BY LEGAL INTERVENTION

In 2010, six of the domestic violence-related homicides were due to legal intervention by officers responding to a 911 call.<sup>35</sup> This exceeds the total of five such deaths for the years 2000 through 2009. The homicides occurred in four counties: Columbia, Dane, Milwaukee, and Outagamie. All of the suspects were men who had a reported history of past domestic violence. Three were under an active restraining order or criminal no-contact order in connection with a pending case and events leading to the officers’ arrival involved a partner who was ending or had recently ended the relationship. Two of the suspects threatened suicide immediately before or during the police response and had barricaded themselves in the home.

In two of the homicides, the suspect shot at the officers—in one case, two officers were grazed by a bullet and in the other the shot hit a shield held by an officer positioned outside a window. In a third incident, the suspect head-butted an officer, knocked him to the ground, and struck him in the face. Weapons in the other incidents included a knife and two large swords. None of the homicides were ambush attacks: i.e., officers knew they were responding to a domestic violence-related call and the suspect was known to them via prior police contacts and criminal history records. According to Neil Websdale, a researcher on domestic violence and co-founder of the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative, there has been no systematic analysis of data on homicides by police in domestic violence calls.

The impact of homicide by legal intervention in a domestic violence call is wide-reaching. The suspect’s surviving family members and friends face grief at the person’s death and often anger at intervening officers, the suspect, his current or former partner, or all three. Family members may be present in the home and may witness the incident if they cannot be safely evacuated. The suspect may have barricaded himself in the home—as happened in two of the 2010 homicides—requiring a response by many officers and a tactical response unit. Neighbors may find their street filled with emergency vehicles and armed officers and be ordered to stay inside. They might hear or see the gunfire. Responding officers are drawn into an act that remains a rare event in their profession—firing a weapon in the line of duty and, rarer still, a fatal shooting—and the personal aftermath of taking another person’s life, however legally justified. As an officer who was involved in one of the 2010 legal intervention homicides put it, “It’s the worst thing in the world, trust me. It’s something any of us never want to go through.”<sup>36</sup>

## RETURNING VETERANS

Two of the 2010 homicides and one of the near-homicides involved veterans who had served in Iraq and Afghanistan. One man shot and killed his pregnant wife and the child she was soon due to deliver, their thirteen-month-old daughter, and the family’s three dogs before killing himself. He had been treated for post-traumatic stress disorder and been flagged as a suicide risk by the Veteran’s Administration. He returned from Iraq in 2007 after being deployed for twelve months. He was twenty-three years old. In the second homicide, a twenty-four-year-old man has been charged with homicide in the death of his mother. In the near-homicide, a thirty- six-year-old man was charged with attempting to poison his four young children; he also planned to kill himself. After giving his children sleeping pills he called his estranged wife, who then contacted police for help. Published reports note that he is a seventeen-year Army veteran who served in Iraq and suffers from post-traumatic stress syndrome and a traumatic brain injury.

<sup>34</sup> Violence Policy Center, American Roulette: *The Untold Story of Murder-Suicide in the United States*, 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Legal intervention is when the decedent was killed by a law enforcement officer with specified legal authority to use deadly force when acting in the line of duty.

<sup>36</sup> *Wisconsin State Journal*, reporting by Sandy Cullen, August 5, 2010. Posted online under Crime and Courts at <http://host.madison.com/wsj/>.

More than two million members of the U.S. Armed Forces have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan in the last decade. According to the Military Advocacy Program of the Battered Women's Justice Project, "there is no answer" to the question, "does having been in combat cause [intimate partner violence]?"<sup>37</sup> For returning veterans, there are reports of increased violence in some relationships with a history of controlling behavior and/or physical violence prior to deployment. There are also reports of psychological and/or physical violence in relationships where there was no history of violence prior to deployment. It is important for advocates and other interveners to inquire about the history of control and violence both before and after military service or exposure to combat and gauge whether it has increased in severity or frequency. What is known is that "veterans with PTSD have consistently been found to have a higher incidence of IPV perpetration and also report significantly higher rates of generally violent behaviors and aggression than veterans without PTSD."<sup>38</sup>

## 'NEAR HOMICIDES'

While we do not track non-fatal attacks systematically, such cases quickly come up in the search for homicide cases. These 'near homicides' are distinguished by the severity of the attack or an apparent intention to kill the victim that is thwarted by the victim's actions, intervention by others, a shot or blow that did not do as much damage as it could have, or prompt medical attention. If we could identify all near homicides that occur in Wisconsin, the range and impact of domestic violence would be even wider and more visible than it already is. For every assault that ends in death there are countless others that leave victims terrorized, severely hurt, and traumatized and often draw in family members, neighbors, and responding officers as well.

The 2010 examples include:

- Life-threatening injuries to a woman who was hit by a car after she tried to stop a man from beating up his girlfriend
- A 17-year-old who suffered a concussion, bleeding on the brain, and a fractured jaw after being kicked repeatedly in the head by an 18-year-old woman who was jealous of the victim's relationship with the perpetrator's ex-boyfriend
- A man who placed an ad on Craigslist for a bomb, which he thought had been mailed to a man his estranged wife was seeing (it was intercepted by an undercover federal agent)
- A man who slammed his girlfriend's head against a door until she lost consciousness and then strangled her
- A man who grabbed his girlfriend by the hair, slammed her head into the wall, and choked her until she lost consciousness
- A man who appeared at his estranged wife's home and then stabbed her, strangled her, and set the garage on fire; he charged at responding officers and was shot in the upper abdomen
- Four children under the age of eleven who were drugged by their father, who planned on killing his children and himself after his wife moved to end their relationship
- A lengthy attack that included slamming a woman's head into an aquarium until it broke and dragging her repeatedly by the hair, including down a flight of stairs; she was hospitalized with a concussion

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<sup>37</sup> *Victim Advocate Guide: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Combat Experience*, available at [www.bwjp.org](http://www.bwjp.org), Military Advocacy Program.

<sup>38</sup> *Safety on the Homefront: Adequately Addressing Violence in Families Impacted by Military Service*, Glenna Tinney and Kathleen M. West, USC Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans & Military Families, Policy Brief, May 2011.

## SEEKING HELP

Most victims of domestic violence seek help from a variety of sources, both informal (e.g., talking with family and friends, finding information online or through a library) to formal (e.g., local domestic abuse services, police, courts, counseling). Aspects of identity and life circumstances have a great deal to do with where and how someone looks for and finds meaningful help and support. While the homicide report does not specifically examine help-seeking strategies used by victims prior to their deaths, it provides numerous examples of their efforts. Help-seeking efforts reflected the approaches reported in research studies, as well as findings that abused women who were killed were more likely to have sought help and that “by seeking help, an abused woman indicates that her situation could be serious.”<sup>39</sup> This picture of help-seeking raises questions about what kinds of new strategies might support those efforts to be safer and more protective. It also reinforces the challenge of recognizing opportunities for intervention.

In 2010, women who were killed by an intimate partner used informal approaches such as going to live with family members, confiding in family members who then kept in regular touch, and going to counseling at their church.

Few victims apparently sought restraining orders. We identified five cases where an active temporary restraining order or restraining order was in effect at the time of the homicide. CCAP records identified the homicide victim as the petitioner in two of them and the petitioner is unidentified in the other three.<sup>40</sup> Several victims had sought help from police in the weeks before the homicide, as suggested by domestic abuse related charges and no-contact orders that were in effect. Such examples, in particular, reinforce Block’s finding that seeking help can be a signal of escalating and severe violence.<sup>41</sup>

## DIVERSE COMMUNITIES, IDENTITIES, AND REALITIES

The 2009 domestic violence homicide report (available at [www.wcadv.org](http://www.wcadv.org)) took a close look at the experiences of diverse communities in Wisconsin between 2005 and 2009, the years for which data could be most readily retrieved. Readers are encouraged to revisit that discussion, which included attention to historical experience and oppression, summary data for domestic violence homicides, and efforts that specific organizations are taking in response. The 2009 report focused on rural, Hmong and Lao, Latino, and African American communities because they are the culturally-distinct communities where domestic violence homicides have most frequently appeared in the public sources that the report is based on. As noted earlier, domestic violence homicides involving lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender residents are almost certainly under-identified. Similarly, homicides in Tribal communities have surfaced infrequently when compiling the report and are most likely unidentified and underreported. As one longtime Native American advocate noted, a woman’s body found by the side of the road may be too readily be labeled a suicide.

All of the culturally specific communities represented in the 2009 discussion also lost members to domestic violence homicide in 2010, with most involving a single death (see Key Findings – 2010). At 33%, the percentage of homicide incidents that occurred in rural areas was in proportion to the state population classified as rural.

For African American communities in Wisconsin, however, 2010 pushed an already disproportionate impact even higher: 39% of domestic violence homicide victims statewide were African American (20 of 51); 24% of all female victims were African American women and 16% of all male victims. The total number of homicides increased from 14 in 2009 to 20 in 2010, an increase of 43%. Most of the homicide victims lived in Milwaukee County (12), followed by Dane County (6).

<sup>39</sup> Block, *How Can Practitioners Help?* See also, Adams, *Why Do They Kill?* Adams reports a range of help-seeking by women who survived homicide attempts. The top five include: sought help from her family, obtained protective order, sought medical treatment for domestic violence injury, called police, and sought help from friends.

<sup>40</sup> Victims may not seek restraining orders for a variety of reasons: threats from the abuser, past experience with inadequate enforcement, messages that it will not make any difference, and limited information about the process. Restraining order petitioners in more recent cases are not identified. Federal law prohibits Internet access to petitioner name and address information in these cases. 18 USC sec. 2265(d)(3). Wisconsin Statute 813.12(5m) also prohibits the court from disclosing the petitioner’s address.

<sup>41</sup> Block, *How Can Practitioners Help?*



In July, the Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAHA) declared a “State of Emergency” for Milwaukee’s African American residents, citing the long history of segregation, poverty, unemployment, and high infant mortality in the community. The unemployment rate for African American men in Milwaukee is conservatively estimated at 34% and another study has placed it at 53%. Milwaukee has lost over 56,000 jobs since 2008. It is this reality that many African American victims of domestic violence in Milwaukee face.

While no one person is entirely immune from the possibility of abuse—particularly as it extends across the life span, for we all age—oppression, social standing and life circumstance have a great deal to do with the options for safety and the availability and impact of interventions. Identities are complex, multi-layered, and intersect in ways that can make people vulnerable to bias in different ways. Peoples’ unique cultures and identities can both strengthen and impede safety from abuse and violence—sometimes simultaneously—both on the level of individual experience and in the response of the institutions that they encounter. Forms of oppression related to identity—including gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, class—interrelate to create systemic social inequality that impacts the safety and well-being of individuals facing domestic violence, as well as entire groups of people and communities.

This attention to “intersectionality” offers a path to better understand the complexities of peoples’ lives, analyze social justice problems more completely, and shape more effective interventions. The term was “initially conceived as a way to present a simple reality that seemed to be hidden by conventional thinking about discrimination and exclusion. This simple reality is that disadvantage or exclusion can be based on the interaction of multiple factors rather than just one. Yet conventional approaches to social problems are often organized as though these risk factors are mutually exclusive and separable. As a consequence, many interventions and policies fail to capture the interactive effects of race, gender, sexuality, class, etc. and marginalize the needs of those who are multiply affected by them.”<sup>42</sup>

For example, returning to the earlier discussion of the experiences of LGBT people, a low-income transgender woman of color may face discriminatory enforcement of laws and a lack of access to services because of gender identity, race, and class.

The idea of intersectionality also helps us recognize the “double bind” that African American women face when confronting domestic violence—in meeting what they perceive as the greater good of the community before their own well-being—and the “triple jeopardy” of intersecting factors of poverty, substance abuse, and battering,<sup>43</sup> as well as the impact of historic and ongoing racism. African American women are acutely aware of the ways in which criminal justice and law enforcement systems—and the impact of the “war on drugs,” in particular—have helped to produce what Michele Alexander describes as the “new Jim Crow,” where often relatively minor offenses that occur with little notice on college campuses or in middle class suburban communities mean felony convictions for young African American men. A felony conviction ushers in a “parallel social universe” in which they can be denied the right to vote, automatically excluded from juries, and legally discriminated against in housing, employment, and education in ways that are reminiscent of the Jim Crow era.<sup>44</sup>

Bent-Goodley and Williams characterize the complexity of risk and safety related to domestic violence in this way: “many African Americans forego reporting abuse in an attempt to protect their intimate partner from abuse by police or loss of income through imprisonment or incarceration. The result is that the woman and her child(ren) are at an increased risk for violence and often do not report violence until the lethality of the abuse cannot be withstood.”<sup>45</sup> That lethality is beyond epidemic proportions in Wisconsin.

42 “Intersectionality” was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw, with the African American Policy Forum. Download a copy of the *Intersectionality Primer* at [http://aapf.org/tool\\_to\\_speak\\_out/intersectionality-primer/](http://aapf.org/tool_to_speak_out/intersectionality-primer/).

43 Tricia B. Bent-Goodley and Oliver J. Williams, *Community Insights on Domestic Violence among African Americans: Conversations About Domestic Violence and Other Issues Affecting Their Community*, Seattle, WA, 2004. The Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC) has convened discussion groups in nine U. S. cities to expand knowledge about community perceptions of and responses to domestic violence. This report and others are available at <http://www.dvinstitute.org/>. See also: Doris Williams Campbell, et al., “Intimate Partner Violence in African American Women,” *2002 Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, January 31, 2002.

44 Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, The New Press, 2010. See an interview with Michelle Alexander and Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, online: <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/04022010/profile.html>.

45 Bent-Goodley and Williams, *Community Insights*, p. 5.

## UPDATES TO PRIOR REPORTS

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The following cases have since been concluded or otherwise updated since the reports they appeared in were published.

### 2006

- Prairie du Chien, Crawford County (addition to the 2006 report)

Michael Burroughs, 26, has been charged with first-degree reckless homicide and hiding a corpse in connection with the 2006 homicide of his girlfriend, Shannon Fischer, who was 23 at the time of her death. On October 10, 2010, Michael Burroughs contacted police and told them that he had strangled Shannon Fischer and left her body in a garbage container after several days. In April 2011, Michael Burroughs was ruled competent to stand trial; no trial date has been set.

### 2008

- Oshkosh, Winnebago County (addition to the 2008 report)

In October 2008, a jury convicted Zachary Reid of first-degree intentional homicide in the strangulation death of his father, Brett Reid, 53. Zachary Reid was sentenced to life in prison. In December 2010, he appealed his conviction. Zachary Reid testified that his father had pulled a knife on him numerous times in the past and that he was defending himself during a struggle. Police found Brett Reid's body in the back of his own vehicle, parked in an elementary school parking lot. There was a plastic bag over his head and he had been wrapped in a blanket. Zachary Reid told two friends that he had killed his father and asked them to pick him up at the parking lot. Posts to an online petition, "Justice for Zachary Reid" include statements from individuals who state that Zachary had been verbally and physically abused by his father. The prosecution argued that it was the son who was abusive to his father and that he had planned the killing in advance.

- Kenosha, Kenosha County

Gary Sabol was charged with first-degree intentional homicide, first-degree sexual assault using a dangerous weapon, and mayhem in the stabbing and shooting death of his wife, Joann Reidenbach. Criminal proceedings were suspended in October 2010 after he was found incompetent to participate in his defense. He was committed for further evaluation and treatment.

- Baraboo, Sauk County

In October 2010, a jury convicted David R. Yates of two counts of first-degree intentional homicide in the deaths of his infant twins (a daughter and a son). The children died after receiving fractured skulls and multiple blunt force injuries. He was sentenced to two consecutive counts of life in prison.

### 2009

- Green Bay, Brown County

In February 2011, Nawanna L. Polk pled guilty to first-degree intentional homicide and two counts of bail jumping in the stabbing death of her boyfriend, Kenneth Erving. She was sentenced to nine years in prison and 20 years of extended supervision.

- Fitchburg, Dane County

In October 2010, a jury found Perry Lucas guilty of first-degree intentional homicide and first-degree recklessly endangering safety in the shooting death of Detarius Martin and the wounding of his brother. The homicide occurred during a confrontation involving the defendant, his girlfriend, and a woman who was on a date with the defendant. Perry Lucas was sentenced to 20 years in prison and ten years of extended supervision.

- Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac County

In October 2010, a jury convicted Brandon J. Mueller of first-degree intentional homicide and mutilating a corpse in the strangulation death of his girlfriend, Renee Redmer. He was sentenced to life in prison. Prior to his conviction, two other defendants in the case were convicted at jury trials of mutilating a corpse: Brandon Mueller's mother, Nancy J. Pinno, and a friend of hers, Donald R. Worth.

- Cooperstown, Manitowoc County

In May 2011, Ambrose Greaves pled no-contest and was found guilty of second-degree intentional homicide in the death of his estranged wife, Miki Greaves. He was sentenced to 35 years in prison and 20 years of extended supervision.

- Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

In September 2010, a jury convicted Raymond E. Woods of first-degree reckless homicide and possession of firearm by a felon in the shooting death of Johnnie W. Chapman. Raymond Woods was in a relationship with a woman who had previously been involved with Johnnie Chapman and with whom she shared children. He was sentenced to 27 years in prison and ten years of extended supervision.

- Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

In the stabbing death of her step-grandfather, Robert A. Moon, the thirteen-year-old defendant, L.B.T., was waived back to juvenile court and sentenced to Department of Corrections' supervision for one to ten years.

- Milwaukee, Milwaukee County

In April 2011, a jury convicted Lee Yang of first-degree intentional homicide in the shooting death of Shoua Lee. He was sentenced to life in prison with eligibility for extended supervision after serving forty years. Shoua Lee was in a relationship with Lee Yang's former wife.

- Warrens, Monroe County

In June 2010, Brent W. Wilkinson pled guilty to first-degree intentional homicide in shooting death of his estranged wife, Teresa Wilkinson. He was sentenced to life in prison with no opportunity for release until after 35 years served.

- Town of Chase, Oconto County

In August 2011, a jury convicted Randall C. Staeven of first-degree intentional homicide, three counts of first-degree reckless endangerment, arson, and mutilating a corpse in the death of his estranged wife, Christine Staeven. His three young children were present at the time of the homicide and able to escape the fire. Sentencing is scheduled for October 2011.

- Grand Chute, Outagamie County

In March 2010, a jury convicted Scott E. Schmidt of first-degree intentional homicide in the shooting death of his estranged wife, Kelly Wing Schmidt. He was also convicted of first-degree recklessly endangering safety in connection with an attack on her mother. He was sentenced to life in prison with parole eligibility in 2050. The verdict is under appeal.

- Waukesha, Waukesha County

In November 2010, Daniel K. Christesen was found guilty of committing first-degree intentional homicide, but not guilty by reason of "mental disease/defect" in the stabbing death of his girlfriend, Carol Fisher. He was committed to a state mental hospital for life.



## WISCONSIN DEATHS RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDE

Year	Homicide Deaths	Suicides	Total
2010	51	7	58
2009	52	15	67
2008	37	10	47
2007	41	10	51
2006	29	8	37
2005	40	6	46
2004	28	5	33
2003	45	16	61
2002	38	11	49
2001	33	9	42
2000	33	8	41
<b>Totals</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>532</b>

## 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 or partners, former spouses or former partners, adults with children in common, and adults or teens that had been in a dating relationship.
- Beginning with the report for 2010, we also include cases that involved other adult family members, such as a parent or grandparent killed by an adult child or grandchild.
- 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 obsessive control of the perpetrator's current or former partner that extended to her or his new partner; and the homicide of a bystander or someone who attempted to protect a domestic violence victim from future harm.
- The homicide was a child death that occurred as an extension of or in response to ongoing abuse between adult intimate partners. For example, when a partner or estranged partner killed their children in order to exact revenge on his partner.

The report also accounts for overall deaths related to domestic violence homicide, including perpetrator deaths. Most perpetrator deaths are suicides. The count of domestic violence homicide victims occasionally includes perpetrators killed by responding law enforcement officers (homicide by legal intervention) or killed by someone in defense of another person who is under attack. The victim count also includes law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty when responding to domestic violence.

In each case of homicide-suicide, we list the murdered person in our heading as the homicide victim. We seek to be as consistent and as accurate as possible year to year in the homicides included in the report.

The homicide report research begins with an ongoing search for news accounts of domestic violence-related homicides. WCADV tracks daily media coverage of domestic violence homicides in major Wisconsin newspapers, which is supplemented with Internet searches. In some cases we contact one or more of the following sources for clarification of information obtained from news sources: local domestic violence programs, district attorney's offices, adult protective services, law enforcement agencies, and coordinated community response coordinators in the counties where the homicides took place. We use the Wisconsin Circuit Court Access Program to research the criminal history of the homicide perpetrator and victims.

To further identify the domestic violence homicides that occur in Wisconsin in a given year, we examine the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) submitted to the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance (OJA) by local law enforcement agencies. UCR fields include: reporting agency; county; homicide date, type, and location; victim and offender demographics; 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, however. We use the coding and details in the UCR reports to identify domestic violence-related homicides that might have been missed via monitoring news stories.

We seek to uniformly report the facts of the case for each incident. However, if additional information is unavailable, we report only the simple demographic and case information available via published accounts, CCAP records, and the UCR. Reporting on domestic violence related homicides is complicated since we cannot know the exact characteristics of the relationship. Our knowledge is ultimately limited by the information reported to community systems and friends and family by the involved parties prior to the homicide, and how much of that knowledge finds its way into the official record.<sup>46</sup>

Due to confidentiality laws, WCADV can only obtain records of public access; data such as death certificates are not available to us. We know this methodology is imperfect and can result in undercounts in at least three 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 perpetrators of domestic violence.
- ***LGBT 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." Where the victim was reported as single and there was no apparent forced entry to the home or scene, the homicide may go unrecognized as related to LGBT intimate partner violence.

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<sup>46</sup> Neil Websdale, *Lethality Assessment Tools: A Critical Analysis*, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, 1999.

- ***Homicides of American Indian and Alaska Native women:*** National rates of homicide victimization against American Indian and Alaska Native women are high and in some counties comprised primarily of tribal lands, murder rates are over ten times the national average, with Native women being most likely to be killed by their intimate partners.<sup>47</sup> Tribal communities are very diverse socially, culturally, and economically, with many women living in urban areas off of tribal lands. Intimate partner homicides—as well as homicides in general—may not receive attention from the dominant news media and therefore not come to our attention as we compile data for the homicide report.

In compiling our summary data, we seek to include the total number of homicides committed in Wisconsin in a given year. We use information from the Uniform Crime Report data submitted to OJA and, if available for the year in question, information from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Each agency compiles its data from various reporting methods including death certificates, police reports, coroner, medical examiner and hospital records. For example, BHI counts homicides of Wisconsin residents that occur in other states, as well as traffic fatalities from intoxicated driving; OJA counts homicides in the Wisconsin county in which they occur and conforms to UCR standards that omit intoxicated driving deaths. OJA does not include homicides by legal intervention. The BHI figure is therefore usually higher than the UCR-based count.

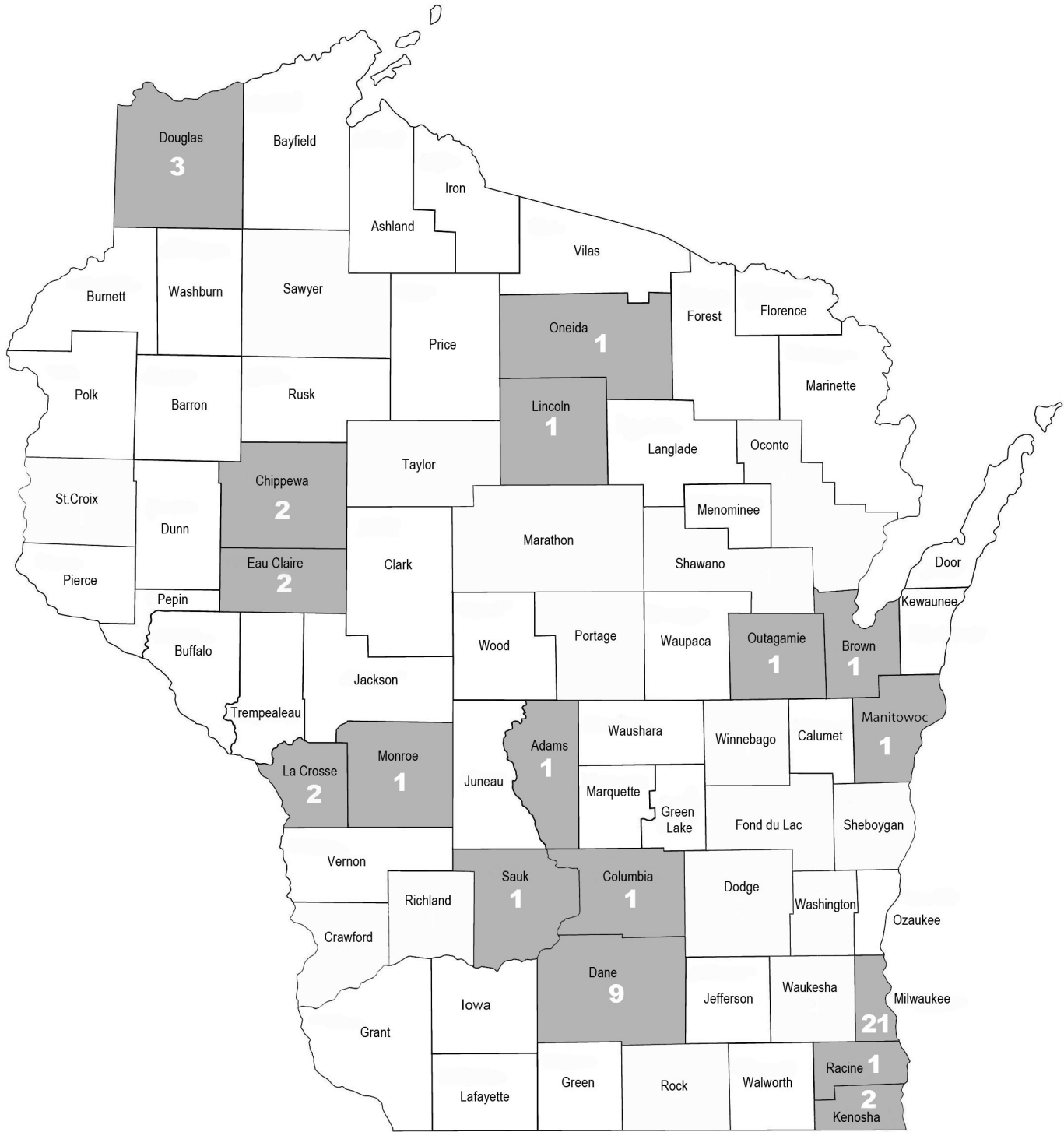
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<sup>47</sup> *Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and the Criminal Justice Response: What is Known*, Ronet Bachman, et al., report to the U. S. Department of Justice, August 2008, Executive Summary.

# 2010

## WISCONSIN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

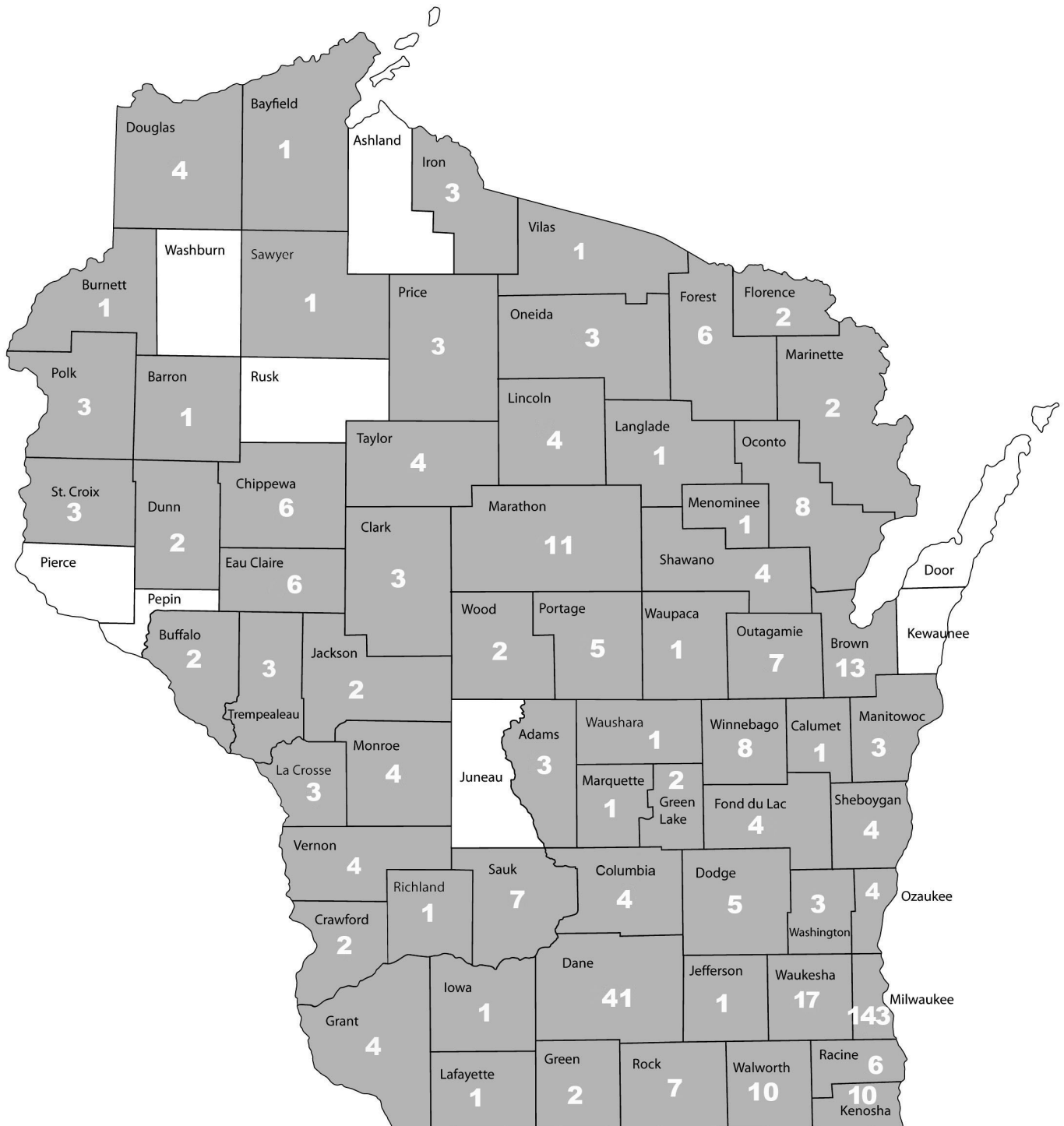
### HOMICIDES



# 2000 TO 2010

## WISCONSIN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### HOMICIDES



## POSTSCRIPT: Reading domestic violence homicide cases

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Researching and writing this report each year brings many questions: which cases to include and which to exclude; the circumstances of someone's death; the particular details to include and how to do that. We always wonder whether we even have a right to put people's stories on the page, however well-intentioned the cause. They have no say in how the story is told, after all, whether by police or prosecutors or reporters or by us.

Each year brings its own distinctive set of questions.

How can it be that media attention to domestic violence still so often misses the nature and complexity of power and control and coercion and violence that are at its core? Instead, the subject is reduced to the sensational, trivializing headline that rockets across the Internet pages: the "bizarre case" where "man killed girlfriend because she answered her phone during sex." Or, "tumultuous romance led to exotic dancer's death."

How can it be that we have learned so much about risk and danger and still so often pay so little attention to it? We know that ready access to guns plus obsessive jealous plus a partner who is attempting a permanent break ramp up the danger. We know that stalking plus strangulation plus threats to kill ramp up the danger. Yet so much of our systemic response, from law enforcement to family courts, persists in seeing only a series of individual, isolated acts and not the pattern of ongoing risk and danger.

How can we do a better job of engaging and connecting with those most at risk? Paying attention to the signs and approaching safety planning as a process and not a piece of paper? Maximizing opportunities for advocacy and intervention? Understanding the intersecting issues and dynamics? Speaking up?

## ABOUT WCADV

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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
- Technical assistance for attorneys, legal advocates, prosecutors, and public defenders and limited funds for victims to acquire direct legal assistance

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We could not develop this report each year without the help of the Office of Justice Assistance and the data that OJA staff has generously provided. Likewise, our thanks go to the staff of domestic abuse programs, district attorneys' offices, law enforcement agencies, and victim witness offices who helped us find information about the domestic homicide victims whose stories are included in this report. We particularly appreciate all of the advocates who participated in the conference calls about the scope of the report.

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Since 2000, we have benefited greatly from the findings and recommendations of the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence Domestic Violence Fatality Review and continue to do so as we enter a second decade of paying attention to domestic violence homicide in Wisconsin.

Finally, we want to acknowledge each and every individual life taken by domestic violence, and their surviving families and communities.



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