

Domestic Violence Claimed 62 Lives in Wisconsin in 2017



Wisconsin Domestic Violence
Homicide Report
2017

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Foreword

This is the sixteenth edition of the Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report. End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin has been tracking and analyzing all incidents of domestic violence homicide that have occurred in Wisconsin since 2000. This report documents fatalities during 2017.

2017 was the first year in which End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin had a position fully dedicated to homicide prevention. Through our homicide prevention program, we have made it easier for communities to adopt lifesaving practices that identify and respond to key warning signs, which research has shown are indicative of high risk. Through that work, we have become accustomed to routinely listing the most predictive red flags for lethal violence. As examples: previous use of a weapon against the victim; previous threats to kill; and previous acts of strangulation.

Because the approximately ten best indicators of risk are such common and clear warnings signs, they can become strangely clinical and abstract. We can lose sight of the fact that these tactics of abuse before they are “predictors” or “evidence-based indicators” they are acts of terror. They are nightmarish disruptions to a human being’s bodily and emotional security. As we compile the stories of domestic violence homicides every year, our attention is called back to the ways in which the categories we use to understand domestic violence and conceptual tools we employ to prevent it are always surpassed by the devastatingly visceral experiences that led up to these murders. The names and narratives in this report bring us back to that truth.

In this year’s report, we have included a long-form interview with a surviving family member of a domestic violence victim, Angelina Schnook, who lost her mother Karie Lantz at the hands of her stepfather. Her conversation with us describes the real-life complexities that underly a domestic violence homicide. In the midst of living through domestic abuse, victims and their loved ones need supportive community members who can zoom out from the stress and trauma to call attention to the danger. In the interview, Angelina said, “We just needed somebody who could notice those red flags that we were just completely missing.”

We encourage you to read this report with those words in mind. It is our hope that after reading this report, you as a community member, friend, advocate, or other professional might be the person who notices the warning signs and is able to make a life-saving difference.

Executive Summary

Since 2000, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin has chronicled deaths due to domestic violence in our state. In 2017, individuals died in Wisconsin due to domestic violence at a rate of 1 death every 6 days. The basic findings contained in this report are outlined below.

2017 compared to 2016	2017	2016
Incidents of domestic violence homicide	40	51
Victims of domestic violence homicide (excluding by legal intervention)	45	57
Homicides by legal intervention (responding law enforcement)	3	2
All domestic violence-related homicides	48	59
Perpetrator suicide (excluding by legal intervention)	13	12
Attempted homicide incidents with perpetrator suicide	1	2
Total deaths (victim and perpetrator)	62	73

Other findings of the *2017 Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report* include:

- Perpetrators of domestic violence homicide incidents were overwhelmingly male. In 2017, 31 of 40 (78%) perpetrators were male. This figure excludes the three homicides that occurred during legal intervention. These incidents have also been excluded from other perpetrator demographic statistics.
- In 2017, over 42% of the victims of intimate partner homicide were killed after the relationship ended or when one person in the relationship was taking steps to leave the relationship. This figure demonstrates that leaving does not equate to safety. It also supports the main message of this report: no victim in Wisconsin should have to take the courageous step of leaving an abusive relationship without the safety and support offered by domestic violence victim advocates and without the benefit of a coordinated community response.
- 42% of the victims included in this report were not an intimate partner of the perpetrator. There were 26 intimate partner homicide victims.

- Victims in this report reflect the span of life, from less than 1 year old to 88 years old. The average age of victims was 40 years old. Perpetrators ranged in age from 15 to 88 years old. The average age for perpetrators was 38 years old.
- In 2017, homicides were committed in 19 separate counties in Wisconsin. About 58% of the homicide incidents occurred in urban areas, and roughly 42% happened in rural communities.
- Consistent with the findings throughout this report's history, firearms remain the most common means of perpetrating domestic violence homicides. In 2017, firearms were the weapons used in 70% of domestic violence homicide incidents, excluding the three homicides by legal intervention. In at least 11 of these domestic violence shooting deaths, the gunmen were legally prohibited from possessing firearms.
- Many of the 2017 homicide cases reflect the risk factors that research has found to be particularly associated with lethal violence. These include, among other factors: threats to use or actual use of a weapon, threats to kill, stalking, strangulation, obsessive jealousy, and sexual assault.

National and Historical Context

Overall, domestic violence homicide rates have declined nationally for all race and gender groups in the past thirty years. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), from 1980 to 2005, intimate partner homicides declined by 44%, and homicides among other family members decreased by 26%. Similarly, nonfatal domestic violence has decreased by about 63% from 1994 to 2010. This downward trend has been attributed to increased awareness, services, and intervention. However, the decline has varied significantly for different populations. The data from the BJS indicate that 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%." Unfortunately, more recently updated historical data from the BJS is not available.

Key Findings

Overview

	2017
Domestic violence homicide incidents	40
Victims of domestic violence homicide (excluding by legal intervention)	45
Homicides by legal intervention (responding law enforcement)*	3
All domestic violence-related homicides	48
Homicide incidents with perpetrator suicides	13
Attempted-homicide incidents with perpetrator suicides*	1
Total deaths (victims and perpetrators)	62
Homicide incidents with two or more victims	3
Female victims	28
Male victims	17
Female perpetrators	9
Male perpetrators	31

*Attempted homicide perpetrators' and responding law enforcements officers' demographics are not included in figures and percentages found elsewhere in this report.

Relationship of victim to female perpetrator

When perpetrator was female, victim was:	2017
Current male partner	4
Former or estranged male partner	2
New female partner of perpetrator's former or estranged male partner	1
Father of the perpetrator	1
Bystander (man who lived in same building as perpetrator's boyfriend)	1

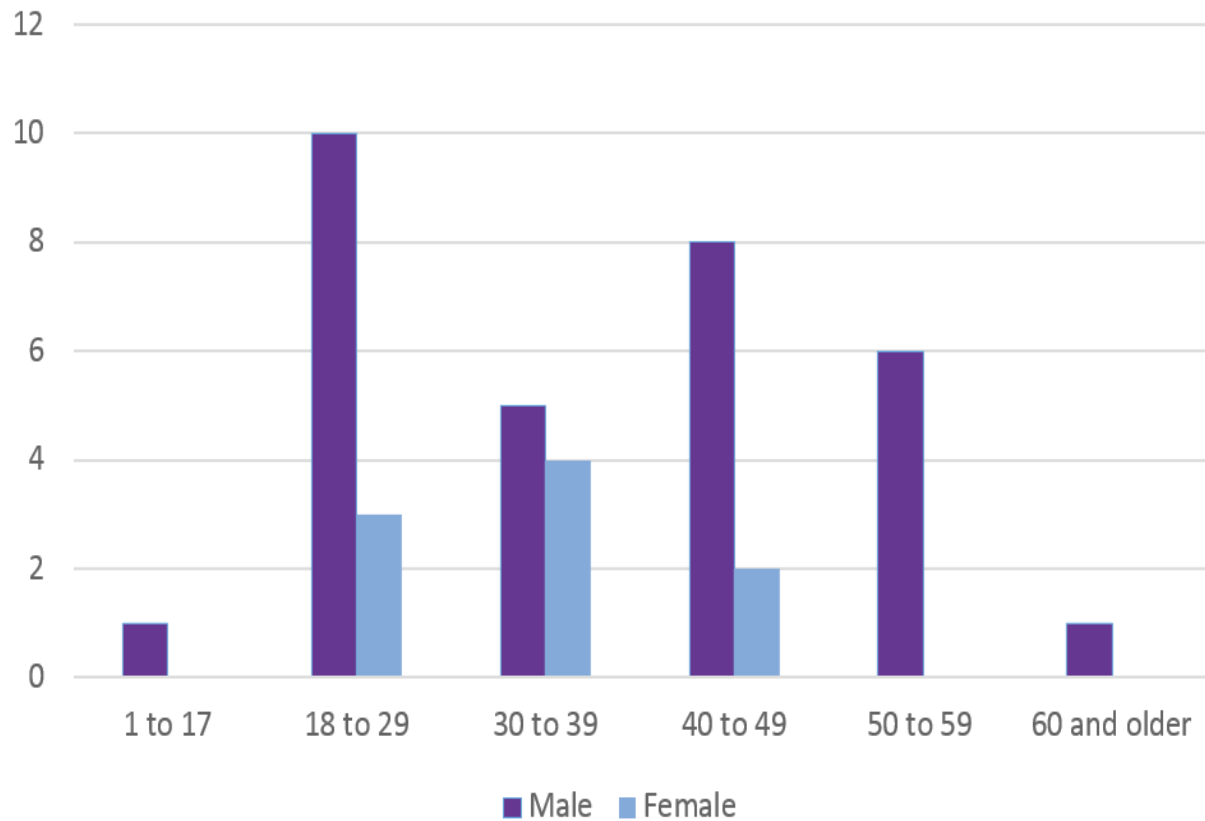
Relationship of victim to male perpetrator

When perpetrator was male, victim was:	2017
Current female partner	10
Current male partner	1
Former or estranged female partner	9
Former male partner of perpetrator's girlfriend	1
Mother of the perpetrator	3
Perpetrator's child (and child of current or former female partner)	1
Perpetrator's stepchild	1
New male partner of perpetrator's former or estranged female partner	3
Perpetrator's girlfriend's roommate	1
Perpetrator's friend	2
Co-worker of perpetrator's estranged female partner	2
Divorce attorney representing perpetrator's estranged wife	1
Responding law enforcement officer	1

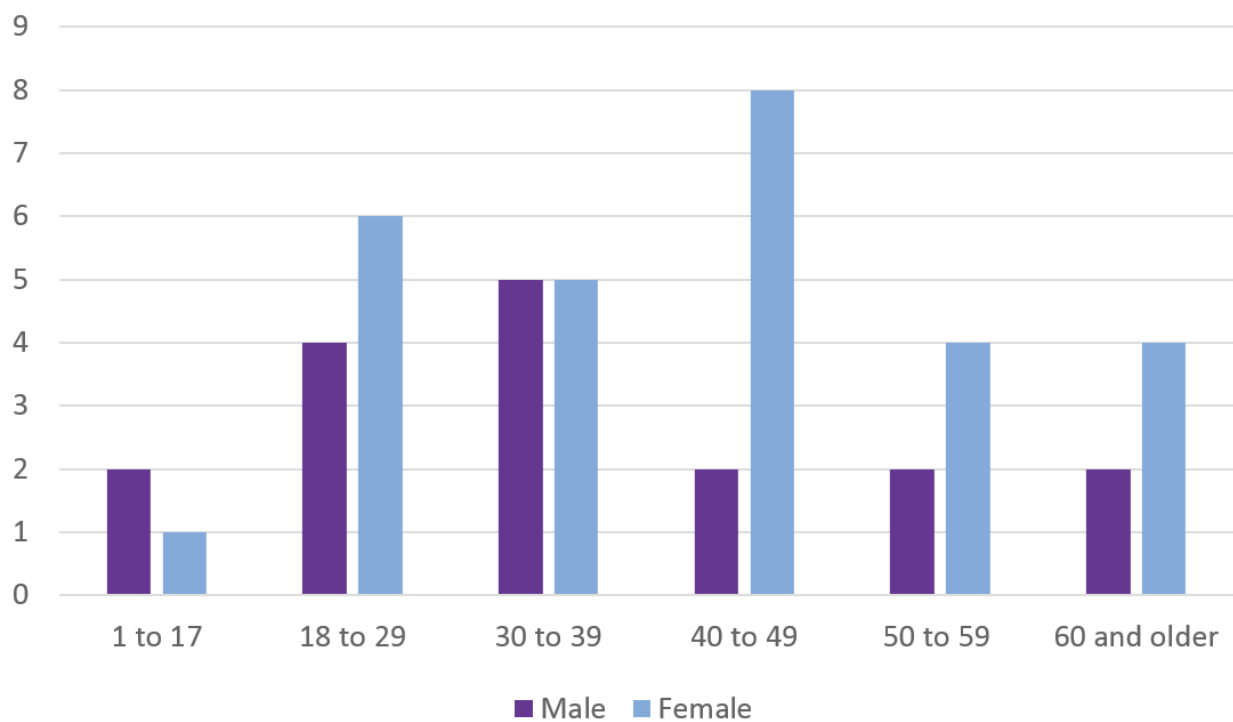
Suicide

	2017
Homicide incidents with perpetrator suicide	13
Homicide-suicide incidents involving firearms	13
Male perpetrators of homicide-suicide	12
Female perpetrators of homicide-suicide	1

Age and gender of perpetrators



Age and gender of victims



Method of homicide

Firearm

28 70%

Since 2005, firearms have accounted for more domestic violence homicides than all other methods of killing combined.

Domestic violence assaults involving a gun are 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force.ⁱ

The presence of a gun in domestic violence situations increases the risk of homicide for women by 500%.ⁱⁱ

There are 46% fewer intimate partner gun homicides of women in states that require background checks for private handgun sales than in states, like Wisconsin, which do not.ⁱⁱⁱ

11 (39%) of the perpetrators in 2017 who used a gun were legally prohibited from possessing a firearm at the time of the homicide.

Stabbing or Cutting

7 18%

i. Saltzman, Linda E., James A. Mercy, Patrick W. O'Carroll, Mark L. Rosenberg, and Philip H. Rhodes. "Weapon Involvement and Injury Outcomes in Family and Intimate Assaults." JAMA 267, no. 22 (1992): 3043-3047.

ii. Campbell, Jacquelyn C., Daniel Webster, Jane Koziol-McLain, Carolyn Block, Doris Campbell, Mary Ann Curry, Faye Gary et al. "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multisite Case Control Study." American Journal of Public Health 93, no. 7 (2003): 1089-1097.

iii. Everytown for Gun Safety. *State Background Check Requirements and Rates of Domestic Violence Homicide*. 2014. Accessed September 20, 2016. <http://everytown/1y3kxCb>.

Blunt Force

1 2.4%

Strangulation or Suffocation

1 2.4%

Ran over with Vehicle

1 2.4%

Unknown

1 2.4%

Location of homicide incidents

	2017
Home of victim and/or perpetrator	29
Public space	6
Home of a third party	2
Vehicle	2
Unknown	1

Race and gender of victims

	Black	Latino	Multi-Racial	Unknown	White
Male	10	0	1	1	5
Female	9	2	0	2	15

Race and gender of perpetrators

	Asian	Black	Latino	Unknown	White
Male	1	13	2	2	13
Female	0	7	0	0	2

2017 Domestic Violence Homicides

...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.

The 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 people's lives to either a sensational story or a dry statistic.

The information surrounding domestic violence homicides included in this report, as in past reports, is 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. See *Methodology* for an extended discussion of this shortcoming (page 43).

Clearly, these brief descriptions in no way reflect the complexity and circumstances of each person's death. They certainly do not capture the complexities and fullness of their lives and the impact that each homicide or suicide has on surviving family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, communities, and those responding and attempting to help during the immediate event or in the time preceding it.

BARRON

Brenda Turner, 55, and Natalie Turner, 17 Chetek – October 27, 2017

John Hengst, 55, shot and killed his ex-wife, Brenda Turner, and ex-stepdaughter, Natalie Turner, with whom he still lived. An altercation took place upstairs in the home and continued downstairs, where Brenda Turner was found dead with blunt force injuries. Natalie Turner called the police from her room, but by the time the police arrived, she was dead from a gunshot wound, and Hengst had turned the gun on himself. Convicted of a felony drug charge in 2014, Hengst was prohibited from possessing a firearm.

COLUMBIA

Thomas Selje, 64, Pardeeville – August 21, 2017

On August 21, 2017, police responded to a domestic disturbance call at the house of Thomas Selje. His wife called the police after the two of them were arguing, and Thomas pulled out a gun. He threatened his wife with the gun and stated that he would kill any law enforcement who came to their residence. A Columbia County law enforcement officer arrived on the scene and took cover behind a truck. Thomas Selje fired shots towards the officer. He continued to walk towards both his wife and the officer with his gun drawn, prompting the officer to fatally shoot him. The circumstances of the shooting were investigated and ruled justified.

DANE

Thomas Lee Leonard, 33, Sun Prairie – June 18, 2017

Steven E. Adams, 34, spent the evening with Thomas Leonard's longtime girlfriend. When the two returned to Adams' cousin's apartment, Leonard approached Adams' vehicle and shot at him. Adams returned fire, killing Leonard. Adams was charged with possession of a firearm by a felon. The case has not concluded.

Gerald Moore, 52, Madison – June 24, 2017

Ronald Redeaux, 27, and Gerald Moore, who had lived together and been involved romantically for six years, were smoking crack cocaine in their apartment when Redeaux became nervous that Moore was planning to hurt him. They started fighting and wrestling, and Moore broke free and went into the kitchen. Redeaux thought Moore was looking for something to hurt him with, so Redeaux grabbed scissors and a knife and stabbed Moore over 70 times. Redeaux was charged with first-degree intentional homicide. The case has not concluded. Twelve days before the homicide, Redeaux and Moore were arrested for a domestic situation that resulted in Moore receiving a cut above his eye. No charges were filed against Redeaux, and he was released from jail June 14.

Lee Anne Pirus, 50, Madison – September 13, 2017

Steven Pirus, 59, initially told police that he helped his wife Lee Anne Pirus commit suicide, claiming she begged him to shoot her because she was depressed and wanted to die. Weeks after he shot and killed her, he orchestrated a house explosion to hide the evidence. Due to the state of Lee Anne's remains, police were able to determine that she died prior to the explosion. Through the investigation, information was found on Steven Pirus' phone and tablet that indicated he was planning on marrying a Russian woman who was stuck in London due to Visa issues. He was charged and pleaded guilty to first-degree intentional homicide. He was then sentenced to life in prison.

EAU CLAIRE

Karie Lantz, 44, Eau Claire – February 6, 2017

After being separated from 49-year-old Dean Lantz for over two years, Karie Lantz filed for divorce on January 27, 2017. She met with her attorney to prepare a plan for her and her teenage daughter to go to a safe place when the papers were served to Dean. However, Dean found out that Karie filed for divorce. He offered to sign the papers with her at her divorce attorney's office. When Karie went to Dean's house to pick him up and drive to the attorney's office, he shot and killed her and then himself inside the home. The couple's adult daughter reports that in the weeks leading up to the homicide, Dean's behavior became more erratic, and he seemed distraught that Karie refused to get back together with him.

GREEN LAKE

Grace Reiter-Rudolph, 55, Princeton – March 13, 2017

After smoking methamphetamine and drinking multiple beers, 29-year-old Antonio Contreras returned home to his live-in girlfriend, Grace Reiter-Rudolph. Contreras and Reiter-Rudolph got into a verbal and physical argument, and Reiter-Rudolph subsequently went upstairs and locked herself in their bedroom. Contreras brought his firearm upstairs, broke into the bedroom, and shot Reiter-Rudolph at least four times. To destroy evidence, he lit her corpse and bloody objects on fire. Contreras then took some belongings from the house and drove to Florida. In August 2018, he pleaded no contest to a first-degree intentional homicide charge, and the case is scheduled for sentencing in November. As a convicted felon, Contreras was prohibited from possessing a firearm at the time of the homicide.

JACKSON

Lucas De Ford, 27, Town of Brockway – October 28, 2017

Lucas De Ford was fatally shot by a Jackson County Sheriff's Office deputy who responded to a call regarding disorderly conduct and a restraining order violation. The deputy took a statement from the female caller and then went to get a statement from the subject of the complaint, De Ford. A car chase ensued after the deputy arrived, with De Ford driving to the residence of the female complainant. De Ford quickly exited his vehicle and pointed a gun toward the deputy's head while he was still sitting in the squad car, prompting the deputy to shoot De Ford in the abdomen and chest. It was later discovered that the gun De Ford pointed at the deputy was a pellet gun. The circumstances surrounding the shooting were investigated by the Department of Justice, who concluded that the deputy had reason to believe he was in imminent danger of being killed. Online court records show that at the time of De Ford's death, there was an active harassment restraining order against him involving a woman with whom he shared children.

KENOSHA

Brian Engelhart, 38, Twin Lakes – April 11, 2017

On April 11, 2017, Anna Wright, 29, and her boyfriend, Brian Engelhart, were using cocaine and alcohol. They got into a dispute over drugs at Wright's house. Engelhart left the house on foot, with Wright following him in her car. Wright struck Engelhart with her car; he was dragged underneath her vehicle and later pronounced dead at the hospital. Wright pleaded guilty to a charge of homicide by intoxicated use of a vehicle and was sentenced to seven years in prison and eight years of extended supervision.

Dezjon Taylor, 15, Kenosha – April 25, 2017

15-year-old Timothy Carson and Dezjon Taylor were friends until Carson found out that his girlfriend had been texting Taylor while Carson and his girlfriend were briefly split up. Carson told Taylor he wanted to fight, so they met at a park. Carson took out a handgun and told Taylor to give him all his stuff, but he did not fire the weapon when Taylor did not comply. About a week later, at school, Taylor and his friends walked into a classroom where Carson was. Taylor punched Carson in the face, and Carson responded by stabbing Taylor once in the chest, killing him. Carson is being tried as an adult and faces a charge of second-degree intentional homicide. The case has not concluded.

Brian Baldwin, 23, Kenosha – June 7, 2017

The bodies of 23-year-old Anthony Kerrill and Brian Baldwin were found inside a residence in Kenosha. The murder-suicide was thought to be the result of a domestic issue, as Kerrill recently got divorced from Baldwin's girlfriend. Allegedly, Kerrill shot Baldwin and then turned the gun on himself. A witness in the home at the time of the incident was unharmed. Court records from Illinois indicate Kerrill and his wife divorced two months prior to this incident.

Martha Justice, 39, Pleasant Prairie – June 19, 2017

James Justice, 49, and Martha Justice were married but living separately in Pleasant Prairie for two months. Martha's daughter told police her mom and stepdad had kept in touch since her mom moved out, and they had tried working on their relationship. On June 19, Martha and her daughter went to James' apartment to visit with him, as they did not see him on Father's Day.

KENOSHA

The daughter was listening to music in her room when she heard arguing coming from James' bedroom followed by gunshots. She left her room, stood outside of her stepfather's bedroom door, and called for her mom. There was no answer, and after finding the bedroom door was locked, she exited the apartment and called for help. When officers arrived, they confirmed that James and Martha were deceased. The investigation revealed that James shot Martha with his handgun and then shot himself. Martha's daughter told police that the couple frequently argued and that James sometimes physically grabbed Martha and shook her.

LA CROSSE

Patricia Manix, 46, Town of Campbell – September 20, 2017

Kevin Manix, 50, shot and killed his estranged wife, Patricia Manix in her home before taking his own life. Patricia filed for divorce the previous month, and the two were living separately. Kevin's adult sons went to Patricia's house on September 20 after they received a suspicious text message from Kevin telling them to come over as soon as possible. When they entered the home, they discovered the bedroom door was locked, so they called law enforcement, who were able to force entry into the room. There they found Kevin and Patricia dead with gunshot wounds. A search of Kevin's apartment revealed a handwritten note outlining where he wanted his assets to go, as well as a note describing how he could have been a better husband to Patricia.

MARATHON

**Dianne Look, 67, Karen Barclay, 62, Sara Quirt Sann, 43, and Jason Weiland, 40
Weston – March 22, 2017**

Nengmy Vang, 45, filed for divorce from his wife, Naly, in June 2015. He pushed for a quick settlement and wanted to use the Hmong clan system, while his wife wanted to go through a legal divorce using the American court system to make sure she got custody, child support, and other payments that would be determined by a judge. Five different police reports detail incidents from October 10, November 24, and November 25 in 2015, when officers were called to their home as Nengmy tried to get belongings out of the house. No arrests resulted. What ensued became a long, contentious divorce.

On March 22, 2017, Nengmy went to the bank where Naly worked and demanded she sign their divorce papers within 24 hours. When she declined, he asked her in Hmong, "Do you want to die now?" and went back to his vehicle in the parking lot, where his wife knew he kept a gun. She asked her co-workers and friends Dianne Look and Karen Barclay where she could run and hide, and she exited the bank. When Nengmy returned to the bank, he shot and killed Look and Barclay.

Ten minutes later, an emergency call was placed from the law office of the attorney who was representing Naly in the divorce. After holding two people at gunpoint, Nengmy shot and killed his wife's attorney, Sara Quirt Sann, and returned to his apartment. Nengmy began shooting at Everest Metro Police Detective Jason Weiland while he was setting up a perimeter around the apartment, killing him. Later that afternoon, police officers from multiple agencies exchanged gunfire with Nengmy, who was hit and seriously injured. He was transported to the hospital, where he remained until he died on April 1.

About six weeks after the murders, Naly Vang opened up to the media about some of the troubles in their marriage, including verbal abuse and controlling behaviors. She explained they were having money issues that created tension in their marriage. Part of the divorce process was to determine whether she would receive a form of alimony payments. About a month before the killings, Nengmy and his brother approached Naly's stepfather and asked him to tell her to drop the need for those payments. If she didn't, Nengmy told her stepfather that "something bad might happen."

MILWAUKEE

Stephanie Jones, 18, Milwaukee – January 3, 2017

On January 3, 2017, 18-year-old Hakeem Raheem Tucker crawled through his ex-girlfriend Stephanie Jones' mother's bedroom window in the middle of the night. Stephanie's mother called for help, and Stephanie's father went to the room. There was a physical altercation between him and Tucker. Tucker aimed a pistol at her father and shot him before turning around and shooting Stephanie in the chest. She died, and her father survived but was seriously injured. Jones and Tucker's 2-year-old child was also in the residence during the shooting but was unharmed. Tucker fled the home, and police caught up with him three days later. As he was being arrested, Tucker reached into the car and grabbed a loaded pistol, pointing it over his shoulder toward several officers. However, an officer was able to twist Tucker's hand, forcing him to drop the gun. Due to a previous felony conviction, Tucker was prohibited from possessing a firearm at the time of this incident. He was charged with first-degree intentional homicide, first-degree attempted intentional homicide, and possession of a firearm by a felon. The case has not concluded.

There was a documented history of domestic violence between the couple dating back to 2013. In November 2013, police were called to the Jones home after Tucker confronted Stephanie's mother and wanted to know where her 15-year-old daughter was. She said she didn't know when her daughter would be home, and Tucker slapped her, threw a TV into the wall, and broke a fan.

MILWAUKEE

Police were sent to two separate domestic violence-related battery calls involving Tucker and Jones in December 2016. After the homicide, Jones' mother told police her daughter said Tucker stalked her, pointed a gun at her numerous times, and threatened to kill her.

Anthony Upchurch, 53, Milwaukee – January 27, 2017

Angela Crawford, 43, stabbed her boyfriend Anthony Upchurch many times in the face. When police arrived, both Upchurch and Crawford told them a man had done this to Upchurch outside. Crawford said she was in her bedroom when Upchurch came to the doorway holding a towel to his face and telling her to call 911. However, the amount of blood in Crawford's apartment and the lack of it anywhere else led police to suspect Crawford was responsible for the stabbing. Upchurch suffered a stroke during surgery and died on February 4. Detectives spoke to a friend of his, who said Upchurch had described a "volatile relationship" with Crawford.

Crawford was initially charged with second-degree reckless homicide, but the case was dismissed in May of 2018.

Loren High, 28, Milwaukee – February 5, 2017

Loren High was found dead in his home after being shot in the chest by his ex-girlfriend, 30-year-old Porsche Humphery, while having a conversation with her about getting closure from their off-and-on relationship. A few weeks before the murder, they had an altercation. A witness of the altercation stated that Humphery told High she would find people to hurt him. Humphery was found guilty of second-degree reckless homicide. She has been given a sentence of nine years in prison and six years of extended supervision.

Daniel Baker, 36, Milwaukee – March 7, 2017

Daniel Baker was shot and killed by 28-year-old Les Henderson, a man with whom his children's mother was having a relationship. On the evening of March 6, Henderson and Baker got into an argument after Baker's children's mother claimed Baker put his hands on her. Henderson was attempting to leave the woman's residence after getting into a heated argument with Baker, but Baker charged after him. Henderson turned around and shot Baker once in the stomach, killing him. Henderson was initially charged with second-degree reckless homicide and possession of a firearm by a felon, but those charges were later dismissed when the state was unable to locate a material witness, Henderson's friend, who was also present the night of the homicide.

MILWAUKEE

Sherida Davis, 38, Milwaukee – March 11, 2017

47-year-old Leon Davis, a Milwaukee police officer, shot and killed his wife Sherida with his work-issued firearm and then turned the gun on himself. The couple's two minor children were home at the time. That day, Sherida Davis was planning to take the couple's two sons to see a movie. She and her husband had an argument, and she called her mother shortly before 2 PM. Sherida's mother could hear Leon yelling in the background and asked her daughter if she should call 911. Leon Davis grabbed the phone and said his wife had called 911 for "no apparent reason" before. Three different domestic violence-related calls to the police were made since 1996 regarding disorderly conduct and family trouble, with Leon Davis being the perpetrator. He was never arrested, nor were the family trouble calls referred to the district attorney. The investigation of this incident showed that Sherida called 911 about five minutes before she was shot, shortly after speaking with her mother on the phone. Police were dispatched to a "family trouble call." Before help arrived, the couple's 12-year-old found his parents unresponsive after hearing an argument and six gunshots.

Online court records show that Leon Davis filed for divorce in 2016, and a hearing on that case was scheduled to happen a few weeks after their deaths. Family members report Leon had been drinking a lot since filing for divorce.

Johnathan Evans, 24, Milwaukee – April 8, 2017

On April 8, 2017, Johnathan Evans was dropping his son off at his son's grandmother's house. He went inside the house and got into an argument with his estranged wife and her new boyfriend, 34-year-old Donte Brown. She forced Brown and Evans outside, thinking they were going to get into a fist fight. Instead, Brown pulled out a gun, then shot at the ground and at Evans. Brown and Evans' estranged wife left the scene together, leaving Evans laying on the ground, where he died.

Donte Brown was charged with first-degree reckless homicide and possession of a firearm by a felon. He was found guilty at a jury trial and is awaiting sentencing. Evans' estranged wife was found guilty of two counts of obstructing an officer and was sentenced to two years of probation, with a seven month house of corrections sentence imposed and stayed. Evans had a history of abusing his estranged wife, and the couple was going through a divorce at the time of Evans' death, which is what she told police the argument was about.

MILWAUKEE

Montrell Glover, 37, Milwaukee – April 9, 2017

After an evening of heavy drinking, Montrell Glover became angry with his 30-year-old girlfriend, Loreal Frier, when he could not find his sunglasses. Glover grabbed Frier by the shirt and threatened to beat her. He was holding a knife in his hand when Frier's 14-year-old son came into the room and told Glover to not hurt his mom. Glover punched the boy, and the two began to wrestle on the ground. Frier grabbed the knife and was swinging it towards Glover, who then fell over. Frier told him to let her son go and get out. Glover got up, told them he was going to come back and kill them all, and left the residence. Shortly after leaving, Glover got into a car accident and was transported to a hospital where he later died. Frier was initially arrested but not charged by the district attorney's office in this incident.

Tyvitta Dischler, 26, Milwaukee – May 24, 2017

49-year-old James Hutchins and his wife, Tyvitta Dischler, were arguing in their kitchen with their 5-year-old son in the room. Hutchins pulled out a gun and shot Dischler twice in the head, causing her to fall out of her chair onto the ground. Then he hit his son in the head with the gun, causing a skull fracture, and threw him to the ground. Dischler was barely breathing but making some noises, and Hutchins told her he would finish her off when he got back home. He drove away in Dischler's car with their son and dropped him off at Hutchins' sister's house. Then, Hutchins allegedly drove home, poured gasoline on Dischler, and burned her body. Soot and discoloring in her airway indicates she was still alive when burned. Hutchins' sister took the child to the hospital after noticing bruises and a cut on his head. At the hospital, when asked what happened, the boy told doctors his dad killed his mom, prompting investigators to go to the residence and find Dischler's deceased and mostly burned body with a tank of gasoline next to it.

A few weeks before the murder on April 26, 2017, Dischler filed a domestic abuse temporary restraining order against Hutchins after he hit her in the head with a rolling pin, slapped her, and choked her. The restraining order was denied on May 10, 2017, because the court determined she did not have enough evidence to prove Hutchins was abusing her. She filed for another one shortly afterwards, but she was killed before any court proceedings happened.

Due to a previous felony conviction, Hutchins was prohibited from possessing a firearm at the time of the murder. He also had documented child abuse on his record. James Hutchins was found guilty of first-degree reckless homicide, causing mental and physical harm to a child, and mutilating a corpse, and has been sentenced to 30 years in prison and 27 years of extended supervision.

MILWAUKEE

Teresa Wade, 24, Milwaukee – May 28, 2017

Teresa Wade saw 24-year-old Jasmin Troutman driving the car belonging to her child's father and became upset. Wade pulled into a gas station, following Troutman. Wade started yelling and threatening to kill Troutman and the baby. Troutman then got out of the car and told Wade to get out too. Wade then backed up her car, purposely bumping Troutman's car. Troutman reacted by going back to her car, grabbing a handgun, and shooting Wade. Teresa Wade started to drive away but quickly lost consciousness and eventually died. Jasmin Troutman was found guilty of second-degree reckless homicide and second-degree recklessly endangering safety. She was given a sentence of seven years in prison and four years of extended supervision.

Willie Greer, 72, Milwaukee – June 16, 2017

Java Wright, 39, got into a fight with her boyfriend at his residence. He locked her out of his home, and when she looked through the hole in the door where the doorknob used to be, he shoved something through the hole and poked her in the eye. Wright broke the window of her boyfriend's apartment, poured gasoline on the curtains and inside of the unit, and set it on fire to force him to come outside so they could finish their argument. The fire killed an uninvolved elderly man, Willie Greer, who lived in a lower unit of the building. Java Wright pleaded guilty to first-degree reckless homicide and arson of building without the owner's consent. She was sentenced to 22 years in prison with 15 years of extended supervision.

Maria Mexicano, 40, Milwaukee – August 6, 2017

Jose Galvan, 33, initially told police that he and his girlfriend, Maria Mexicano, were arguing in the car while he was driving and that she grabbed the steering wheel, resulting in a crash and Mexicano's death. Later, while talking to police, Galvan admitted to choking Mexicano while he was driving. He claimed Mexicano was challenging him to hurt her, saying he would do it if he was a real man. At one point while Galvan was choking Mexicano, she grabbed the steering wheel, causing them to crash into a tree. He told police that afterwards, she was gasping for air. Galvan drove away and then crashed into a light pole a short time later, presumably because he knew Mexicano was dead, and he wanted to make it seem like it was due to the crash. Galvan pleaded guilty to first-degree reckless homicide and was sentenced to 25 years in prison and 15 years of extended supervision.

MILWAUKEE

Crystal Leopold, 24, Milwaukee – August 11, 2017

On July 26, 2017, just over two weeks before she was murdered, Crystal Leopold was granted a 4-year restraining order against her ex-boyfriend, 27-year-old Emmanuel Sanchez, after he strangled her in a car. On August 6, 2017, Sanchez violated the restraining order by entering Leopold's residence while she was sleeping and without her knowledge. Leopold woke up and saw Sanchez unplug and pick up her cell phone. She got her cell phone back from him and called 911. Sanchez left her residence.

On August 11, 2017, Sanchez returned to Leopold's apartment, once again violating the restraining order. Leopold was getting ready for a date, and Sanchez was upset that she was dating other men after their breakup. He attacked her, stabbing her once in the chest with a butcher's knife in her bathtub. Leopold's two roommates, who moved in with her to protect her from Sanchez, were both in the apartment at the time of the attack. One roommate fought Sanchez off Leopold, but Sanchez escaped through a window before police and paramedics arrived. They declared Leopold deceased. Authorities found and arrested Sanchez shortly after the murder. He was charged with first-degree intentional homicide and knowingly violating a domestic abuse injunction. The case has not concluded.

Nathaniel Gary, 24, Milwaukee - August 23, 2017

Stephanie Squire, 23, shot her boyfriend Nathaniel Gary once in the chest during an argument, killing him. Gary was upset that Squire was talking to the father of her child. He pulled a gun out of the dresser and got on top of her, waving the gun around and yelling at her. At one point, he put the firearm down on the bed. Squire grabbed it, pointed it at his chest, and told him to get off of her. As he was getting off, she fired one shot, killing him. Squire told police that she never meant to kill him; she fired the shot because she wanted him to feel the same pain that she feels when he yells at her about talking to the father of her child. Squire told police that the last time Gary abused her or choked her was August 11, 2017. She was charged with second-degree reckless homicide and sentenced to ten years in prison and eight years of extended supervision.

Willa Johnson, 88, Glendale – December 11, 2017

Harold Johnson, 88, shot and killed his wife, Willa, before turning the gun on himself. Willa suffered from Alzheimer's, and Harold's physical health had recently been declining.

MILWAUKEE

**Eulalia Thomas, 32, and Tamala Wrencher, 32
Milwaukee – December 16, 2017**

On December 16, 2017, Eulalia Thomas and her roommate, Tamala Wrencher, were shot and killed in their apartment by Thomas' boyfriend, 43-year-old Quinton Price. He then took his own life. At the time of the double murder-suicide, Thomas and Price's infant son and Thomas' two other children were in the apartment, but none of them witnessed the shootings or were injured. Quinton Price had previously been convicted of a felony and was legally prohibited from possessing a firearm.

Bonita Pierce, 48, Oak Creek – December 19, 2017

25-year-old Kervin Pierce Jr. told police he was fed up with his brother and mother, Bonita Pierce, for disrespecting and nagging him over the past several months. According to the criminal complaint, on the night of December 19, 2017, Kervin was feeling particularly overwhelmed and disrespected by his mother and brother. He drank alcohol, entered his mother's bedroom a few minutes after she went to sleep, and shot and killed her in her bed. Then Kervin walked into his brother's bedroom and tried to shoot and kill him, but the gun jammed. Kervin pistol whipped his brother as hard as he could in the head, breaking the gun. Kervin grabbed a knife and attempted to stab his brother. He could not get the knife through his brother's sweatshirt, so he slashed his brother on the forehead with it. Kervin then called 911 and turned himself in. His brother survived the attack.

The following day, Kervin Pierce Jr. attacked a correctional officer at the Milwaukee County Jail. He grabbed her throat with both hands and shook her, then threw her to the ground and continued to strangle her. The attack lasted for about 15 seconds until three other inmates intervened. For both incidents, Kervin Pierce Jr. was charged with first-degree intentional homicide, attempted first-degree intentional homicide, strangulation and suffocation, and battery on prisoners. The case has not concluded.

Regina Rosebrock, 62, Oak Creek – December 26, 2017

45-year-old Stephen Cole lived in Oak Creek with his mother, Regina Rosebrock, and stepfather. Rosebrock was upset with Cole's excessive drinking, and she told him he could no longer have alcohol in their house. Rosebrock dumped out multiple bottles of his alcohol, and Stephen started an argument. Cole's stepfather called the police three times on the day of the murder. The first time, police came to the scene and diffused the situation. Once the police left, Cole and Rosebrock started arguing again, prompting Cole's stepfather to call the police for the second time that day. They arrested Stephen on marijuana charges. He was taken to the police station,

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ticketed, and released. Later that night, Cole's stepfather woke up to the sound of Rosebrock screaming for help from the kitchen. He went downstairs to find Cole stabbing his mother in the face and chest with a knife. Cole then went after his stepfather with the knife, cutting his shoulder. His stepfather defended himself by hitting Cole in the head with a scraping tool until the police arrived. Stephen Cole was charged with first-degree reckless homicide and first-degree recklessly endangering safety. The case has not concluded.

Elandis Johnson, 42, Milwaukee – December 31, 2017

Elandis Johnson was found dead lying behind the front door of his home with a gunshot wound to his right eye. He and Ann Bellamy, 43, were in an off-and-on relationship for 18 years. They shared a child. Johnson's brother told police that earlier in the month, Bellamy barricaded herself in a room at Johnson's house, jealous of his new relationship. Investigation into the homicide incident revealed text messages from Bellamy's phone about purchasing a gun, and police were able to match a shoe left at the scene with a pair of shoes Bellamy owned. She was charged with first-degree reckless homicide, and the case has not concluded.

OUTAGAMIE

Annie Ford, 48, Appleton – September 21, 2017

58-year-old Johnny Scott accused his girlfriend, Annie Ford, of stealing \$800. His anger was escalating, so she and her 15-year-old son decided to sleep in the guest bedroom to get some space. Scott came into the bedroom and kept pulling the covers off of them as they were trying to sleep and continued to yell at Ford. Ford's son went downstairs to sleep, and soon heard multiple gunshots and his mom yelling for help. He ran upstairs and saw Scott holding a gun and his mom bleeding. Scott pointed the gun at the boy's chest and told him to leave before he killed him too. The boy went outside and called the police, and Scott surrendered to them once law enforcement arrived. Johnny Scott was charged with first-degree intentional homicide and second-degree recklessly endangering safety. The case has not concluded.

PORTAGE

Krista Sypher, 44, Plover – March 13, 2017

Krista Sypher was last seen on March 13, 2017. Her husband Jason Sypher, 43, reported her missing on March 20. Almost a year and a half later, Jason Sypher was arrested and charged with her murder. Prosecutors allege that Jason was abusive towards Krista during their relationship. Although her remains have never been located, evidence strongly suggests Jason was responsible for Krista's death. A police K9 indicated the presence of decomposing tissue in the Sypher's home and car. Furthermore, Jason smashed and threw away Krista's cell phone. He purchased trash bags the day of her disappearance, and vehicle GPS data shows him driving to various dumpsters in the days following. He was charged with first-degree intentional homicide and hiding a corpse. The case has not concluded.

RACINE

Audrey Scott, 26, Yorkville – July 4, 2017

On July 3, 2017, 28-year-old Sammie Miller saw his girlfriend, Audrey Scott, dancing with someone at a bar and became upset. Miller's friend reported that Miller contacted him many times that night. Miller came to his friend's house early the next morning to pick him up. Audrey Scott was in the front seat and appeared to be very badly beaten. Miller drove to a secluded spot, took Scott out of the car, and led her into the woods. The friend followed them, heard a gunshot, and saw Scott fall to the ground with Miller pointing a gun at her. The two left the body, but the friend was able to lead the police back to the place of the shooting, where Scott's remains were found. The friend told investigators he asked Miller why he did it, and Miller said he did not want to go back to prison. He was found guilty of first-degree intentional homicide and possession of a firearm as a felon and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Sammie Miller had recently been released from prison, where he served eight years for killing a man during a robbery in 2007. He was on extended supervision at the time of the homicide. At his sentencing hearing, Miller continued to deny that he killed Scott.

ROCK

Amanii Hodges, 2 months, Beloit – March 20, 2017

2-month-old Amanii Hodges was in the care of his father, 31-year-old Deanthony Hodges, on March 20, 2017. Hodges claimed Amanii suddenly did not look good. He texted Amanii's mother, Jessica Nelson, saying he needed to be taken to a hospital. The infant died in the hospital on March 26. Amanii's cause of death was blunt force trauma. At the time of their son's death, Hodges and Nelson were being investigated for child abuse after Nelson's 3- and 5-year-old children were allegedly abused. For Amanii's death, Deanthony Hodges was charged with first-degree reckless homicide.

ROCK

and bail jumping. He pleaded not guilty to both charges, and the case has not concluded.

Authorities allege Jessica Nelson misled Child Protective Services about how Amanii would be cared for during an ongoing domestic violence case involving her and Hodges. She was charged with neglecting a child, consequence is death. She pleaded not guilty, and the case has not concluded. Court records show Hodges was previously accused of strangling Nelson after confronting her over a series of text messages. The alleged incident occurred while Nelson was three months pregnant with Amanii.

Zachary Barrett, 30, Milton – October 25, 2017

Jason Kraayvanger, 21, shot his friend, Zachary Barrett, outside of his home while Barrett was having an argument with his wife. Barrett's wife called police when things escalated, and her husband armed himself and put on ballistic gear. Kraayvanger, who was staying with the couple, told investigators that at one point Barrett had a gun pointed at his wife's head and threatened to kill her. Kraayvanger told police that he and Barret went outside. He tried to talk Barrett down, but Barrett raised a rifle toward him multiple times. At one point, Barrett pointed the rifle at his face, so Kraayvanger grabbed a 9 mm pistol from Barrett's chest holster and shot Barrett once in the head. Barrett died 11 days later. After the shooting, Barrett's wife told the media that there was a fight, but Barrett did not threaten to kill her. Kraayvanger was not charged for Barrett's death.

SHEBOYGAN

Thomas Rank, 64, Lima – April 27, 2017

Sarah Soucheck, 38, shot and killed her father, Thomas Rank, in his residence before calling law enforcement, informing them that she just killed someone and that she was armed and suicidal. Soucheck shot and killed herself before law enforcement arrived to the scene. The motive of the murder-suicide is undetermined, but Soucheck had a felony charge pending for scamming an attorney out of more than \$145,000. She also owed her parents several thousand dollars.

ST. CROIX

Charlene Wold, 49, Hudson – February 17, 2017

28-year-old Logan Reese stabbed his mother Charlene Wold multiple times, killing her. He also stabbed his stepfather and beat his teenage stepbrother with a pool stick in their home. Both of the injured family members fled to the garage and survived. A little over an hour later, Reese's apartment was reported to be on fire. He fled in his car until police spotted his vehicle. A

chase began, and Reese shot at officers from his car throughout the chase. Eventually, after a 50-mile pursuit that crossed into Minnesota, Reese crashed his car into a median and fatally shot himself in the head.

WAUKESHA

Abigail Voeks, 27, Pewaukee – December 5, 2017

On December 5, 2017, Abigail Voeks went to the home of her ex-boyfriend, 30-year-old Zakoree Mitschke. No one heard from her again. Police officers found Voeks dead alongside Mitschke in his residence. An investigation determined that Mitschke shot Voeks and then himself. Three months before the murder-suicide, Mitschke called Voeks, threatening to kill her, including graphic details of how he would murder her. Voeks recorded the conversation, gave the recording to the police, and filed a police report.

WAUPACA

Cori Cummings, 32, Royalton – October 24, 2017

Cori Cummings met up with her estranged husband, 51-year-old John Cummings, at a supper club in Royalton the morning of October 24, 2017. Surveillance footage shows John getting into the passenger's seat of Cori's car and the vehicle pulling out of the parking lot. Shortly thereafter, the car crashed in a ditch. Cori and John were found dead inside of the vehicle with gunshot wounds. Police determined that John shot Cori before turning the gun on himself. There was a history of domestic abuse issues in the relationship, including a 2014 domestic incident in which John was referred to the Waupaca County District Attorney's Office on a charge of domestic abuse disorderly conduct.

WINNEBAGO

Jean Walsh-Josephson, 57, Utica – February 27, 2017

Dewey Josephson, 59, and his wife, Jean Walsh-Josephson, were found with fatal shotgun wounds. Walsh-Josephson, an ex-financial adviser, was in the middle of a jury trial where she was the defendant, facing numerous charges for embezzling from elderly clients. She was due to appear in court for the sixth day of the jury trial the morning of February 27, 2017. Dewey Josephson was also scheduled to appear in court that day to testify against his wife. When neither Walsh-Josephson nor Josephson showed up to court, police went to their residence and found the couple dead. There was a note explaining their mutual plan for the murder-suicide, which was for Josephson to shoot his wife and then himself.

Oshkosh – August 2, 2017

In this attempted murder-suicide, 66-year-old Bonnie Tyson shot her husband, John Tyson, in the head at their home. She then shot herself. Bonnie died at the scene, but John survived the shooting. Nobody who knew the couple thought they had relationship problems, but police say Bonnie had been suffering from mental illness for years.

A Conversation with a Surviving Family Member

End Abuse's Homicide Prevention Program Director, Sara Krall, had the opportunity to sit down with Angelina Schnook, a young woman who lost her mother, Karie Lantz, and stepfather, Dean Lantz, in a domestic violence-related murder-suicide in February 2017. Her contribution is a unique opportunity to get a closer look at the person Karie Lantz was and the impact she had on so many people. The rich and at times emotion-filled conversation with Angelina is summarized below.



*Angelina Schnook and
Karie Lantz*

SK: Thank you for sitting down with me and chatting about your mother, Karie. Could you start by telling me a bit about her? Who was she? What was she like?

AS: She was my role model. Every teenage girl always thinks that they hate their mother and their mother never understands them. But I saw a really hardworking person. My mom got pregnant early, so she didn't go to college until she was 30. She always worked multiple jobs and picked up extra jobs around Christmas so we could do the activities that we wanted. She was always super involved with us. She was the Boy Scout leader for my brothers, the Girl Scout leader for me. She was a 4-H leader when we did 4-H. She always chaperoned trips and worked hard to make sure we could go to camps.

She was also a manager at Pizza Hut for 17 years. She was always giving people second and third chances, even if their employment record wasn't what somebody was looking for, and they just needed help getting there. She was always that person who would work with them. She went out of her way to not only help her employees have a job but make sure that they were being taken care of at home, too. If she knew that they were tight on money, she'd bring in food for everybody. And she was always bringing people to family events, like birthdays and Christmases and things like that, when they needed to spend the holidays with other people. She made sure that the people she cared about were taken care of. Her doing that and working hard simultaneously helped me and my brothers see those core values. You always gotta work, but it's not just about work; you gotta give extra too, and things like that. So that was my mom. She was amazing.

SK: And you have how many siblings?

AS: I'm the middle of five, so I have two older brothers, a younger brother, and a younger sister, who now lives with me and my husband.

SK: Can you tell me a little bit about your father?

AS: He's actually my stepdad, but he was still like my dad. She met Dean when I was one, and she got remarried to him, and then they had my two younger siblings. My biological father had visitation rights, but I probably saw him three or four times up until middle school, and then I didn't really see him after that. My stepdad and my biological father were actually good friends. That's how my

stepdad met my mom. All three of them worked at Menards, so when my biological father left, my stepdad stepped in to help my mom. He gave her a place to live and made sure she got to work and that we were taken care of, things like that. I was one year old, so that's just recounting what we grew up hearing from everybody else, including my mom and my grandparents.

One of the things I remember growing up is that he never wanted to go out with any adult friends. He didn't socialize as much as my mom did. She was very involved with people's lives and helping people, and my dad always just stayed home. As a child I rationalized that the majority of the times he missed any of our sporting or other events was because he was working. He didn't have standard Monday through Friday, eight to four hours. So yeah, he didn't really like going out with friends and socializing like that at all. I know that my parents fought about that a lot when I was growing up, just because my mom did like going out with her friends, and he didn't always want her to. If we had a family event on my mom's side, my dad didn't always come.

SK: What did your mom's family think of your stepdad?

AS: Well, if you ever asked my stepdad, he would always say that my grandparents never liked him. My mom's side is quite religious, and my stepdad wasn't. As a child growing up, I never saw anything like they didn't like him or didn't support them in their relationship. They never said anything bad about him. I know that they were appreciative of the situation that my mom was in shortly after I was born, where she was on her own and needed support. But it was more my dad never liked my mom's parents. He didn't always voice it, but he didn't shy away from voicing it either. And he always put it back on them.

SK: Do you know if your mom's relationship with your stepdad moved quickly?

AS: If I was born when she was nineteen and my brother when she was 21, she had to have been pregnant within the first year of them being together. I can definitely see my mom feeling like she didn't have a choice when Dean stepped in. I know the religion definitely played a part in it. But I don't think she would have had an emotional or sexual relationship with him if she didn't have feelings for him. When I was in first grade, my parents lived separately, and we lived with my grandparents. But I know she got a lot of pressure to stay married, and they got back together.

SK: Did that ever happen again when you were a child?

AS: That was the only time until they separated. Once me and the two older siblings graduated, we all moved out. We all had our own lives, so there were less get-togethers with family. My mom started doing more with friends, where she didn't when we were younger because she was so involved in our activities. My mom and I, our relationship became a lot closer when I was 18 or 19. We started going to the gym together, and I got a part-time job working at Pizza Hut. The activities that we did, my dad never did with us. When we went to the gym, it was me, my mom, and my brother. We would go roller blading together too. We would do all these things together, and he was just working and by himself.

SK: Then what happened in their relationship?

AS: I remember he was working at Ashley Furniture, because he stayed there the longest [2012]. I think it was almost a year. That's when he came home and said that he had a girlfriend, and he essentially wanted to take it to the next level, wanted it to be serious with her. He actually wanted my mom to move out, and she was like, "I know we don't talk anymore, but I didn't realize you were dating somebody." It was kind of like a shock. So my mom's first response was, "Oh my gosh, I let things go, and we drifted apart, and I have to fix this." They went back and forth for six to nine months, and that's when they saw the effect it had on my sister. The whole time he was seeing his girlfriend, he was taking my sister, because the girlfriend had a four-year-old daughter. So it was my dad and his girlfriend and the two girls, and they were going to do activities together, and he was always like, this is our secret, you can't tell mom. And then it all came out that he had this girlfriend, and I know my mom felt like she failed because she hadn't seen the signs.

In January [2015], he actually kicked her out and was like, "You can't come home tonight, we're done. My girlfriend's moving in." My mom got an apartment and lived there for the next two years, until everything kind of changed. That whole time, he still had the same girlfriend. Granted, they broke up a couple times because my parents never finalized any sort of divorce or anything like that. Dean was kind of flip-flopping back and forth because he was like, "Oh well, my wife actually does love me, we just drifted apart," and all this stuff. Just so much drama.

In the six months before this all happened, he wanted to refinance the house and have my mom move back home. But he still wanted the girlfriend to live there. It was just a financial strain. Financially, neither one of them could afford to live apart. And I just remember being like, "This is just stupid. Either you guys are married or not married." And my mom said, "No, I'm resigning my lease." He was very, very upset that she wouldn't do it.

SK: When did you start to become concerned?

AS: It was right around that January timeframe. That's when the erratic behavior started, even though we knew he was still with the girlfriend. His behavior just never made sense; I think he wanted both and couldn't have both. One day they would take a trip together, and then two days later he'd be at my mom's door saying, "Come back home" or "I just want to hang out" and things like that.

SK: And this is January of 17?

AS: Yeah. Just in four weeks, everything just went so fast, and that's why it was just really hard to make that connection. There were a couple of things that happened before January that we really didn't tie to it until unfortunately all this had happened.

At one point that winter, my mom's mailbox was completely smashed, and we just thought somebody just ran into the mailbox and just drove off. Then both my mom and my grandparents' vehicles all ended up with the same nails in the tires, so we were tracing back all their travel patterns and thought it was because somebody dropped a box of nails out of a truck

or something. We were trying to make all these connections, just trying to figure out. My mom's vehicle got keyed, and we were like, "Okay, who did you fire recently?" Then she started having the worst vehicle problems, and in September or August [2016] she bought a new truck because she was having so many issues with some of her older jeeps. We took them to two or three different shops; they could never figure it out. A couple of months after she got the new truck, it started having similar problems, and we figured out somebody was putting sugar in the gas tank or sugar water or something like that. But it took like four months to figure out. He thought if he could break her cars that she'd have to come home. He tried all these tactics, tried bribing her, and then tried making it so she couldn't live apart either.

One of the other weird things that he did was he was going to the church that they had gotten married at, and he was getting counseling. He actually went to three different churches, which was alarming after I had figured that out, because I don't think he was getting the answer he wanted. So he kept talking to different people. But he was telling me that the pastor he talked to said that Karie owed him another chance, and that they are supposed to be together and can't get divorced. He was going to all these people, even my mom's friend, trying to get all these people to be on his side. When we cleaned up the house afterwards, we found a phone there, and I had replayed some of the messages. One of the counselors had left a message. She sounded really alarmed in the voicemail about a session that they had and wanted him to come back so they could talk more. I can't help but wonder if we had known, if these people had reached out to us if he wasn't acting normal in the sessions, because maybe they were seeing this other side that we weren't seeing.

My dad forced himself into my mom's house in January. He came over to talk to her, and she didn't want to talk to him. He just pushed the door open. It was a yelling match, then he stormed off. It was weird because she had gotten the divorce lawyer the week before, and the week after was when he was acting really strange. We were monitoring my sister's phone, because my dad was just constantly texting, asking, "Where are you guys at? What are you doing?" And two or three times, he just happened to show up at the same place they were. He was harassing my sister to the point where she told him where they were. Then my mom had this no phones rule, and she actually took the sim card out of my sister's phone the week she was going to file for divorce, and that's when he got really anxious. He'd be calling her at like 11:00 at night saying, "Can I come over and say goodnight?" and things like that.

SK: It kind of sounds like your sister was his way into finding out information?

AS: Yeah, his last resort was to manipulate my sister. When that was taken away from him, the rest of it started. He started showing up at my work and wanted to talk. He'd be like, "You should talk to mom, and we should be together." The first couple times, I said, "It's not my marriage. It's up to you guys to work it out, regardless of my opinion." And then he got angry at me. We met at Burger King, and I didn't know at the time that he had already found out; it was a week after she had filed, and it was the week before their deaths. He was so angry at me. He said, "A good child wouldn't want her parents to get a divorce," and, "Stop telling her that she should divorce me." I said, "I'm not the one telling her. You literally told her years ago, this is what you've been fighting for." In January, everything got so weird. Before that, he would never show up at my work and, in my opinion, be a basket case, saying things like "I can't sleep, I'm

not eating, I'm in a lot of pain," and things like that. And, "Karie's my whole life." My sister was so anxious and so scared to say the wrong thing that she just didn't talk. It wasn't normal for her, being a young, innocent child. And I remember my mom and I googling what a normal custody case situation was, because it wasn't a punishment; the intent was never to take her away from my dad.

SK: What other types of abusive behavior did you see manifest? And what did their verbal arguments look like?

AS: I know that last week, after she had filed for divorce, she rearranged her schedule to do anything she could to just not be home. She didn't want him to know what gym she was going to and things like that. He was never physically abusive towards her. When he forced himself into my mom's place in January, he didn't hurt her, but he did violate her space.

And there was a lot of blaming. I know that he always resented the fact that my mom went to college and got a degree, and then it was because she went and got an accounting degree and a degree in computer science, but then she stayed working in the restaurant industry, and he always was pushing her to do more. He would always make comments like, "Well, if I was the one that got to go to college for architecture, I'd be working in that field." I know that was always a big, big strain. He always thought that it was unfair that he didn't get to go to college, because with as many siblings as he had, he didn't always get the opportunity to go to school, even in high school, because he had chores to do.

I think he felt she owed it to him to take care of him, because she had gone to college and he didn't. And they knew that at some point, he wouldn't be able to continue working to support himself. The majority of his work was self-employment, so he wouldn't get a lot of social security. So he thought she owed it to him to come back because she knew all along that he would need somebody to take care of him. He was even bringing that up to me, so one of the things I was trying to get him to do those last few weeks was sign up for government assistance programs. But I think it was just not even an option to seek help from anybody else. It had to be Karie, because she owed it to him.

He also used the fact that he stepped in when my biological dad left her stranded with three kids to guilt her. He would say things like, "I saved you. I gave you a car so you could get to work. I made sure that you had a roof over your head." Things like that. But that was like 20 years ago. That was something that he chose to do 20 years ago. It wasn't like he was stepping in now. It was always repetitive. Almost like he had to beat her down to get her to agree with him because she never saw his side of things. But that was because she didn't want to be back together with him. He would just come back with the same argument over and over until she was just emotionally drained.

SK: Do you know if he was suicidal or ever tried to commit suicide before?

AS: Not that I'm aware of. When I met him in January at Burger King, he said, "I have nothing else to live for. I just have your sister and Karie. I might as well not live if I don't have them." He never said "I'm going to kill myself," or anything like that. But you could tell that he was

depressed; he made that very clear.

SK: Looking back, is there anything that you think could have prevented your mom's death?

AS: I really think that if we had been able to enact our safety plan, which was that mom and my sister weren't even gonna be in the same state when he was notified that she filed for divorce. I wish I could see what that outcome would have been. I think that the counselors maybe could've established that there was something wrong. And I think if the police were involved, they would've had somebody there that was professionally trained to see red flags. We just needed somebody that could notice those red flags that we were just completely missing. That's really the biggest opportunity.

We were kind of worried that Sunday, when we found out that he knew that she had filed for divorce. But he said all the right things to her that day. If I was drained from weeks of getting emotionally beat the crap out of, and somebody says, "I'm just gonna sign the divorce papers," oh God, I would have been there in a heartbeat. So, those are some of the things that, if we had some of that knowledge, we could have at least taken a step back and questioned it. He made it seem like he was just as drained, just as tired. It was like, I'm still not okay with this, but if you've already gotten to that point, then nothing I can say is going to change your mind. Having that viewpoint and being able to manipulate that situation was what got her to go over there that day.

SK: Do you think your mom was scared of him? And if so, at what point did she become scared?

AS: That's something I've asked myself a lot. Right around Christmas time, when I'd kind of put my foot down and I said, "Okay, I'm starting to have arguments with my husband about somebody else's marriage. And that's just not okay," I could tell then that our relationship changed. And it's sad because more of the drama happened in January than the previous four or five months. I knew she was intentionally downplaying things when we were talking because she didn't want to tarnish my relationship with her. How much of what was going on was she not relaying to me, and was she actually afraid for herself? I think there's a part of me that thinks she was afraid for herself, but she didn't want to say it out loud to me. We were only focusing on my sister, and the only way to protect her was the restraining order. She was afraid for my sister, and I think she was afraid that he would force a confrontation. Not necessarily physically hurt her, but he would force a confrontation. He had done that before, and he was showing up at her work and driving around, seeing when she was home and things like that. So I think there was definitely a chance that she pursued a restraining order to protect herself as well.

SK: People will see this report that have lost their own family members or loved ones to domestic violence. Is there a message that you would like to share with somebody who may be in a similar situation?

AS: Yeah. Honestly, if somebody had told me this when it first had happened, I never would have believed them. But now that it's been a year and a half, I know that there's nothing I

could've done to prevent it. A year ago, I was like, "I could have done this, this, and this." I just replay all those situations in my head, and I still end up with the same outcome. I could've called the police instead of telling my mom I was worried about my sister. What would have happened? Do you know? I can't say that I do.

Then I think about how around Christmas, when I told my mom I was done, I told her she had to do something for my sister, because my stepdad's behavior was emotionally hurting her. I wasn't telling her she had to get a divorce, but they had to come to some sort of adult reconciliation. I've always questioned, did I do the right thing by forcing that issue, because this is what it led to? But what was the alternative? They went for years like this, and I end up with an emotionally traumatized sister.

Even though it was hard, in the last year I've been able to separate myself and know it's not my fault. We were all adults, and I didn't force either one of them to take the actions that they did. I know now that I could have done a million things differently, and I still could have the same result or an even worse result. It takes time to break down each of those individual situations and then think about if I did this differently and this differently, what would the possible ramifications be? Unfortunately, what you come up with is, you're not them. They're going to make their own decisions. And as a victim that has suffered this loss, you can't make that realization in the first year. You really can't. It's something that even the counselors couldn't get me to realize. I just had to work it through in my head myself and realize that my end goal was to help save my sister. And what did it cost me? It cost me both my parents. Is that a fair trade-off? No, but what's the alternative? You lose them all?

I'll never be okay with how things played out. Not at all. I lost my best friend. My mom and I talked every day. We went grocery shopping together, we worked out together, we hung out together, we worked together, and we were best friends. And now I'm lucky enough that I get to mentor my sister and create that relationship with her, but it cost me a lot, and it's not fair. I know that I didn't always make the right decisions. I didn't always say the right things, but I know that I couldn't have changed either one of my parents' behaviors as an adult. They had to make those decisions on their own.

SK: Is there anything more you'd like to share about how this has impacted you and your sister?

AS: Obviously my biggest concern all along was for my sister. My husband and I are very adamant about making sure that she can have as much of a normal life as she can. So supporting the activities that she wanted to be in is a big one. Mostly because my parents worked so hard to make sure me and my siblings could be in all the activities that we wanted to. And because my parents were living separately when my sister was starting to branch out and do those things, she couldn't do some of the things that we were able to do, because of the financial strain. My sister also lacks confidence, which after being emotionally abused is completely understandable. I told my husband that if we can do one thing while we're raising her, I want to help her get her confidence back. She's come out of her shell in the past year and a half. She's no longer afraid of being rejected or being put in a situation where she has to try to repair something for somebody. It's like the first time in years that she just gets to be a kid.

Homicide Prevention Program Update

This section replaces our usual “Lethality Assessment Program Update” section (as it was worded in the previous few Homicide Reports), because that title falls short of describing the many ways End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin’s homicide prevention work has evolved over the past year. In 2017, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin received Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funding from the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) to expand our homicide prevention work. This enabled End Abuse to dedicate a full-time staff position to oversee expansion of the Lethality Assessment Program – Maryland Model (LAP).⁴ We entered into a formal memorandum of understanding with the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) in December 2017, outlining the agreement between our two coalitions that End Abuse is now the entity to directly fulfill LAP training and technical assistance requests received from Wisconsin communities.

In early 2018, End Abuse was approached once again by the DOJ, who asked if we were willing to write a proposal outlining how we might multiply our efforts if given more resources. Our vision included not only getting more parts of our state implementing this evidence-based approach to reducing domestic homicides and serious assaults but also supporting the sustainability of those efforts, among other initiatives. The DOJ recognizes the value and importance of this work, and ultimately they were able to support our proposal. End Abuse brought on a second full-time staff member to our homicide prevention team in July of 2018 to assist with the program expansion.

Since receiving the first round of funding from DOJ in 2017, 22 additional law enforcement jurisdictions⁵ and ten domestic violence programs⁶ in Wisconsin have participated in a LAP train-the-trainer session and are now implementing the LAP or will be soon. To date, there are over 100 law enforcement agencies in Wisconsin that have received training through End Abuse or MNADV on this life-saving protocol. Domestic violence programs report that they are connecting with victims they have never worked with before, and law enforcement officers are also having a positive experience with the program. In the words of Chief Eric Atkinson of Menomonie Police Department, “This is the perfect way to build those partnerships and really understand each other’s role, what each person does and what our expectations are, and work together to try and save lives.”⁷

We are aware that there are areas of the state where domestic violence programs have developed their own referral processes with law enforcement, and places that have used research to piece together their own lethality assessment tool. In other scenarios, law enforcement agencies are using the LAP tool as a part of their investigation, but not in the way it was intended or researched to be effective at reducing homicide and serious assault, which is by providing that immediate

4 See 2013-2016 editions of the Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report for a further discussion of what the LAP is, and the research behind the LAP screening tool and protocol.

5 22 law enforcement agencies include: Adams, Ashland, Bayfield, Brown, Iowa, Kewaunee, Marquette, St. Croix, Waukesha and Wood County Sheriff’s Offices; Algoma, Ashwaubenon, Beloit, Delafield, De Pere, Hobart-Lawrence, Kewaunee, Luxemburg, Janesville, North Hudson and Pulaski Police Departments.

6 Ten domestic violence programs: Turningpoint, The Family Center, New Day Advocacy Center, Violence Intervention Project, Golden House, Hope House, Family Advocates, The Women’s Center, YWCA Rock County, Beloit Domestic Violence Survivor Center

7 Benefits of the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apvPrIq6eUw&t=3s>. Accessed September 23, 2018.

link to domestic violence advocacy services. We urge communities to consider taking advantage of the cost-free training and technical assistance available through End Abuse. DOJ envisions all Wisconsin law enforcement jurisdictions will eventually incorporate this protocol into their response to intimate partner violence cases, but it must be a collaborative partnership between agencies involved. In Maryland, where the protocol was developed, they saw a 32% decrease in their domestic violence homicide rate between 2008 and 2013 after state-wide implementation of the LAP in 2005.⁸ Our goal, and DOJ's goal, is to experience a decrease in our domestic violence homicide rate through widespread use of the LAP.

With the additional resources, another priority of ours is to integrate the other nationally-recognized evidence-based homicide prevention strategy, the Domestic Violence High-Risk Team (DVHRT) model into Wisconsin communities.⁹ The DVHRT model, initially developed by the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center, aims to proactively identify cases at high risk for homicide via use of an evidence-based screening tool, and then provide ongoing case monitoring through a small multi-disciplinary team to ensure victim safety as the case moves through the criminal justice system. Wisconsin LAP-implementing communities hoped to utilize the LAP cases assessed by law enforcement at "high-danger" as a mechanism for screening in cases to a high-risk team, but the amount of cases the LAP typically screens in as "high-danger" is around 50-60%. In more urban settings, that number of cases would overwhelm a high-risk team. Our solution, after consulting with the nation's leading researcher on intimate partner femicide, Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell, was to work with her to develop a weighted LAP tool for communities to be able to gradate the LAP Screen to account for the different "weight" each lethality factor poses, as not all of the lethality factors on the LAP Screen pose the same level of risk.¹⁰ Milwaukee has recently implemented a high-risk team in their community using the same method and has already experienced success with utilizing both the LAP and the high-risk team in combination.

For the Wisconsin communities that are not trained in the LAP but want a way to determine lethality risk and explore the possibility of creating their own high-risk team, End Abuse arranged for Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell to provide a Danger Assessment Training in Madison the week after this report's release. The Danger Assessment can be utilized by professionals in the criminal justice system, healthcare settings and domestic violence victim service programs.¹¹ The tool has four "scoring" levels: Variable Danger, Increased Danger, Severe Danger, and Extreme Danger. Following the live training, participants are able to go online and pay a small fee to become certified to use the tool. It is not only helpful to alert victims to their danger level and help to craft a personalized safety plan, but it also has proven to be useful in court settings.

We were also fortunate to bring Neil Websdale, director of the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative (NDVFR) to Wisconsin in November. Fatality Review is a process that

8 See <https://lethalityassessmentprogram.org/about-lap/talking-points>

9 See <https://www.jgccdale.org/about-dvhrt/>

10 Campbell, Jacquelyn C., Daniel Webster, Jane Koziol-McLain, Carolyn Rebecca Block, Doris Campbell, Mary Ann Curry, Faye Gary et al. "Assessing Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Homicide." National Institute of Justice Journal 250 (2003):14-19.

11 See www.dangerassessment.org

brings together systems which were involved in a domestic violence homicide case to share their knowledge of that case and look for gaps in systems' coordination that were apparent. The aim is never to point fingers or blame an entity, but rather acknowledge that better coordination may save lives. The only formal, organized homicide review team in Wisconsin is in the city of Milwaukee. Communities have periodically reached out to End Abuse for support in conducting a fatality review, but those reviews have never come to fruition. Our hope is that this training will help Wisconsin communities, as well as the End Abuse homicide prevention team, better understand how to organize such an effort. In other states, statutes mandate and govern the process of domestic violence fatality review. Wisconsin has no such statute. This training will help inform whether or not that is a direction to explore.

Lethality Risk: Child Custody & Placement Decisions

By Adrienne Roach, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin's Policy & Systems Analyst

Last year, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin embarked on a research project to explore how criminal domestic violence convictions affect subsequent child custody and placement decisions in the family law system. For years, advocates in the field have witnessed the effects of adverse custody and placement decisions on domestic violence survivors. These stories are powerful and have always driven End Abuse's work to improve outcomes for survivors in court. Yet, without comprehensive research to support these stories, systems have been reluctant to change. That is why End Abuse engaged in an expansive study to evaluate outcomes for survivors throughout the state.

As we developed the data collection instrument, we realized the need to measure the severity of a case. We expected to find that the more severe the criminal domestic violence case, the higher the likelihood the child custody and placement outcomes would favor the victim. To test this hypothesis, we needed a measurement. At first, we thought the severity of the criminal charge might be enough, but charges do not always accurately reflect the severity of a crime. This led us to explore lethality factors, specifically the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) lethality factors, to measure the cases' potential severity.

The LAP lethality factors are associated with different levels of severity. Level one lethality factors (some of the most dangerous factors) including using a weapon or threatening the use of a weapon such as a gun or a knife, homicidal threats, and a victim's belief that the abuser might try to kill him/her. Level two lethality factors (less risky, but still extremely dangerous) include whether the abuser has access to a gun, whether the abuser has strangled the victim, and whether the abuser is violently or constantly jealous and controlling, among other factors.

In using the LAP lethality factors, we identified one limitation. The LAP Screen is for one-on-one interviews between a victim and a law enforcement officer in the immediate aftermath of an incident. Conversely, we used the LAP lethality factors to evaluate the case long after the incident occurred. We also determined lethality risk secondhand, based on police reports, indictments, injunction petitions, general case notes, and trial transcripts. We were concerned about the potential for personal bias and human error in a secondhand case review. To mitigate these

concerns, we provided a codebook to all data collectors. The codebook clearly specified what to look for in the case file and how to evaluate certain statements or accounts in the context of lethality risk.

Controlling for human error, the strengths of using the LAP lethality factors to measure case severity far outweighed the limitations. What we found was stunning and concerning. Our findings highlight the need for significant policy and systems change to ensure better accounting for the safety of children and survivors in custody and placement decisions.

We reviewed 361 cases across 20 counties, ranging in size from small to medium to large. All the cases we reviewed resulted in criminal misdemeanor or felony convictions; therefore, we expected to find some severely violent cases. Not surprisingly, the majority of cases we reviewed (72%) were severe enough to include at least one lethality factor. Of those 260 cases, 123 had at least one level one lethality factor, and 56 had more than one. Therefore, of all the cases we reviewed, more than a third were at high risk for lethality, according to the LAP lethality factors. So, how did that severity translate to the court's subsequent child custody and placement decisions?

Of the 123 riskiest cases – cases in which the abuser either used or threatened to use a deadly weapon against the victim, threatened to kill the victim, or the victim believed the abuser would kill him/her – the court awarded sole-custody to the victim less than half of the time (46% of cases). The court awarded joint custody to the victim and the extremely violent abuser 47% of the time. Additionally, we were shocked to find that in two cases the court awarded sole custody to the violent abuser.

Survivors fared a little better on physical placement, but the results were still disturbing. Physical placement decisions are critical to the child and the survivor's imminent safety. However, the court awarded sole placement to the survivor in only seven of the riskiest cases. Most decisions favored primary placement with the victim (61%). However, the court ordered 50/50 and shared placement (which both require extensive contact between parents) in 21 cases. We were again shocked to find that in six cases the court awarded primary placement to the violent abuser.

Finally, we expected that in the riskiest cases, the court would order safety provisions to ensure the future safety of the child and the survivor. However, we were stunned to find that the court ordered safety provisions in only 20% of these cases. Only six of those cases had a 50/50 or shared placement order, meaning that the other 15 orders for 50/50 or shared placement included NO safety provisions.

Unfortunately, these findings mapped similarly onto the broader set of cases we reviewed. The court awarded joint custody about as often as they awarded sole custody to the victim. Even though the court ordered primary placement with the victim in the majority of cases, there were still an alarmingly high number of 50/50 and shared placement decisions. Sole placement with the victim was rare, and equally as rare was the use of safety provisions. This demonstrates that in our family law system, a case's lethality risk or severity appears to have little to no effect on the court's custody and placement decisions.

This study's findings will inform our biannual legislative policy agenda and our work with systems. End Abuse has already met with professionals from the court system, attorneys, guardians *ad litem*, advocates, and survivors to discuss how we should use our findings to effect change. We are currently exploring a collection of innovative strategies from the micro-level, such as the use of different forms and processes, along with increased training for court personnel, to the macro-level, such as mandated and statutory changes to court requirements and processes.

Overall, this study showed us that research has the potential to inspire change. Research can be a powerful tool for innovation and justice. We will continue to analyze the wealth of data we gathered in this project to inspire future systems change. We will also explore new ways to amplify survivors' voices and shine light on their experiences to move us all forward toward positive social and systems change.

Leveraging the Legislative Process to Increase Survivor Safety

Preventing domestic violence homicides requires a multi-faceted approach, addressing safety concerns on an individual level, as well as on a global scale. End Abuse Public Policy Coordinator, Chase Tarrier, reflects on how we center our legislative policy efforts on what survivors say they need in order to stay safe. He also outlines some key changes in the law that were passed in the previous legislative session, as well as future legislation that we plan to support.

At times, it can seem that the decisions made, the committee meetings held, and the votes taken in our state legislature are removed from the day-to-day lives of the citizens in our state. Many people around the country feel disengaged from 'politics' at both the state and federal level, and they wonder about the real-world impact of legislative changes on their lives. Victims of domestic violence are no exception; in fact, the legislative process can have an even more exaggerated effect on their ability to stay safe and live independently on their own terms.

In this past legislative session, our first point of concern with the budget was a proposed cut of \$2.9 million to the Emergency Assistance (EA) program, which disseminates federal dollars to low-income families in times of crisis to help them avoid homelessness. Despite the concerns we raised about the possible impact this cut would have on victims and their children taking steps to leave an abuser, the final version of the budget included this reduction in EA funding.

On a more positive note, End Abuse and other allied organizations successfully defeated a budget motion that would have tied FoodShare eligibility to child support compliance. Tying public benefits eligibility to child support compliance forces victims into increased contact with abusers and allows batterers to more easily use children as a tool of control. Defeating this proposed change to state law was a positive step for the safety of survivors and their kids in Wisconsin.

New Laws Impacting Survivors and Advocates

End Abuse supported several important proposals this session that were passed into law and will improve the safety and autonomy of Wisconsin survivors.

Assembly Bill 581 (AB 581), which passed out the State Senate just before the end of the session, institutes a change to state law pertaining to venue for restraining orders. Grounded in the stories of several domestic violence homicide victims who were also domestic violence program employees, AB 581 offers additional protections for survivors who work in the domestic violence advocacy or a related field. Under the new state law, specific categories of victims who lack anonymity in the court system due to the nature of their work will now be able to seek out a restraining order in a different county than the one they reside in. By allowing this group of victims to maintain their privacy while seeking legal protections, we hope that victims who also work in the field will have the tools they need to stay safe.

Assembly Bill 451 (AB 451) also passed into law this session and ensures that Canadian victims of domestic violence living or residing in Wisconsin will have their protective orders recognized by our state's courts and law enforcement agencies. This new law will bring our state in line with the Canadian justice system, which already recognizes the validity of Wisconsin protective orders.

Finally, **Assembly Bill 865 (AB 865)** also passed into law this session, instituting several important changes to the Safe at Home program, which ensures that the location of victims of domestic violence, harassment, stalking, and other crimes remain protected from their abusers. These changes clarify several unanswered administrative questions for the Department of Justice (DOJ) and ensure that all the identifying information of people enrolled in the program remains protected, an important step towards increased safety for victims and their kids.

Future Legislation End Abuse Plans to Support for Survivor Safety

While End Abuse was happy to see several important proposals to improve survivor safety and autonomy pass this session, there are other legislative priorities that have yet to become law. Moving forward into next session, the End Abuse policy team will continue to advocate for several proposals to break the cycle of abuse and empower survivors. One of these proposals is the Teen Dating Violence Prevention Bill. This proposal will institute teen dating violence prevention curricula in all Wisconsin middle and high schools, in addition to requiring that schools have a stated policy governing their response to dating violence and regularly train staff on that policy.

Likewise, we plan to once again support the Protecting Victims of Child Sex Trafficking Act. This important legislation prohibits law enforcement from charging minors with prostitution, an important step towards recognizing that trafficking survivors are victims and not criminals. While there was more support than ever for this bill, which would bring a more trauma-informed approach to these cases in our criminal justice system, there remained enough opposition to stop the bill from full passage. Hopefully, through increased education of state legislators during the non-voting months, this bill will pass into law next session with strong bi-partisan support.

An area of public policy advocacy particularly tied to our homicide prevention work is ensuring we have laws in place to keep firearms out of the hands of dangerous abusers. In the next legislative session, End Abuse plans to support legislation to reinstate the 48-hour waiting period for firearm purchases. The two-day waiting period for firearm sales existed until the 2015-16 session, at which time it was repealed from our state statutes. It is critical that this waiting period be reestablished in Wisconsin state law to ensure an additional level of protection for victims, who are far more likely

to be killed by their abusers when they have easy access to a gun.

Another firearm-related bill that End Abuse plans to support would bring Wisconsin state law in line with federal law by prohibiting firearm possession for misdemeanor-level domestic violence offenders. While this proposal did not pass in the previous session, we look forward to encouraging our legislators to take common sense steps toward increased firearm safety next session, starting with universal background checks on all gun sales.

For more information on End Abuse's policy work, feel free to reach out to Chase Tarrier, Public Policy Coordinator, at chaset@endabusewi.org.

Cold Cases Highlight Undercount

By Jacqueline Kretchmer, Homicide Prevention Program Intern

In our years of gathering domestic violence homicide information, we've come to learn that not every homicide case is initially recognized as such. Some domestic violence homicides are ruled suicides or inconclusive, turning cold and forgotten. The perpetrator faces no consequences, and often they are treated as a victim who lost a loved one, perhaps even receiving a life insurance check for the life they secretly were responsible for ending. In recent years, due to developments in technology and evidence processing, crimes like these have renewed hope of being solved. Outlined below are two domestic violence homicides committed in the 1980s. It was not until 2018 that the perpetrators were held accountable through the criminal justice system for their crimes.

Columbia County

On August 19, 1988, Lorelei "Lori" Bringe was found dead from a single gunshot wound in a wooded area close to her home in Poynette, WI. Her death was ruled a suicide, and the case was dropped.

In 2014, the case was reopened by the Columbia County Sheriff's Office as a homicide investigation, because they had new reasons to believe that Bringe's death was not a suicide. Due to the placement of the gunshot wound in her head, Bringe would have needed to fire the gun with her left hand even though she was right-handed. Additionally, after further examination of how the bullet entered her skull, Bringe would have needed to hold the gun at an unusually awkward angle when firing it.

Given this information, investigators started looking more closely into her husband, Mark Bringe, who was interviewed by police in 2017 and gave contradictory statements about the incident from those he gave in 1988 shortly after his wife's death. Additionally, he admitted that the gun and magazine found next to Lori Bringe's body belonged to him and that he had no prior knowledge of her ever firing a weapon before that incident.

Another piece of evidence that was especially influential to detectives was one that provided a motive for Mark Bringe to kill his wife. He knew that she was secretly seeing another man and was planning on telling Mark that she was leaving him the very weekend that she was found dead. Lori Bringe's close friend said that Mark was recording Lori's phone conversations, enabling him to know about her affair and the fact that she was planning on leaving him. The recording device was found in Mark Bringe's home in Arizona during a search of his home in 2017. Mark Bringe also claimed he did not know about his wife's affair before her death, but his call records show that he called the man with whom his wife was having an affair the day after she died.

In February 2018, Mark Bringe was arrested on charges of first-degree murder and brought back to Wisconsin. The case has not concluded.

Oneida County

On April 28, 1982, Barbara Mendez's co-worker found her bludgeoned to death in the Park City Credit Union in Minocqua, where they both worked. Additionally, there was \$2,700 in cash missing. The case went cold after investigators could not determine a suspect. Finally, after re-interviewing all of the witnesses, the victim's husband, Robin Mendez, was arrested in February 2018 for Barbara's murder.

The key witnesses, Robin and Barbara's two children and a girl with whom Robin was having an affair, were all minors at the time of the murder and in recent years told authorities they were coerced by Robin Mendez to lie about their versions of the story. All three reported that he manipulated them into thinking their memories were not serving them correctly, and he coached all three girls to tell his version of the story in court.

Robin Mendez was having an affair with a 14-year-old girl and told her that he wanted to buy her an engagement ring. He knew his church would not approve of him divorcing Barbara and would not let him get married again in that church. According to witnesses, Barbara apparently found out about this affair shortly before her murder. The 14-year-old girl reported having sexual intercourse with Robin Mendez the night of his wife's murder. Shortly thereafter, Mendez was criminally charged with having sexual contact with the 14-year-old girl. A year after his wife's death he was charged for molesting a 5-year-old girl.

In addition to the three girls' testimony that incriminated Mendez, Mendez gave contradicting statements during interviews with the police, and additional evidence also pointed to his guilt. After examining Barbara's body, it was determined that she likely was bludgeoned with a pry bar, just like one that Robin Mendez regularly used at his job in the furniture industry. There appeared to be no forced entry to the credit union, so investigators determined that the perpetrator was likely someone who Barbara knew. Another piece of evidence pointing to Mendez is that one month after Barbara's murder, he sold his motorcycle and bought a new one. He wrote a check for \$3,774 to cover the remaining amount due. His daughters reported that they did not

know where he came up with that money, as he had always been very poor. This led investigators to believe that he stole the \$2,700 from the credit union the night of the murder.

After compiling enough evidence, police were able to arrest and charge 69-year-old Robin Mendez in connection to the murder of Barbara Mendez, nearly 36 years after her death. The case has not concluded.

Not only do we need to honor the lives of those included in this report, but we also must keep in mind that additional domestic violence homicides may have occurred in Wisconsin during the years that we have been tracking this information that we have not yet been able to attribute to domestic violence.

Methodology

Our definition of homicide is the killing of one human being by another. This encompasses criminal, justifiable, self-defense, and reckless homicides. Homicides are 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 involve a parent or grandparent killed by an adult child or grandchild. We do not include these cases, however, if the defendant was found not guilty by reason of mental illness or lacked the capacity to stand trial.
- It was a homicide of a person other than the intimate partner, and it occurred within the context of domestic violence. This encompasses 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. We also include 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 his or her children in order to exact revenge on his or her partner, it is considered domestic violence-related.

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 was

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 listed 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 determining which homicides to include in the report.

In compiling our summary data, we seek to include the total number of homicides committed in Wisconsin in a given year. As previously noted, we use UCR data submitted to DOJ and, if available for the year in question, information from the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) of 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; DOJ counts homicides in the Wisconsin county in which they occur and conforms to UCR standards that omit intoxicated driving deaths. DOJ does not include homicides by legal intervention. The BHI figure is therefore usually higher than the UCR-based count.

A Note about the Expanded 2010 Definition

As noted above, beginning with the report for 2010, we also include cases that involve a parent or grandparent killed by an adult child or grandchild. We do not include these cases, however, if the defendant was found not guilty by reason of mental illness or lacked the capacity to stand trial.

We chose to include these cases in 2010 at the urging of advocates for victims of elder abuse, particularly by our colleagues at the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life, which is a national project of End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin. We included these types of cases in our report because the preceding dynamics of violence in families in which adult parents are killed by their adult children often exhibit similar characteristics of power and control. The perpetrator's ongoing abuse often relies on tactics of coercion, intimidation, and unique vulnerabilities inherent in the close familial relationship. Because our original motivation to systemically include these cases stemmed from an acknowledgement that power and control is a pattern in family abuse outside of intimate partner relationships, we have excluded cases in which there is a clear indicator that mental health issues were a predominant factor in the homicide. Therefore, we have excluded cases in which the defendant was found not guilty by reason of mental illness or lacked the capacity to stand trial.

In attempting to make these distinctions, we have become aware of the ways in which our attempt to categorize homicides is always imperfect, and it will necessarily exclude cases that could illuminate potentially significant aspects of violence that happens in families. For instance, our definition does not include situations in which an adult parent causes the death of an adult child. These types of homicides appear to be relatively rare and therefore difficult to generalize about; however, we would be challenged to give a satisfying reason as to why one type of case is included and the other is not. In addition, our exclusion of patricide and matricide cases that seem closely related to mental illness reflects our belief that the analogous cases of intimate partner

homicide—that is, intimate partner violence homicides primarily caused by mental illness—are relatively rare. We know from research and experience that mental illness alone rarely explains why an abusive person kills their partner; however, we also acknowledge that these efforts to conceptually cordon off cases that are closely connected to mental illness from those that are not may prevent us from attending to the complex etiologies of domestic violence homicide.

The table on page 45 shows the number of that are included as a result of the 2010 expanded definition.

A Note about Child Homicides

As noted above, we include as domestic violence homicides, child killings 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 his or her children in order to exact revenge on his or her partner, it is considered domestic violence-related.

We believe our limited ability to recognize these cases likely results in an under-count of these types of homicides. 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.

Each year there are a number of homicides of children we do not include but in which domestic abuse appears to be a salient characteristic or risk factor. These cases are not included because we lack the information necessary to link the killings to intimate partner violence (and thus to the report’s definition of domestic violence homicide). Below is an example of this type of incident from 2016.

Waupaca County

On June 14, John Brush’s girlfriend left her three-year-old son in his care. About an hour later, he called her to say the boy was not breathing. Brush told the mother that he called 911, but when she arrived back at the house, she found Brush and his parents standing around the severely injured child. Brush said he did not want to call 911 because he had warrants out for his arrest. The mother rushed the boy to the hospital. The child was in critical condition for about two weeks before he died.

Brush claimed the child fell down the stairs, but medical investigators determined the injuries were not consistent with that story. Prosecutors initially charged Brush with reckless homicide and six other charges. He pled no contest to first-degree recklessly endangering safety. He has not yet been sentenced for that crime.

As documented by court records, Brush had a long history of violent behavior, including a substantial history of domestic abuse. He was charged with domestic abuse in separate cases in 1999, 2000, 2003, 2007, and 2010. Some of the charges were for felony-level offenses. He also was a respondent in two separate restraining order cases brought by different women.

However, the case is not classified as a domestic violence homicide because, we did not find documented evidence that Brush was violent to his current girlfriend, the child's mother.

While the Brush case does not meet our definition of domestic violence homicide, the death of this child is connected to, or likely connected to, domestic abuse in a number of ways. First, domestic abuse perpetration is often a repeat behavior, particularly by an individual with Brush's long, documented history. Thus, the lack of documentation of Brush having engaged in abuse in relationship with the child's mother may simply be because most incidents of domestic abuse do not come to light in public sources, not because the abuse was not occurring. Second, at the time of the homicide, Brush was wanted on a warrant. He had violated a condition of probation that was imposed for a conviction related to a restraining order violation. Therefore, taking a broad view, the child's death may not have occurred had Brush faced greater accountability for past domestic abuse behavior.

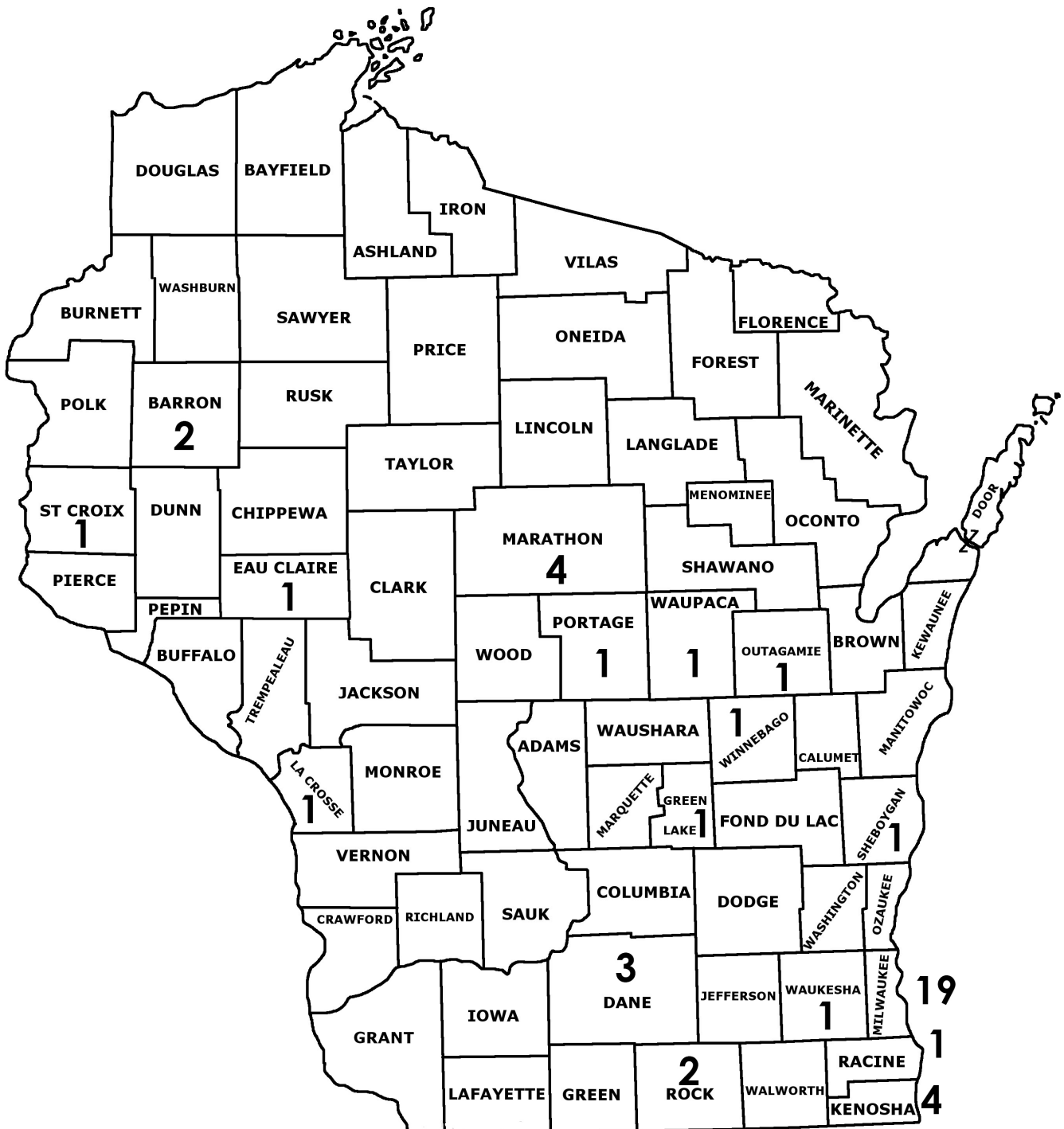
The Brush case is just one example of how the fatal consequences of domestic abuse extend beyond the particular cases that meet our definition of a domestic violence homicide. Domestic abuse is a pervasive epidemic that has directly victimized well over one million Wisconsinites. Therefore, it is not surprising that the cases included in any year's report only show a portion of the various ways domestic abuse has life and death implications in our state.

2000 to 2017 Totals

Year	Totals Homicide Deaths	Homicides, Pre-2010 Defintion	Suicides	Total
2017	48	44	14	62
2016	59	54	14	73
2015	49	43	9	58
2014	37	33	6	43
2013	43	41	12	55
2012	48	47	4	52
2011	34	29	3	37
2010	45	37	7	52
2009	52	52	15	67
2008	37	37	10	47
2007	41	41	10	51
2006	28	28	8	36
2005	40	40	6	46
2004	28	28	5	33
2003	45	45	16	61
2002	38	38	11	49
2001	33	33	9	42
2000	33	33	8	41
Totals	738	703	167	905

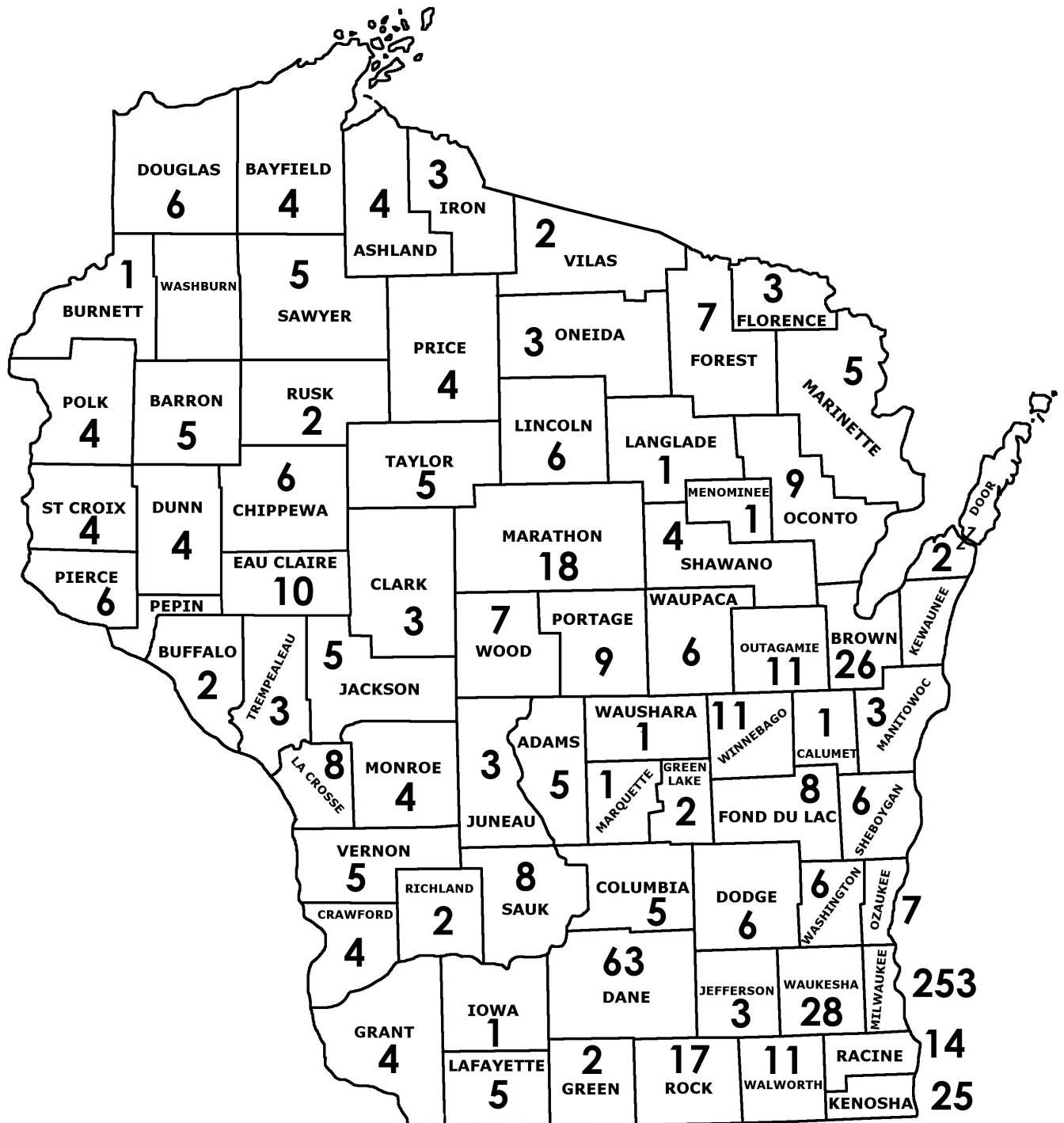
2017 DV Homicide Map

Domestic violence homicide victims by county.



2000 - 2017 DV Homicide Map

Domestic violence homicide victims by county.



Topic Index to Previous Homicide Reports

Each year, the homicide report includes a discussion of a variety of topics. Below is an index of the topics that have been addressed. The report year is followed by the page number in parentheses. Each year's report is available at <http://www.endabusewi.org/homicide-reports>.

African-American communities, Impact on, 2005 (16), 2008 (23), 2009 (34), 2010 (37), 2011/12 (42), 2013 (46)

Bystander risk, 2002 (8), 2003 (10), 2004 (6), 2005 (11)

Child custody, connection to, 2001 (7), 2006/7 (23), 2009 (25)

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Coordinated community response, 2010 (7), 2013 (30)

Dane County, a closer look, 2009 (21)

Domestic abuse programs, impact on, 2009 (39), 2010 (30), 2013 (48)

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Health-care response, 2013 (45)

Help-seeking, 2005 (17), 2006/7 (33), 2009 (38), 2010 (37)

Hmong and Lao communities, impact on, 2006/7 (30), 2009 (33), 2011/12 (43), 2013 (39)

Immigrant survivors, 2016 (34)

Interventions, missed opportunities, 2004 (9), 2011/12 (46)

Later life homicides, 2005 (15), 2008 (23), 2009 (35), 2010 (27), 2011/12 (38), 2013 (44)

Latin@ communities, impact on, 2009 (34), 2011/12 (42), 2013 (29)

Lethality Assessment Program, 2014 (37), 2015 (29), 2016 (29)

Lethality risk factors, 2014 (27)

LGBTQ communities, impact on, 2010 (30), 2011/12 (44), 2013 (43), 2015 (32)

Law enforcement, homicides by, 2010 (35)

Media coverage, 2001 (8), 2002 (9), 2003 (10), 2004 (10)

Multiple homicides, 2006/7 (20), 2008 (16), 2009 (29), 2010 (32), 2011/12 (45)

Near homicides, 2006/7 (21), 2008 (16), 2009 (37), 2010 (36), 2016 (38)

Northcentral Wisconsin, a closer look, 2006/7 (17)

Pregnancy, elevated risk, 2005(14), 2011/12 (35)

Prevention, 2010 (7), 2011/12 (33), 2013 (26)

Location of homicide, 2006/7 (21), 2011/12 (37)

Rural communities, impact on, 2009 (32)

Self-defense, 2001 (5), 2000 (2), 2003(8), 2005 (15), 2008 (22)

Separation, increased risk, 2001 (7), 2002 (7), 2003 (8), 2004 (7), 2006/7 (26), 2008 (20), 2009 (26), 2010 (32), 2014 (34)

Sexual assault, 2004 (8), 2005 (13)

Suicide, 2003 (9), 2005 (9), 2014 (35), 2016 (33)

Stalking, 2001 (6), 2002 (8), 2003 (8), 2005 (13), 2006/7 (27), 2008 (21), 2009 (27), 2010 (33), 2011/12 (34), 2014 (36)

Strangulation, 2005 (13), 2006/7 (29), 2008 (22), 2009 (29), 2010 (34), 2014 (32)

Teen dating violence, 2013 (40)

Ten-year retrospective, 2009 (41)

Tribes, impact on, 2009 (32), 2011/12 (43), 2013 (41)

Veterans, 2010 (35), 2011/12 (36)

Welfare reform, 2000 (3)

Workplace violence, 2011/12 (37), 2013 (42)

About End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin

For advocates, survivors and allies, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin is the only statewide coalition led by social policy advocates, attorneys and experts working to support, connect, equip, empower and lead organizations for social change to end domestic abuse, because everyone deserves dignity and safety.

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www.endabusewi.org

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