

Special Femicide Report: Strangulation and Women and Children Murdered in Minnesota, 1989-2005

March 10, 2005

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

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About the Femicide Report

The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women monitors information about women and children murdered in our state to educate the public about the lethality of violence against women and child abuse. We pledge to remember the women, children, and family members and/or friends who die each year from domestic violence and the women and children who die while being used in prostitution and sex trafficking—systems of violence against women and children. Women and children used in prostitution and sex trafficking are battered women in need of protection from abuse. We also remember the women and children who were murdered by friends, acquaintances, strangers, or unknown perpetrators.

We challenge communities to respond to battered women and their children by providing adequate funding for safe shelter and advocacy services, prevention education for all elementary and secondary students, laws to protect women and children, effective enforcement of those laws, and aggressive prosecution of all domestic assault crimes and all prostitution crimes targeting perpetrators, pimps, and "johns".

In reporting the total number of deaths, it is important to note that *at least* this many women and children have been murdered. We cannot be certain we have not missed some deaths since we must use a method of data collection that relies upon news accounts. No state or federal agency collects comprehensive data on domestic homicides. In addition, the murders of women and children of color, women and children living in poverty, rural women and children, lesbians, and women and children used in prostitution and sex trafficking may be underreported in our listing as they may go unreported in mainstream media.

The Special Femicide Report: Strangulation and Women and Children Murdered in Minnesota 1989-2005 is compiled from news accounts. Please contact us if we have missed a death or if you have updated or more complete information on any femicide.

We ask that the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women be credited when information from this report is used.

In Minnesota from 1989– March 10, 2005:

At least 41 women were strangled to death in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a current or former husband, boyfriend, intimate partner, or household member/ family member of the deceased woman.

At least 26 children under the age of 18 were strangled to death in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was the father, mother, guardian, babysitter, childcare provider or household/family member of the child, or the perpetrator was the parent's spouse or intimate partner.

At least 9 women or children were strangled to death in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a friend or acquaintance of the deceased woman or child, or was a stranger or an unknown assailant.

At least 33 children have been left motherless due to the strangulation murders of their mothers.

More than 7 times as many women and children were strangled to death from 1989-2005 by an intimate partner, family member or caregiver, than by a friend, acquaintance, stranger or an unknown perpetrator.

Thirteen percent of all women murdered by an intimate partner from 1989-2005 were strangled to death.

Seventeen percent of all children murdered by a family member from 1989-2005 were strangled to death.

Strangulation terms:

Strangulation: Intentionally impeding normal breathing or circulation of the blood by applying pressure on the throat or neck.

Suffocation: Intentionally impeding normal breathing or circulation of the blood by blocking the nose or mouth of another person or applying pressure on the chest. Suffocation is a form of strangulation.

Choking: Often incorrectly used to indicate strangulation. Properly refers to aspiration of material, frequently food, into the airways with coughing.

Asphyxia: A condition caused by the inadequate intake of oxygen, frequently caused by strangulation.

1989-March 10, 2005: Women strangled to death in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a current or former husband, boyfriend, intimate partner, household member, or family member of the deceased woman.

1. Francine Hill, 39

Minneapolis

February 14, 1989

Francine was found strangled to death in a Minneapolis motel room. Police were called when there was a complaint from a motel guest about shouts coming from the room. Her boyfriend, Dennis Wade, 48, was charged with her murder. He pleaded guilty in September to first-degree manslaughter and was likely sentenced to 3 ½ years in prison. Francine was the mother of 8 children.

2. Anita Ross, 24

Minneapolis

June 7, 1989

Anita died of strangulation and was left in a burning apartment, which was set on fire. Anita was planning to end her relationship with Ernest. Her boyfriend, Ernest Hardimon, was charged with second-degree murder and first-degree arson.

3. Lori Ann Behr, 30

Minneapolis

November 21, 1989

Lori was strangled to death. Her boyfriend, Jonathan Mudge, 31, was charged with two counts of first-degree murder in her death. Lori was found dead at the couple's house after police responded to a call from Mudge's brother-in-law who told authorities that Mudge made hysterical statements on the telephone about killing his girlfriend. Mudge was arrested at the scene. Lori was 8 months pregnant at the time of her murder.

4. Elaina Meachum, 40

Moran Lake

August 10, 1989

Elaina died of asphyxiation. She was found with bruise marks on her body, lying face down in a lake behind her home. Officers found blood smears in the entryway of her home and around the house. Her boyfriend, Richard Deming, 41, was charged with second-degree murder. The two had been living together for some time prior to her death. Acquaintances said they frequently saw bruises on Elaina's arms. Richard Deming was described by acquaintances as "mellow, mild-mannered, polite," and "real quiet." A co-worker said, "He's always been very rational, well-educated and intelligent." Deming had worked at a Park Rapids hospital as a home health aide and as a nurse technician. In November, Deming pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the asphyxiation of Elaina, and in December he was sentenced to 25 ½ years in prison. He will serve 17 ½ years before he is eligible for parole.

1989-March 10, 2005: Women strangled to death in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a current or former husband, boyfriend, intimate partner, household member, or family member of the deceased woman.

5. Colleen Buckley, 23

Richfield

April 21, 1990

Colleen was found beaten and strangled to death in her home. Her boyfriend, Lionel Washington, 29, was arrested and charged with third-degree assault on a friend of Colleen's, Mary Kay Ekmark. While walking together, Washington began striking Ekmark with a sharp object. She was treated for puncture wounds to the head and a fractured hand. Police were called and Washington fled. After talking with Ekmark, police went to check on Colleen and found her dead. Washington remains a suspect in Colleen's death. Washington was found guilty of third-degree assault against Mary Kay and was sentenced to five years in prison.

6. Magdaline George, 32

St. Paul

November 10, 1990

Magdaline's teenage daughter found her strangled to death in a closet of her apartment. Neighbors said there were frequent sounds of fighting coming from her apartment. One evening, a neighbor identified "sounds of someone choking and being thumped around." Four days prior to her death, another neighbor stated he heard a woman screaming for someone to call police. Police records do not show any calls to Magdaline's apartment. A former boyfriend, Ray Vaughns, 38, was taken into custody. Charges were dropped due to insufficient evidence. She is survived by her 3 children.

7. Ruth Munden, 61

Minneapolis

June 6, 1991

Ruth's body was found in her room at a Minneapolis group home. She had been strangled and had bruises on her wrists and around her mouth, suggesting she might have been bound and gagged. She was found nude with her nightgown on the floor beside her bed. John Petee, another group home resident, said that the two had watched television and drank beer the previous evening, then had gone into Ruth's room and began "fooling around." He said they later returned to the living room to watch television. The next morning, another resident who is physically disabled, asked to have his breakfast made, a duty usually performed by Ruth. Petee told him that Ruth was not feeling well, and made the breakfast himself. John Petee was indicted by a grand jury on charges of third-degree murder.

1989-March 10, 2005: Women strangled to death in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a current or former husband, boyfriend, intimate partner, household member, or family member of the deceased woman.

8. Julie Everson, 29

Minneapolis

Body found June 26, 1991

Julie's body was discovered in a 3-foot deep grave next to the triplex where she lived. She is believed to have died from suffocation, possibly due to strangulation. The owner of the house, Russell Swart, 30, and another resident, Keith Bullock, 28, were arrested and charged with her death. Her family had tried to convince police for 6 months that something had happened to Julie after she disappeared. Keith Bullock had been charged with fifth-degree assault in December 2000, after Julie reported to police that he had beaten her. That was the last time she was seen alive. The assault case was dismissed in January 1991 when Julie failed to show up in court. Bullock shared a bath and kitchen with Julie. Neighbors said they saw Russell Swart and Keith Bullock digging in the yard in late February during a period of warmer weather. Swart was charged with second-degree murder and was acquitted by a jury. Bullock was charged with second-degree murder but the charges against him were dropped after Swart confessed under oath to killing Julie. Because Swart had been acquitted of Julie's murder before confessing, he was immune from prosecution.

9. May Young, 34

Minneapolis

December 23, 1992

A police dog that was being exercised by its handler discovered May's body in the parking lot of Theodore Wirth Park. She had been strangled and was partly clothed. Her boyfriend, Bemand McAllister, 30, was charged with second-degree murder. Acquaintances of the couple told police that after an argument between May and McAllister, he was overheard to say he was going to kill May. McAllister is alleged to have said, "I did it I did it...I can't believe I killed her, I did it. I can't believe she made me that mad." An acquaintance stated that McAllister said he dumped May's body at the park so someone could find it and that he wanted to dig a grave, but the ground was frozen too hard.

10. Melinda Neumann, 18

Coon Rapids

February 24, 1992

Melinda's body was found between two dumpsters with an electrical cord wrapped around her neck. She also had numerous injuries to her face and head. Melinda's friend and former schoolmate, Gary Goehring, 18, told police he killed her after the two began to have sex in his car and she changed her mind and accused him of rape. He admitted strangling her with his hands and a piece of electrical cord. Melinda died from the strangulation but had also been beaten on the head with a blunt object. Goehring had several fresh scratch or gouge marks on his face and neck. He was arrested and charged with second-degree murder and indicted for first-degree murder. Both Melinda and Gary were deaf and communicated through sign language.

11. Leslie Perkins, 30**Minneapolis****August 6, 1992**

Leslie was found dead in her bedroom. She had been strangled. Her boyfriend, Verdell Shannon, 30, apparently strangled her, then called a friend in tears and asked her to come over. The friend notified police, who found Shannon hiding in a nearby garage. He admitted to police that he strangled Leslie. Earlier in the summer, Leslie had moved into a battered women's shelter to escape abuse by her boyfriend. She left on June 25th to move into transitional housing. Two young children were asleep in another bedroom when she was killed. Shannon was charged with second-degree murder. Leslie is survived by four children.

12. Francis Wilson**Minneapolis****January 13, 1993**

Francis was found strangled in her apartment. Her great-nephew, Cedar Mountain Monahan, 19, told police that he strangled her and punched and stomped on her head in a fit of anger. He was charged with second-degree murder.

13. Mary Rita Kay**Minneapolis****February 15, 1993**

Mary was killed in a hospice unit of a hospital. She was suffering from cancer. Nurses found her nephew, Phillip Eddleston, straddling his aunt's head and holding a pillow over her face. Mary's oxygen supply had also been removed. Eddleston told the nurses, "She told me that she wanted to die." Mary's son, William Kay, said he had talked with his mother the previous evening and they had discussed bringing her other son, Roy, home from Switzerland to see her before she died. He said his mother had made no request to have anyone assist her in dying. Eddleston was charged with second-degree murder.

14. Sandra Jackson, 41**Minneapolis****November 21, 1994**

Sandra was found dead in her apartment. She had been strangled to death by her former boyfriend, Curtis Osborne, 37, with whom she had previously lived. Osborne reported the murder at a medical center nearby. Osborne pled guilty to second-degree murder charges in November and was sentenced to 13-16 years in prison. The sentence was 35 months longer than sentencing guidelines call for. It was sought because Sandra was killed in her own apartment, she was vulnerable because she was intoxicated, and Osborne had stolen a ring from her after her death.

15. Roxanne Waa, 30**Moorhead****March 5, 1995**

Roxanne was found strangled in her apartment after authorities responded to a fire there. A neighbor reported hearing Roxanne and a man arguing outside the apartment about 30 minutes before the fire alarm sounded. Roxanne's car was also reported missing. Allen Davis, 44, with whom she had a relationship, was arrested and charged. He was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to 26 years in prison. Roxanne is survived by 3 small children.

16. Diane Buntrock, 51**New Brighton****May 4, 1995**

Diane was first reported missing, along with her car. Her 18-year-old son, Michael, was detained in Fargo, North Dakota a day later on charges of auto theft when found with his mother's car and his 15-year-old girlfriend. The following day Diane's body was found buried in a shallow grave in a Ham Lake wildemess area. A grand jury indicted Michael Buntrock on a charge of first-degree murder in the strangulation death of his mother. He reportedly admitted to strangling his mother and burying her because he became angry when his mother told him she was going to kick him out of her home and that he wasn't going to be able to see his girlfriend anymore. Diane Buntrock knew the girl's parents were filing an order for protection against him. He said he strangled his mother in her bedroom with the power cord of his radio, then put her body in the trunk of the car and drove to the site where he buried her. The complaint against Buntrock included information about previous domestic violence. Diane had reportedly confided to a friend that, "I don't know what he will do to me." The mother of Buntrock's teenage girlfriend told police that he had beaten and threatened to kill his mother in the past. Diane reportedly told the girlfriend's mother she was reluctant to report the violence to the police saying, "I'm so afraid. You know, he is my son. Nothing will get done." The mother also reportedly told police she thought Buntrock was beating her daughter, that he had boasted of killing a man in a fit of jealousy, and that he was plotting to kidnap an infant he had fathered by another girl. In August, a jury found Buntrock guilty of premeditated first-degree murder for strangling his mother and the judge sentenced him to life in prison. He will serve at least 30 years.

17. Kim Ballandby, 34**Stillwater****June 23, 1995**

The bodies of Kim and her husband, Randee Ballandby, 40, were found in their car parked on a gravel country road about two miles from their home. Ballandby had apparently strangled Kim and then committed suicide by plunging a knife into his chest. A note believed written by Ballandby was found in the car, but the contents were not disclosed. Investigators said it appeared the couple had been having marital difficulties. Both were employed as software engineers at Control Data. Three surviving children now live with relatives.

18. Marletta Kulah-Reed, 38**Minneapolis****August 5, 1995**

Fourteen days after her death, Marletta's boyfriend, Leo Johnson, 40, turned himself in to police and admitted murdering her during an argument over drugs. He reported that he strangled her, placed her in her bed, and then went to work. He returned later in the day with Marletta's son and called police to report finding her body. Johnson was charged with three counts of manslaughter.

19. Cindy Larson Sandlin-Smith, 25**Caledonia****November 26, 1995**

Cynthia was reportedly strangled by her husband after an argument during which she had asked him to have their 13-month-old marriage annulled. He then put her body in the trunk of his car, drove to St Louis, Missouri, weighted her body and dropped it off a bridge into the Missouri River. Smith then drove west and was arrested in Wyoming five weeks later. He confessed to the killing and was charged with second-degree murder.

20. Margaret Bohn, 42**Shoreview****April 7, 1996**

Margaret was killed by her son on Easter Sunday. David "DJ" Bohn, 20, told authorities that he had gone to his mother's home with the intention of strangling her. He said he first tried to strangle her and that it was not working, so he grabbed a shovel and began hitting her. When she went down, DJ continued to hit her, then went to the kitchen for knives and stabbed her until he thought she was dead. He went to the phone and called 911 to report what he had done. He also asked that his younger brother be placed in another home. Margaret died soon after a sheriff's deputy arrived. David Bohn pled guilty to intentional second-degree murder and was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

21. Heidi Haines, 20**Minneapolis****June 28, 1996**

Heidi tried to hide her bruises from her family and didn't often come to family gatherings. On June 12th, when Heidi was five months pregnant, she delivered a premature baby boy and named him Darius. He died an hour and a half after birth. Family members noticed bruising on Heidi's back and a fresh black eye, and suspected the premature delivery of Darius was due to battering on the part of Heidi's boyfriend, David Cross. On June 28th police received a call from witnesses that a woman was being hit by a man in a car at 22nd and Washington Avenue North. As the witnesses drove back to the scene they saw the David Cross outside of the car on the passenger side, strangling Heidi. When police arrived, Heidi was lying outside of the car, facedown on the ground. She was pronounced dead at 12:02 a.m. after police made a prolonged attempt to resuscitate her. David Cross was arrested at the scene and later charged with manslaughter. He was sentenced on December 11, 1996 to life in prison.

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22. Shauntai Johnson, 27**Wadena****July 20, 1996**

Shauntai's body was found in the crawl space of her basement a day after her children reported her missing. Jerry Johnson, 37, Shauntai's husband, was charged with her murder. After three days of deliberation a jury found him guilty of the strangulation death of his wife. Jerry Johnson was convicted of second-degree murder and first-degree manslaughter.

23. Marilyn Ford, 45**St. Paul****March 27, 1998**

Police discovered Marilyn's bloodied and barefoot body outside the duplex she shared with her brother. They followed a trail of blood, beginning at the front door and leading to a bedroom, where more evidence of bleeding was found. It was determined that Marilyn had been strangled. American Morris had been living with Marilyn and her brother for two months. Several months before she died, Marilyn had told her sister that if anything happened to her, Morris would be the culprit. In July, Morris was found guilty of first-degree murder in the strangulation death and was sentenced to life in prison.

24. Germaine Chatkana, 20**St. Cloud****February 2, 1999**

Germaine's body was found in a basement furnace room of an apartment building, after her boyfriend, Ole Dean Maxwell, called Germaine's sister from the Hennepin County jail and told the sister that Germaine was dead. Maxwell had turned himself in to police on another warrant. Germaine had been dead for two or three days when found and police believe Maxwell killed her while he was on home detention. He had been released from prison January 20 on electronic home monitoring. Germaine had been strangled and the apartment where she was found belonged to Maxwell's mother. Her boyfriend had a violent past that included domestic assault charges as well as death threats against his mother and brother. Germaine was the mother of a 10-month-old son.

25. Heidi Ray Johnson, 37**Brooklyn Park****September 4, 1999**

When police were called to the apartment Nathan Clark shared with Heidi, Clark reported that someone had burglarized the apartment. When police arrived they found Heidi lying on the floor, her fingernails broken, a clump of hair torn from her head, deep bruises on her arms, and a cut on her cheek. She had died of strangulation and had been dead for several hours before police were called. Clark had assaulted Heidi before and he had at least two assault cases pending against him when he murdered her. She had attempted to leave several times and each time he would trace her, find her and abuse her. Police had a record of 10 calls to her apartment since May of 1999. Nathan Clark was charged with first-degree murder, pled guilty to second-degree murder and will serve 31 years.

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26. Catherine Ranft, 37**Lonsdale****December 8, 1999**

Six bodies were found in the rubble following an intense fire at a farmhouse. Three cars, a trailer, and a boat encircled the house and all were fully engulfed in the blaze, with flames higher than the trees, when fire fighters arrived. Armed with a butcher knife, gasoline, and a pair of murderous hands, Primitivo Rivas killed five family members including his 16-year-old son Tyler and 20-year-old daughter KiAnn. He then ignited the blaze in an attempt to destroy the crime scene and committed suicide by stabbing himself in the chest. The bodies of Catherine and her two children, Caroline Stepniewski, age 4, and Meredith Stepniewski, age 6, together with the other three, were burned beyond recognition and identification was made by the Minnesota state crime lab. The report stated the two younger children, Caroline and Meredith, and their mother Catherine, had been strangled. Tyler was beaten and stabbed to death and KiAnn killed violently. Primitivo Rivas had serious financial and legal problems in the months preceding the murders, and was facing a 90-day jail sentence.

27. Roxanne Bloomfield, 33**Zumbrota****January 4, 2000**

Roxanne was strangled to death by her husband, James Bloomfield. He told authorities he had used his hands and an extension cord to kill her. He was apprehended about two hours after the murder in Rochester, where he had tried to commit suicide by driving his car in front of a truck on the highway. Roxanne's sister and domestic abuse advocates said the couple had a history of abuse that started before their marriage 18 months ago. Her three children, who were not at home at the time of the murder, survive Roxanne. James Bloomfield committed suicide by hanging himself in the county jail hours before he was to plead guilty to second-degree murder.

28. Nikki Norris Washington, 32**Minneapolis****March 7, 2000**

Nikki had separated from her husband and told him she wanted a divorce. Leevoice Washington went to her home and argued with her, then told her three children to go to a bedroom. They heard their mother screaming, glass breaking, and a table being thrown across the room. The children went into the living room where they saw their mother being stabbed. The assault continued onto the balcony where Leevoice Washington slashed her throat and strangled her. Nikki fell to a concrete slab below and died. Leevoice Washington was charged with first-degree murder.

29. Ruma Hamid, 23**Jordan****Killed May 2000
Body found August 2000**

A man arrested in New York State on a traffic violation told authorities that he had murdered his wife at a campsite in Jordan, Minnesota in May. Jeffrey Thompson said he then drove to Tennessee where he buried Ruma's body on a tract of land he had purchased. Law enforcement found the body of Ruma Hamid buried under 2 feet of dirt and decking material at the spot described by Thompson. Thompson had been convicted of rape in Oregon, custodial interference in California, and fraud in Florida. He reportedly met Ruma Hamid while working in Bangladesh and married her in 1998. Hamid and Thompson's son, 11 months at the time of the murder, was placed with Thompson's parents in Oregon. In January of 2002, Thompson pled guilty to second-degree murder in the case and was sentenced to 29 years in prison. "Her last moments on earth were filled with terror, brutality and horror as she had her life breath strangled out of her by her husband," said Scott County Attorney Tom Harbinson.

30. Nicole Mae Wittkop, 23**Duluth****August 29, 2000**

A Duluth man was charged with beating and strangling his wife, Nicole, to death and dumping her body in the woods. Lawrence Wittkop was charged with second-degree murder in her death. A local man called the St Louis County Sheriff's office after Lawrence Wittkop knocked at his door requesting someone call 911 and saying he had been beaten up and dumped off – "although he didn't look like he had been beaten up". When police arrived he told deputies he wanted to confess to a crime, and led authorities to Nicole's body. Wittkop was convicted of second-degree murder.

31. Jilmarie VonHennchen, 37**Duluth****September 5, 2000**

Motel workers discovered the body of Jilmarie VonHennchen. Others at the motel reported hearing loud noises during the night, and investigation revealed that Douglas Michael Edling – who was renting the room – left the motel by cab about 4:30 am, and he boarded a bus for Minneapolis later that morning. Jilmarie, who had been strangled and beaten, was the girlfriend of Edling. Edling pleaded guilty to second-degree murder.

32. Joanne Olson, 54**Oronoco****December 24, 2000**

Joanne Olson died of strangulation. Her husband, Daryl Olson, called authorities to the couple's home Christmas morning saying his wife was not breathing. He told deputies they had argued Christmas Eve and he used a belt to strangle her. He then cut the belt into pieces and flushed them down the toilet. Authorities pumped the septic tank and found the belt pieces. Daryl, who had a history of being physically abusive, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to no longer than 25 years and five months.

33. Nancy Draper, 54**Inver Grove Heights****April 12, 2001**

Nancy, who had multiple sclerosis, was found in the chest freezer of the couple's home, almost three weeks after she was strangled. Larry Draper, 43, was charged with killing Nancy and the motives for the murder ranged from mercy killing to mental illness. Draper pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to 18 years, less than state sentencing guidelines recommend. Nancy Draper's relatives were furious and perplexed when they heard about the sentence. "We are devastated that justice was not done," said Lois Haley, Nancy's sister. "Where is the mercy in any of this? I don't understand." Nancy Draper's family said they never heard her say she wanted to die. If she had planned to die, she would have told her family and chosen a more humane method than strangulation, her relatives said. "You don't even have to have a medical school background to know you don't want to die brutally with a leather belt around your neck," said Karen Umi, Nancy's cousin.

34. Shelby Davis, 42**Minnetrista****March 28, 2001**

The boyfriend of a Minnetrista woman was charged with killing her after selling some of her belongings. Investigators said James J. Jorgensen, 40, used the money to buy drugs. He was charged in Hennepin County District Court with first- and second-degree murder in the death of Shelby Davis, 42. Davis didn't show up for work at Gabberts Furniture store in Edina after March 22, 2001, and police and Davis' sister found her body on March 28 wrapped in a blanket in the garage of her home. Jorgensen had beaten Shelby in the head with a sewing machine bobbin and then smothered her to death by holding his hand over her nose and mouth. Jorgensen was found guilty of first-degree murder on November 1, 2001 and he was sentenced to life in prison on November 28, 2001.

35. Kristina Zierman, 21**Maple Grove****Missing January 24, 2002
Body found June 5, 2002**

Kristina told her mother and a friend on January 24 that she planned to end her relationship with her abusive boyfriend, Christopher Seebold, 34. If something were to happen to her, "He did it," she said. That was the last day she was seen alive. A fisherman discovered Kristina's body, anchored with landscaping bricks, on June 5, in the Minnesota River in Bloomington. It was determined that Kristina had been strangled. Zierman and Seebold lived together until December of 2001 when she moved in with her mother because of Seebold's abuse. Zierman filed assault charges against Seebold, claiming he had strangled her and pushed her into a coffee table. Seebold was convicted of the assault against Kristina on October 5, 2002. Seebold and Zierman's three year-old son told his grandmother that he found his mother on the floor and that he could not wake her. The boy is now living with relatives. Christopher Seebold was convicted in 1989 of attempted murder. Seebold pleaded guilty to Kristina's murder in March 2003 and received the maximum sentence of 40 years in prison.

36. Barbara J. Szutz, 52**Edina****November 29, 2001**

After Barbara J. Szutz caught her son, Anthony R. Szutz, 33, smoking crack cocaine in her home, he clubbed her and duct-taped a plastic bag over her head. She smothered to death. The mother and son had a volatile relationship and the neighbors said that they had heard several angry exchanges between them over the years. According to the report, the police went to the house when Barbara Szutz's employer reported her missing. They found Barbara's body covered with a sheet in the basement laundry room. In a police statement, Anthony Szutz said he was smoking crack in his basement bedroom when his mother appeared and got angry with him for doing so and that is when he murdered her. Police arrested him near his aunt's house in Baxter, MN. Anthony Szutz was convicted of first-degree assault in 1989 for hitting two women with a baseball bat. He served about two years in state prisons and 15 months on supervised release. He is charged with second-degree intentional murder and is being held at \$750,000 bail.

37. Crystal Lindorff, 22**St. Paul****November 16, 2004**

A St. Paul man who once served prison time for stabbing a girlfriend was charged in the fatal strangulation of another girlfriend. Alexander Miller, 32, and Crystal had been arguing all day about his infidelity on November 16th when he reportedly strangled her at the apartment they shared with their 9-month-old son. Lindorff's family told police there was a history of Miller abusing Crystal but that she was afraid to report him to police. Paramedics were summoned to the apartment after a report of a woman not breathing. Crystal was taken to the hospital and pronounced dead. Police arrested Miller at the apartment. Alexander Miller received a 45-month sentence for second-degree assault after he stabbed a girlfriend in 1997. Miller was charged with second-degree murder in Crystal's death.

38. Erin Rooney, 33**Burnsville****July 13, 2004**

Charles Barnes, 38, called a police dispatcher and said he had just arrived home to find his ex-wife, Erin, unconscious. He told the dispatcher that he thought she had overdosed on drugs and he had given Rooney a shower to attempt to wake her. When police arrived, they found no signs of drug use except for a single hypodermic syringe, which Barnes said he had found. The Dakota County medical examiner later determined that Erin died of injuries consistent with being hit and strangled, including bruises to her face, cuts on the inside of her mouth, and neck injuries. Barnes has two criminal convictions in connection with assaulting Erin. He was charged with two counts of second-degree murder.

39. Stacy Ziegler Smith, 29**Winona****December 16, 2004**

A 21 year-old-man, Paul Gordon, was charged with four counts of first-degree murder; four counts of second-degree murder; first-degree criminal sexual conduct; and first-degree arson in the deaths of Stacy and her daughter Taylor, 10. The murder charges include three counts relating to the death of Smith's unborn child. Rescuers responded to a report of a fire at a Winona apartment complex to find the victims dead. It was determined that Stacy and Taylor were strangled to death and that Taylor was also beaten and sexually assaulted. Police have announced that the fire was deliberately set. Friends of Stacy reported that she and Gordon dated for several months and she was pregnant at the time of her murder. Gordon has an extensive criminal record. He was convicted of fourth-degree sexual assault against a 12-year-old girl in 2004 in Arkansas and was arrested in July in connection with raping and strangling a woman in Bentonville, Arkansas. Gordon was arrested in November in Winona on suspicion of cocaine possession and threatening police officers with a fake plastic gun. Gordon is also suspected of pointing a loaded pistol at another man in December. In the weeks leading up to the slayings, Gordon asked witnesses for rat poison and a syringe and told them that he wanted to get Stacy "off my back."

40. Moonku "Marissa" Persaud, 40 Eagan**February 18, 2005**

Police found Marissa strangled to death in the upstairs bedroom of her Eagan home. She hadn't shown up for her job with Blue Cross/Blue Shield for days and friends and family were concerned and called law enforcement. Marissa's former live-in boyfriend, Jairam Ganpat, 37, was arrested in Brownsville, Texas, trying to re-enter the United States from Mexico. He was charged with two counts of second-degree murder after being extradited to Minnesota. "Growing up I never had a father figure in my life and my mother was both my mother and father," said Marissa's 17-year-old daughter, Vanessa. A good friend of Marissa's described Ganpat as an obsessive boyfriend who prevented her from socializing with her friends. "He was very, very controlling," said Whanyia Lankah. Eagan police had responded to a suspected case of domestic abuse at Marissa's home on January 23rd. Police gave her information on how to obtain an order for protection against Ganpat.

41. Jessica Rose, 18**Duluth****March 5, 2005**

Jeremy Steenbock, 29, was charged with second-degree murder in the death of his fiancée, Jessica Rose, 18. Police found Jessica dead in the apartment she shared with Steenbock and the medical examiner later ruled her death due to strangulation. Steenbock had called 911 to say that he believed his fiancée had fallen and hit her head in the shower. However, Steenbock later admitted to strangling Jessica. Lori Sommer, Jessica's aunt, said, "She didn't have much but she would give you the shirt off her back." Sommer also stated that she knew Steenbock was abusing her niece and tried to get Jessica to leave him. Jeremy Steenbock was arrested 3 times for domestic abuse in 4 years. In January of 2004, a hearing was held to revoke his probation for assaulting another girlfriend, but the judge ruled that Steenbock remain on probation.

1989-March 5, 2005: Children under the age of 18 strangled to death in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was the father, mother, guardian, babysitter, childcare provider or household/family member of the child, or the perpetrator was the parent's spouse or intimate partner.

**1. Jessica O'Meara, 12
2. Ashley Steinbuch, 3**

St. Cloud

July 17, 1991

Police found the bodies of Geri O'Meara-Steinbuch, 38, and her daughters, Jessica and Ashley, in their home. Geri had been beaten with a blunt instrument and had been struck several times on the upper torso and head. She was found on the floor next to her bed. Jessica and Ashley were strangled. Both girls were found with rope around their necks. Geri had been missing from work for several days before a co-worker notified police. Authorities believe Geri, Jessica, and Ashley were killed 3 or 4 days before they were found. Geri's husband, Dale Steinbuch, 34, was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison. Geri had volunteered at St. Cloud's battered women's shelter after escaping an abusive first marriage by fleeing to the shelter. From 1984-1987 she served on the shelter's board of directors and assisted with community education. The night before her murder, she had called the shelter to say she needed help because her marriage was disintegrating. She explained that her husband, a recovering alcoholic, was drinking again and she was going to leave him soon, taking the children with her. The advocate who spoke to Geri asked her if she was afraid or needed to come to the shelter. Geri said no, she just needed someone to talk to.

3. David Geissler, 14

Minneapolis

Body found August 7, 1991

David's body was found in a sleeping bag in a Polk County, Wisconsin lake. His feet were bound and his hands tied behind his back. He had been strangled with a rope. David had not been seen since July 26th when his father, Dennis Geissler, 41, supposedly took him on an out-of-state vacation. Dennis and his roommate, Jeffrey Mell, 29, were found dead together on August 3rd in Arizona, apparently a dual suicide. Police said they believed Dennis killed his son out of anger over his divorce two years earlier from Teri Geissler. On July 29th, Dennis mailed letters from Arizona to his adopted son, Hultman, and parents, which stated, "We won't be back. Mom took the divorce too far." The letters do not admit responsibility for David's death. Terri Geissler had been granted an order for protection in 1989 because of threats and assaults by Dennis. At a hearing she said, "My children are afraid of him; my 16-year-old son told me, after we moved out, he's been sleeping with a knife under his bed for the last two months. My little one has told me that he's very frightened of him when he flies into those rages."

1989-March 5, 2005: Children under the age of 18 strangled to death in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was the father, mother, guardian, babysitter, childcare provider or household/family member of the child, or the perpetrator was the parent's spouse or intimate partner.

1. Natasha Helms, 9 months

Blue Earth

September 17, 1991

Deniece Helms, 20, testified that she suffocated her daughter after 3 hours of futile efforts to stop her crying. Despite her best efforts, the baby would not stop crying and distraught and frustrated she stuffed toilet tissue in the baby's mouth to stop her crying. Deniece has pled guilty to second-degree murder.

2. Trever Kelling, 14 months

Dodge Center

February 2, 1992

Trever was found dead in his crib by his mother. He had been strangled. Regina's boyfriend, Matthew Starkson, was charged with two counts of first-degree murder, two counts of second-degree murder, and one count of first-degree manslaughter. On September 29th, Starkson was found guilty on all counts. He was sentenced to life in prison, but was released on November 26, 1992 pending a new trial.

3. Raquel Crowe, 1

St. Paul

December 17, 1992

Raquel was found unconscious on the floor of her home and was pronounced dead on arrival at St. Paul Medical Center. The medical examiner determined that the child died of asphyxia.

4. Daniel Johnson, 1

Minneapolis

January, 1993

Daniel died of suffocation. His father, Michael Johnson, 19, told police that when the child woke up crying and fussy he held the child tightly to his chest to muffle the cries. After the baby became quiet he continued to hold the baby in the same position. An autopsy discovered that Daniel had three healed rib fractures and one recent rib fracture. Johnson was charged with second-degree manslaughter.

5. Timothy Vojta, 19 months

Brooklyn Park

August 17, 1993

Timothy was taken to the hospital by paramedics who had been called to his home. He lapsed into a coma and died 6 days later. Police had been called to the home seven times in the past two months when Timothy had stopped breathing. When questioned, Timothy's mother, JoAnne Vojta, 28, told doctors and a social worker that she routinely smothered her little boy by cupping her hand over his mouth and nose to stop him from breathing. She reported she did this to prevent her estranged husband from visiting or gaining custody of Timothy. She wanted him hospitalized where she felt he would be safe from his father, Keven Vojta, of Coon Rapids. JoAnne was charged with first-degree murder.

6. Megan Olson, 2**Columbia Heights****January 9, 1994**

Megan and her mother were discovered on a bed in their home. Megan's mother, Christine Olson, 25, told authorities that she had given Megan medication to make her sleep and then put a pillow over her face. When Megan stopped breathing, Olson went to bed with her and took an overdose of pills. She awoke and then cut herself with a kitchen knife. Olson said she had decided to commit suicide and thought her estranged husband was incapable of caring for their daughter, so she decided to kill her daughter as well. Olson was charged with second-degree murder.

7. Jaylyn Celestain, 3**Burnsville****January 16, 1998**

Jaylyn Celestain was found dead in her home. Her mother, Tysann Celestain, had given Jaylyn a sleeping pill, then put a pillow over her face until she stopped kicking. Then she secured a plastic bag over the child's head. Tysann then swallowed sleeping pills and rat poison and put a plastic bag over her own head but it wasn't working and her boyfriend was due home soon. She then cut her wrist with a knife, crawled out a window and walked through the snow to a nearby garage where police found her huddled and bleeding. Her boyfriend arrived home and found Jaylyn and called 911. Tysann Celestain confessed, saying she intended to kill herself but didn't want to leave Jaylyn motherless. She has pled guilty to second-degree murder.

8. Ayesha Collier, 22 months**Brooklyn Park****February 1, 1998**

22 month-old Ayesha Collier was literally squeezed to death. She suffocated and her heart stopped. The autopsy report noted that her body displayed "a constellation of child abuse injuries," including 19 fresh fingertip marks, a lacerated liver, several circular scars consistent with cigarette burns and extensive bruises on her buttocks, thighs and lower legs. Ayesha's mother, Amea Oliver went shopping and left her boyfriend, James Scott, to watch her four children. When she returned Ayesha was dead. Amea Oliver had been attending counseling classes and parenting classes after a complaint 2 years ago and again last year that she was neglecting the children, and she has been charged with assault for allegedly injuring and bruising Ayesha. James Scott has been charged with second-degree murder for allegedly being the one who left the fingertip marks on Ayesha's chest and abdomen.

9. Koua Eai Hang, 11

St. Paul

September 3, 1998

10. Samson Hang, 9

11. Nail Hang, 8

12. Tang Lung Hang, 7

13. A-ee Hang, 6

14. Tang Kee Hang, 5

Khousa Her, 24, called 911, saying that in her despair she had tried to commit suicide and that she had killed her 6 children. Police and paramedics found the bodies of her children in separate rooms in the family's apartment. Her had strangled each of them by wrapping strips of black cloth around their necks twice. Khousa had swallowed poison and tried to hang herself with an electric cord before she called police. By all accounts, Her had a troubled relationship with her husband, who was the children's father. They had been married in a refugee camp in Thailand and the first child was born there when Khousa was just 13. Tou Hang, the father, no longer lived at home and had not seen his children for a month. Police had been to the home about 20 times on calls of domestic violence. Khousa Her was convicted of six counts of second-degree murder. She is not expected to be released until 2032.

15. Shaw Kramer, 3

Fergus Falls

January 14, 1999

The family pastor and Quentin Kramer's brother went to the Kramer family home when they were unable to reach the family and found the couple and their two children dead. Police said Quentin Kramer killed his wife and two children before fatally shooting himself. There was no sign of struggle and police believe Kramer strangled his 3 year old son, Shaw, as he slept in his room, then shot his wife Lisa to death in the couple's bed. He then went to the basement where he found his 6 year old daughter Corrine playing in her pajamas and shot her to death. Quentin Kramer then killed himself.

16. Lamart Wallace, Jr., 4 months

Minneapolis

October 13, 1999

Police and paramedics were called when Lamart's mother ran with him to a relative's house. Neither the relative nor the paramedics were able to revive the baby. The mother's estranged husband, Lamart Wallace, had first assaulted her by strangling her and then went into the living room and threw the baby up in the air. She heard a "boom and a bump" and the baby hollering. Wallace then strangled the baby to death. Lamart Wallace was charged with first-degree murder. The baby had several acute injuries including two skull fractures, a fracture of the clavicle, and a subdural hemorrhage. Lamart Jr. also had several older injuries, including a large chronic subdural hemorrhage and a fracture of the femur. Wallace was sentenced to 25 years for second-degree murder.

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17. Brenda Swearingen, 8**Minneapolis****November 3, 1999**

Brenda was semi-conscious after a beating the morning of Nov 2 - she had just finished practicing her multiplication tables. But her legal guardian did not seek help for her until 2 a.m. the next morning - she was put on life support, but this was withdrawn and she died that afternoon. Authorities said she had received seven blows to the head plus extensive bruises and abrasions. Andrew Lange, who lived with Terry Allen, Brenda's guardian, admitted that he threw Brenda against a wall and strangled her because he wasn't satisfied with the way she did her chores. Lange was sentenced to 25 years for unintentional second-degree murder and Allen was sentenced to three years for aiding an offender.

18. Meredith Stepienewski, 6**Lonsdale****December 8, 1999****19. Caroline Stepienewski, 4**

Please see Catherine Ranft under Women Murdered.

20. Dominic Asfeld, 14 months**Watkins****October 2000**

Michael Asfeld, 24, has been charged with first-degree murder in the death of his 14 month-old son. Asfeld had been charged with second-degree murder in March 2001. Autopsy results showed that Dominic Asfeld was suffocated before his mother found him not breathing in his crib in Cold Spring. Asfeld was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

21. Megan Tomlinson, 13**West St. Paul****January 28, 2002**

Megan was reported missing on January 28. When police questioned her brother, Scott Tomlinson, 16, he began to cry and handed them keys to a storage shed near the family's home. Inside the shed, police found Megan's body inside a sleeping bag. She had been strangled. Scott said, "I didn't mean it, it was an accident, we were wrestling." The initial complaint stated that Scott told a friend that he planned to kill his father and another family member and that he had told other friends about his desire to kill a family member. He attended a special high school for students with severe emotional and behavioral problems. A friend said of Scott, "He had a real temper on him. He had to have things his way all the time." He was initially charged with first- and second-degree murder, but the charges were reduced to one charge of second-degree intentional murder and one charge of second-degree unintentional murder. Scott was sentenced to 12 years in prison.

22. Rita Burnette, 14**Naytahwaush****May 26, 2002**

Rita Burnette's strangled body was found in a wooded area near Naytahwaush, which is on the White Earth Reservation. Her cousin, Kevin Brown, Jr., 21, was arrested and indicted on four counts of first-degree murder, two of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, and two of second-degree criminal sexual conduct. The charges refer to "causing the death of a human being while committing or attempting to commit sexual violence," said Mahnommen County Sheriff's Investigator Brad Athmann. Brown pled guilty to unintentional second-degree murder under a plea bargain in July of 2003 and was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

23. Amanda Lutz, 6 months**Inver Grove Heights****November 11, 2001**

Amanda Lutz, 6 months, was rushed to United Children's Hospital in St. Paul after a report that the baby was not breathing. She was pronounced dead upon arrival at the hospital. Two days later, on November 13, Inver Grove Heights Police were contacted by Amanda's father, David Lutz, who reported that his wife, Diana Lutz, 32, was distraught over the death of her daughter and was missing. Police were dispatched to the AmericInn Hotel in Inver Grove Heights and found Diana dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. She had apparently told her husband on the telephone that she had killed Amanda and confided in two other individuals that she had taken her daughter's life because it was too painful for her to watch her baby girl suffering from a severe medical condition Amanda had had since birth. She told one of those individuals that she had smothered Amanda with a pillow. The investigation has revealed that Diana Lutz stole a loaded handgun from a friend's home, which she used to commit suicide.

24. Newborn Girl**St. Paul****October 2, 2003**

An ambulance was called to the home of a 14-year-old girl. Paramedics found her complaining of abdominal pain, determined that the girl was not in need of emergency treatment, and advised her mother to take her to see a doctor. At Regions Hospital, doctors determined that the girl had recently given birth. She then admitted that she had killed her newborn daughter by tying a sock around her neck and then placed the infant in a shoebox. A 22-year-old man who had been living with the teenager's family, Marvin Alvizurez, was arrested and charged with first-degree criminal sexual conduct. He has been accused of having a sexual relationship with the girl since she was 12. In December, the girl pleaded guilty in Ramsey County Juvenile Court to second-degree murder. She was ordered to remain in secure custody until her 19th birthday.

25. Newborn Boy**White Bear Lake****May 6, 2004**

An 18-year-old White Bear Lake woman, Amanda Anderson, was arrested for strangling her newborn son after giving birth in the bathroom of her family's apartment. According to the search warrant, the baby appeared to be full term and was found in a white kitchen garbage bag inside a clothes hamper. Anderson, who lived with her family, apparently concealed her pregnancy from her family. "I heard her mother screaming and crying outside," said Charlene Silva, who lives across the hall from the family. "Her mother said she had no idea her daughter was pregnant. [Amanda] was only a month away from graduating from high school." A family friend, who did know that the young woman was pregnant, called police to report that she'd given birth and needed help. Anderson pleaded guilty to unintentional second-degree murder and was sentenced to 6 years and 8 months in prison.

26. Taylor Swanson, 10**Winona****December 16, 2004**

A 21 year-old-man, Paul Gordon, was charged with four counts of first-degree murder; four counts of second-degree murder; first-degree criminal sexual conduct; and first-degree arson in the deaths of Stacy and her daughter Taylor, 10. The murder charges include three counts relating to the death of Smith's unborn child. Rescuers responded to a report of a fire at a Winona apartment complex to find the victims dead. It was determined that Stacy and Taylor were strangled to death and that Taylor was also beaten and sexually assaulted. Police have announced that the fire was deliberately set. Friends of Stacy reported that she and Gordon dated for several months and she was pregnant at the time of her murder. Gordon has an extensive criminal record. He was convicted of fourth-degree sexual assault against a 12-year-old girl in 2004 in Arkansas and was arrested in July in connection with raping and strangling a woman in Bentonville, Arkansas. Gordon was arrested in November in Winona on suspicion of cocaine possession and threatening police officers with a fake plastic gun. Gordon is also suspected of pointing a loaded pistol at another man in December. In the weeks leading up to the slayings, Gordon asked witnesses for rat poison and a syringe and told them that he wanted to get Stacy "off my back."

1989-March 5, 2005: Women strangled to death in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a friend or acquaintance of the deceased woman or child, or was a stranger or an unknown assailant.

1. Elma Karsiko, 57

Cloquet

November 23, 1991

Elma was found strangled to death in her room at a hotel where she had lived for many years. She also had stab wounds to the neck. An 18-year-old man, Daniel Bailey, confessed to strangling and stabbing Elma. He told authorities that he and Elma were drinking beer together in her apartment when they began arguing. He said he pushed her onto a bed, grabbed some wire, and strangled her. After she was dead, he stabbed her several times in the neck with a steak knife and then tied her hands behind her back. Daniel Bailey was charged with second-degree and first-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison.

2. Deontay Wilson, 6

Vadnais Heights

April 8, 1996

Deontay's mother, Sabrina Wilson, called the police department to report him missing about 8 p.m. on April 8th. Deputies found the boy's body face down in the garage. The medical examiner determined Deontay had been strangled at least six to seven hours before his body was found. He had been invited upstairs to the residence of Crystal Sesley and her four children, who shared a house with Deontay and his mother. Sesley said she killed Deontay in the bathroom but couldn't remember if she strangled him or drowned him. She later moved his body to the garage. Sesley was convicted of second-degree murder.

3. Renee Bell, 30

Golden Valley

Body Found May 23, 1996

Renee's nude body was found floating in a Theodore Wirth Park creek. She had been strangled with an elastic string. Mark Profit, 33, was charged with her murder. His wallet was discovered near the creek by Golden Valley police. In 1997, Profit was found guilty of Renee Bell's murder and was sentenced to two consecutive life terms in prison. Profit, who has spent nearly one-half of his life in prison for violence and sexual assaults, was known as the "Wirth Park Killer" According to a county attorney, Profit had been out of prison for only a year since he was 15 years old. Police believe Bell was the first of four victims in a four-month serial killing spree. His three other suspected victims are, Deborah LaVoie, 43, whose burned body was found June 3, 1996 in Wirth Park; Avis Warfield, 36, found June 19, 1996 near the park; and Keooudorn Photisane, 21, found July 29, 1996 in bushes near a bike path and the park's golf course.

4. Pa Nhia Lor, 13**Brooklyn Park****September 20, 1998**

Pa Nhia Lor met Michael Medin, 18, after he finished work at a restaurant. She had run away from home but two days earlier had called her family to say she would be home soon. Pa went with Medin and two of his friends, Johnnie Rhodes and Shea Holt, both 17, to Hartkopf Park. Early the next morning Medin pushed Pa down while Rhodes raped her. Rhodes left the park, and Medin stabbed and strangled Pa. But Pa was still alive when Medin carried her out of the park. They went to Holt's garage and got some rope and a plastic bag. Medin put the bag over Pa's head but she ripped it off. They got two more bags and tied them around her head. The two young men then stood on 4'2" Pa's arms, watching the bags move up and down as she struggled to breathe. After she stopped moving, Medin went to buy cigarettes while Holt stood guard over the body. Later that day Medin paged an acquaintance, Nickie Frank, 18. She and Stacy Koemer, 18, met up with Medin who said he had been in an argument with a girl and ended up killing her and needed help to get rid of the body. Medin wrapped the body in a blanket and loaded it into the trunk. Frank drove to a landfill in Elk River but because the gate was closed they drove into a housing development where the men dragged the body 150 feet from the road, took off Pa's jeans and shirt, and covered her with sticks. The police received a tip from someone not connected with the crime, and within 20 hours all five suspects were arrested. Medin was charged with first-degree murder, rape, and kidnapping and was sentenced to life. Holt was charged as an adult with murder and kidnapping and was sentenced to 24 years after pleading guilty. Rhodes was charged as a juvenile with rape and was sentenced to 8 years after pleading guilty. Frank and Koerner were charged with being accomplices to a felony after the fact and were sentenced to one year in the workhouse each.

5. Brenda Townsend, 27**Minneapolis****May 21, 2000**

Brenda's nude body was recovered from the Mississippi River. Someone had strangled and suffocated her and thrown her body into the river. Police continue to investigate

6. Wendy Bozeman, 39**Golden Valley****Body found May 31, 2001**

Wendy's severed limbs and head were discovered in Theodore Wirth Park. Her torso was found near some railroad track in north Minneapolis on June 21, 2001. Marcus Keith Miller, 42, a former KMOJ radio personality who ran an after-hours club out of a North Minneapolis warehouse, was arrested and charged with first-degree murder in Wendy's slaying. Reports indicate that he cleaned his north Minneapolis warehouse apartment including re-tiling his bathroom floor to hide evidence that he beat, strangled, stabbed, and dismembered Bozeman. Miller was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life without parole. Wendy was survived by a 14 year-old son.

7. Cheryl Thompson, 27**Burnsville****October 21**

Cheryl Thompson, 27, was reported missing by her brother when she didn't arrive home from work. Later that day police were called when a neighbor saw a man going through a car in Burnsville. When police found Cheryl's credit card and cash card on the suspect, Brian Batchelor, 19, he was arrested on suspicion of credit card fraud. He was in jail when Cheryl's body was found under a piece of cardboard behind Destiny Christian Center in Burnsville. Batchelor had been charged in September with stealing Cheryl's car. Dakota County court records show he pleaded guilty in October in two auto theft cases and was fined and given a 30-day jail sentence. Batchelor was acquainted with Thompson through his 16 year-old girlfriend, a neighbor of Thompson's. The girlfriend told police that Batchelor had told her he was going to kidnap and murder a woman she believed was Thompson. While in Dakota County jail, Batchelor decided on a plan to "get money from Cheryl Thomspson." He kidnapped her when she returned from work early in the morning and forced her to give her PIN and password for her credit and bankcards. Brian Batchelor duct taped Cheryl Thomspson's mouth and covered her nose and mouth with his hands until she asphyxiated. He then allegedly wrapped Cheryl's torso, legs, and head in duct tape before dumping her body behind the church. Cheryl Thompson was a doctoral student and an advocate at Fairview WomanKind, a domestic violence program in Edina, where she helped she helped women who were being battered. She was a loving mother to her 3 year-old son, Aidan. In June 2003, Batchelor pleaded guilty to first-degree murder. Judge Duane Harves sentenced him to life in prison, with a minimum of 30 years.

8. Mary Klatt, 53**Blue Earth****May 29, 2003**

Police found Mary raped and strangled in an empty room at the AmericInn in Blue Earth, where she worked as a hotel clerk. A hotel guest had called 911 at 6 a.m. that morning after finding her body. Roger Morton, 46, was indicted by a Faribault County grand jury of first-degree murder and first-degree sexual assault. He was linked to the killing through DNA and other evidence found at the crime scene. Authorities have stated that robbery was not a motive in the murder. Mary's brother, Arlyn Klatt, said she'd worked at the AmericInn for five or six years. She had been a teacher in Iowa for years and had returned to Blue Earth to care for her ailing mother. After Morton's arrest, Klatt's boyfriend, Danny Larson, said he was happy that an arrest had made but that it "doesn't compensate for my loss."

9. Melanie Ross, 40**Minneapolis****July 24, 2004**

Melanie was found dead under a bridge in Minneapolis. An autopsy found that she had been strangled. A man was arrested in the case, but is no longer a suspect. A motive for the murder is unknown.

Strangulation is not always the cause of death of a woman or a child, but an abuser who perpetrates an assault as intimate and lethal as strangulation is highly likely to commit murder.

Roberta Lindberg, 27

Duluth

August 10, 1993

Roberta was hacked to death with a machete by her husband, Jonathan Lindberg, 28. He then committed suicide by jumping into the path of a bus. Jonathan had a history of violent behavior and had been court ordered to stay away from his wife and son for most of last year. Roberta reported that he had beaten, hit, strangled and threatened her. She was seeking an end to the relationship and had recently filed for divorce. She is survived by a four-year-old son who apparently witnessed the slaying.

Sally Flores, 35

St. Paul

December 13, 2001

Sally and her husband were found dead in their home. There was one witness, a teenage girl who was the girlfriend of one of the couple's sons. Benigno Flores had left the house after an argument and then came back the following morning. Police records indicate that officers were sent to their house six times in the past five years, but only made a formal report on one incident when Benigno hit and strangled his wife. The couple's three daughters, 16, 18, and 21, were upstairs during the shootings, which took place in the kitchen. The 15 year-old had just come downstairs to check on the noise she'd heard, and she discovered Benigno Flores standing over his wife's body. He shot himself when she entered the room.

Sheng Vang, 21

Minneapolis

July 18, 2004

Sheng was found stabbed to death in the St. Paul garage belonging to a member of her estranged husband's family. Police called it a case of deadly domestic violence. Sheng's mother had warned her that morning not to go alone to see Moua Her, 22, to retrieve legal documents she needed for a passport. "I told her, 'I will go with you. You can tell the police to go with you. That man is very dangerous,'" she said. According to police, family records and court documents, in the past several years there had been many reports of fights, threats, and abuse of Sheng. Sheng had an order for protection against her husband, which was granted after an incident in March when Her tried to strangle his wife and stun her with some sort of electrical weapon. The couple had met in high school and court records show that the abuse started within months of their January 2000 wedding. Moua Her fled the Twin Cities to evade arrest and was captured by police outside of Chicago, after he attempted to use his credit card to pay for an escort service. Sheng was working on a business career while attending Century College. She left behind a 2-year-old daughter.

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Casandra Current, 26**Minneapolis****September 10, 2004**

Police found a horrifying sight when they arrived at a North Minneapolis home. Officers found a 62 year-old man stabbed to death in his front yard and two women dead in the basement, Casandra Current, 26, and her mother, Renee Brown, 44. The man was identified as Current's stepfather, Wayne Huotari. Nine days before the murder, Current's live-in boyfriend, Bryant Jones, 31, had allegedly assaulted, and strangled her. The day after the assault, Current reported to police that he had sexually assaulted her. Jones was wanted on a warrant for the assaults at the time of the murder. He had lived with Casandra's family until he sexually assaulted her. Friends and family reported that Jones was an extremely violent man who had assaulted Casandra numerous times. In 2002, an ex-girlfriend of Jones served him with a protective order. In February 2003, he pleaded guilty to second-degree burglary of his ex-girlfriend's home and violating the protection order. Instead of being sentenced the recommended 38 months in prison, Jones was ordered to complete chemical dependency treatment and one year in the workhouse, according to Hennepin County court records. Jones spent only six months in the workhouse. Minneapolis police said they had offered Current shelter in a safe house. She declined but stayed elsewhere up until a few days ago, and her family changed locks on the house, neighbors said. Cassandra is remembered by her aunt, Karo Adolfo, "She was very softhearted. She'd cry over a TV commercial." Renee's family remembered her as someone happiest when she was taking care of her garden or grilling her famous chicken.

Katelyn Thongratsamy, 3**St. Michael****October 31, 2004**

Katelyn Thongratsamy, 3, was found shot to death at her father's St. Michael home. Her father, Soukanh Thongratsamy, 42, was also found shot in the home. Police determined that the little girl's death was a murder-suicide perpetrated by the father. Deputies responded to a call the afternoon of the 31st after Thongratsamy assaulted his ex-girlfriend, who is also Katelyn's mother. Stacy Doyle of the Wright County Sheriff's Department said that the mother moved out of the house a couple of months before the murder and was back to pick on her daughter after a weekend visit with her father. Doyle said an argument broke out and that the woman was assaulted, threatened with a gun, strangled, and bound before escaping from a basement window and calling police from a neighbor's house. After police responded, they cordoned off the area and unsuccessfully attempted to contact Soukanh Thongratsamy. Police stormed the house, where they found the little girl and her father dead. Katelyn's mother was taken to the hospital and has since recovered from her injuries.

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Facts About Strangulation

According to a study by the San Diego City Attorney's Office of 300 attempted strangulation cases and strangulation murders in 1995:

- 10% of violent deaths were by strangulation.
- 90% of these deaths were domestic violence related.
- Females were strangled six times more than males.
- 99% of the suspects were men.
- Police officers reported no visible injuries or signs of strangulation in 62% of the cases studied.
- Significant visible signs of strangulation, such as rope burns, bruises, or red marks, were found in only 16% of the cases.

A 2002 study by Jacqueline Campell in *The Lancet* found that 10-44% of battered women reported having been strangled by a current or former partner.

About the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women was founded in 1978 to serve as a unifying voice for battered women and to link battered women's programs in the state with the common purpose of ending domestic violence. MCBW is a statewide membership organization of local, regional, and statewide programs advocating on behalf of battered women and their children.

MCBW promotes social change-- individual, institutional, and cultural. We work to end oppression based on gender, race, age, affectional orientation, class, and disability. The specific work of MCBW involves changing systems and institutions so that they can respond more effectively. MCBW works to empower organizations that serve victims of domestic abuse. MCBW provides widespread networking opportunities for organizations that serve battered women and is the statewide voice on behalf on battered women and provides leadership on a regional, statewide, and national level.

MCBW's activities include resources and referrals for individuals, legislative and public policy advocacy on a statewide and federal level, sponsoring training events for programs that serve battered women, coordinating statewide task force meetings, serving as an information clearinghouse, publishing a quarterly newsletter and web site, and producing community education materials.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women is to provide a voice for battered women and member programs; challenge systems and institutions so they respond more effectively to the needs of battered women and their children; promote social change; and support, educate, and connect member programs.

Vision Statement:

The vision of the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women is to end violence against women and their children and to achieve social justice for all.