

**Senate Counsel, Research,
and Fiscal Analysis**

G-17 STATE CAPITOL
75 REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BLVD.
ST. PAUL, MN 55155-1606
(651) 296-4791
FAX: (651) 296-7747
JO ANNE ZOFF SELLNER
DIRECTOR

Senate

State of Minnesota

S.F. No. 934 -Crime of Domestic Assault by Strangulation

Author: Senator Jane Ranum

Prepared by: Chris Turner, Senate Research (651/296-4350) CT

Date: March 7, 2005

Section 1, subdivision 1, defines "strangulation" as intentionally impeding normal breathing or circulation of the blood by applying pressure on the throat or neck or by blocking the nose or mouth of another person.

Subdivision 2 creates a five-year felony for assaulting a family or household member by strangulation.

Section 2 provides an August 1, 2005 effective date, applicable to crimes committed on or after that date.

CT:vs

Senators Ranum, Foley, Skoglund, McGinn and Limmer introduced--
S.F. No. 934: Referred to the Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety.

1 A bill for an act
2 relating to crimes; making it a crime to strangle a
3 family or household member; proposing coding for new
4 law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 609.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

6 Section 1. [609.2247] [DOMESTIC ASSAULT BY STRANGULATION.]

7 Subdivision 1. [DEFINITIONS.] (a) As used in this section,
8 the following terms have the meanings given.

9 (b) "Assault" has the meaning given in section 609.02,
10 subdivision 10.

11 (c) "Family or household members" has the meaning given in
12 section 518B.01, subdivision 2.

13 (d) "Strangulation" means intentionally impeding normal
14 breathing or circulation of the blood by applying pressure on
15 the throat or neck or by blocking the nose or mouth of another
16 person.

17 Subd. 2. [CRIME.] Whoever assaults a family or household
18 member by strangulation is guilty of a felony and may be
19 sentenced to imprisonment for not more than five years or to
20 payment of a fine of not more than \$10,000 or both.

21 Sec. 2. [EFFECTIVE DATE.]

22 Section 1 is effective August 1, 2005, and applies to
23 crimes committed on or after that date.

1 Senator moves to amend S.F. No. 934 as follows:

2 Page 1, after line 5, insert:

3 "Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 609.02,
4 subdivision 16, is amended to read:

5 Subd. 16. [QUALIFIED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE-RELATED OFFENSE.]

6 "Qualified domestic violence-related offense" includes the
7 following offenses: sections 518B.01, subdivision 14 (violation
8 of domestic abuse order for protection); 609.221 (first-degree
9 assault); 609.222 (second-degree assault); 609.223 (third-degree
10 assault); 609.2231 (fourth-degree assault); 609.224
11 (fifth-degree assault); 609.2242 (domestic assault); 609.2247
12 (domestic assault by strangulation); 609.342 (first-degree
13 criminal sexual conduct); 609.343 (second-degree criminal sexual
14 conduct); 609.344 (third-degree criminal sexual conduct);
15 609.345 (fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct); 609.377
16 (malicious punishment of a child); 609.713 (terroristic
17 threats); 609.748, subdivision 6 (violation of harassment
18 restraining order); and 609.749 (harassment/stalking); and
19 similar laws of other states, the United States, the District of
20 Columbia, tribal lands, and United States territories.

21 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 609.2242,
22 subdivision 3, is amended to read:

23 Subd. 3. [DOMESTIC ASSAULTS; FIREARMS.] (a) When a person
24 is convicted of a violation of this section or section 609.221,
25 609.222, 609.223, ~~or~~ 609.224, or 609.2247, the court shall
26 determine and make written findings on the record as to whether:

27 (1) the assault was committed against a family or household
28 member, as defined in section 518B.01, subdivision 2;

29 (2) the defendant owns or possesses a firearm; and

30 (3) the firearm was used in any way during the commission
31 of the assault.

32 (b) If the court determines that the assault was of a
33 family or household member, and that the offender owns or
34 possesses a firearm and used it in any way during the commission
35 of the assault, it shall order that the firearm be summarily
36 forfeited under section 609.5316, subdivision 3.

1 (c) When a person is convicted of assaulting a family or
2 household member and is determined by the court to have used a
3 firearm in any way during commission of the assault, the court
4 may order that the person is prohibited from possessing any type
5 of firearm for any period longer than three years or for the
6 remainder of the person's life. A person who violates this
7 paragraph is guilty of a gross misdemeanor. At the time of the
8 conviction, the court shall inform the defendant whether and for
9 how long the defendant is prohibited from possessing a firearm
10 and that it is a gross misdemeanor to violate this paragraph.
11 The failure of the court to provide this information to a
12 defendant does not affect the applicability of the firearm
13 possession prohibition or the gross misdemeanor penalty to that
14 defendant.

15 (d) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (c), when a
16 person is convicted of a violation of this section or section
17 609.224 and the court determines that the victim was a family or
18 household member, the court shall inform the defendant that the
19 defendant is prohibited from possessing a pistol for three years
20 from the date of conviction and that it is a gross misdemeanor
21 offense to violate this prohibition. The failure of the court
22 to provide this information to a defendant does not affect the
23 applicability of the pistol possession prohibition or the gross
24 misdemeanor penalty to that defendant.

25 (e) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (c), a person
26 is not entitled to possess a pistol if the person has been
27 convicted after August 1, 1992, of domestic assault under this
28 section or assault in the fifth degree under section 609.224 and
29 the assault victim was a family or household member as defined
30 in section 518B.01, subdivision 2, unless three years have
31 elapsed from the date of conviction and, during that time, the
32 person has not been convicted of any other violation of this
33 section or section 609.224. Property rights may not be abated
34 but access may be restricted by the courts. A person who
35 possesses a pistol in violation of this paragraph is guilty of a
36 gross misdemeanor."

1 Page 1, line 9, delete everything after "(b)"

2 Page 1, delete line 10

3 Page 1, line 11, delete "(c)"

4 Page 1, line 13, delete "(d)" and insert "(c)"

5 Page 1, line 17, before "Whoever" insert "Unless a greater
6 penalty is provided elsewhere,"

7 Page 1, after line 20, insert:

8 "Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 624.712,
9 subdivision 5, is amended to read:

10 Subd. 5. [CRIME OF VIOLENCE.] "Crime of violence" means:
11 felony convictions of the following offenses: sections 609.185
12 (murder in the first degree); 609.19 (murder in the second
13 degree); 609.195 (murder in the third degree); 609.20
14 (manslaughter in the first degree); 609.205 (manslaughter in the
15 second degree); 609.215 (aiding suicide and aiding attempted
16 suicide); 609.221 (assault in the first degree); 609.222
17 (assault in the second degree); 609.223 (assault in the third
18 degree); 609.2231 (assault in the fourth degree); 609.2247
19 (domestic assault by strangulation); 609.229 (crimes committed
20 for the benefit of a gang); 609.235 (use of drugs to injure or
21 facilitate crime); 609.24 (simple robbery); 609.245 (aggravated
22 robbery); 609.25 (kidnapping); 609.255 (false imprisonment);
23 609.342 (criminal sexual conduct in the first degree); 609.343
24 (criminal sexual conduct in the second degree); 609.344
25 (criminal sexual conduct in the third degree); 609.345 (criminal
26 sexual conduct in the fourth degree); 609.377 (malicious
27 punishment of a child); 609.378 (neglect or endangerment of a
28 child); 609.486 (commission of crime while wearing or possessing
29 a bullet-resistant vest); 609.52 (involving theft of a firearm,
30 theft involving the intentional taking or driving of a motor
31 vehicle without the consent of the owner or authorized agent of
32 the owner, theft involving the taking of property from a
33 burning, abandoned, or vacant building, or from an area of
34 destruction caused by civil disaster, riot, bombing, or the
35 proximity of battle, and theft involving the theft of a
36 controlled substance, an explosive, or an incendiary device);

1 609.561 (arson in the first degree); 609.562 (arson in the
2 second degree); 609.582, subdivision 1, 2, or 3 (burglary in the
3 first through third degrees); 609.66, subdivision 1e (drive-by
4 shooting); 609.67 (unlawfully owning, possessing, operating a
5 machine gun or short-barreled shotgun); 609.71 (riot); 609.713
6 (terroristic threats); 609.749 (harassment and stalking);
7 609.855, subdivision 5 (shooting at a public transit vehicle or
8 facility); and chapter 152 (drugs, controlled substances); and
9 an attempt to commit any of these offenses."

10 Page 1, line 22, delete "Section 1 is" and insert "Sections
11 1 to 4 are" and delete "applies" and insert "apply"

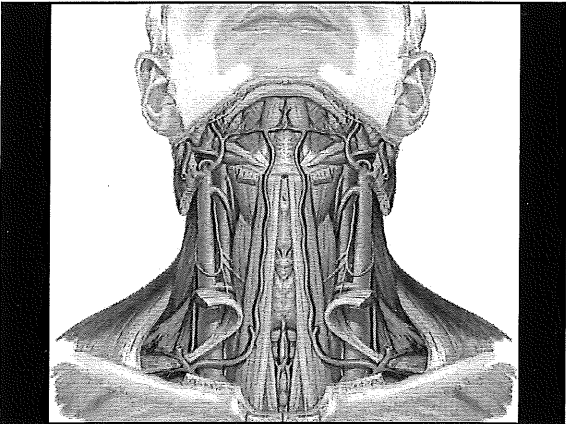
12 Renumber the sections in sequence and correct the internal
13 references

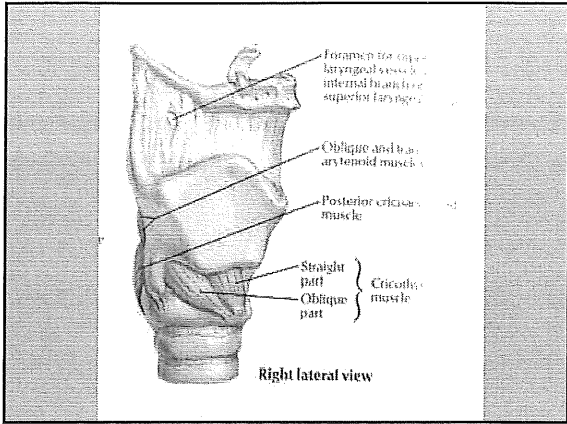
14 Amend the title as follows:

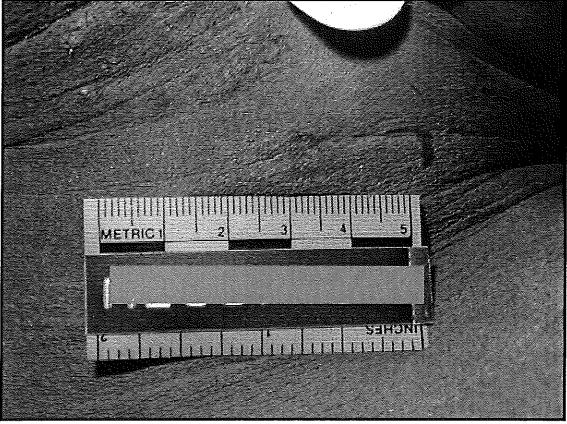
15 Page 1, line 3, after the semicolon, insert "making
16 necessary corresponding changes to other laws; defining the new
17 strangulation crime as a "crime of violence;"

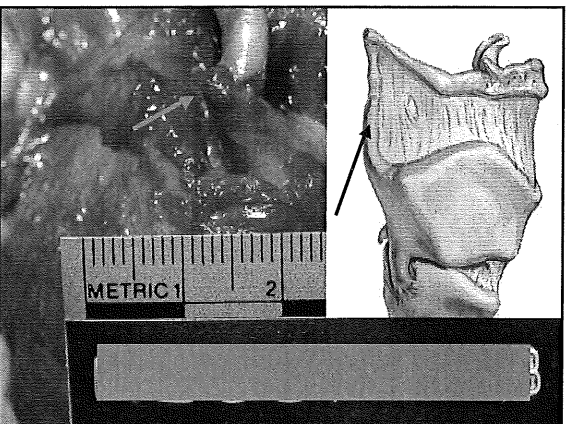
Asphyxiation as part of violence
Mary Carr, M.D.

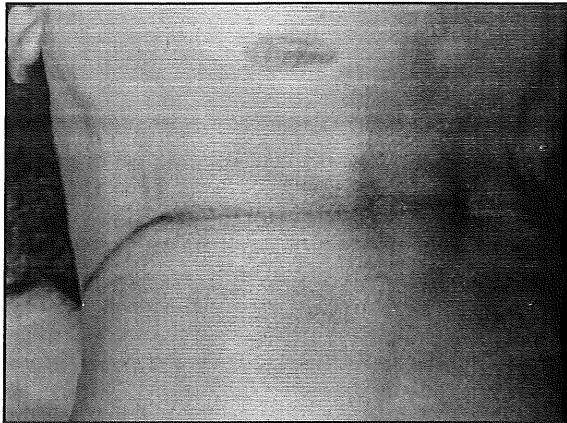
- Asphyxia: Two big groups
- Suffocation
 - Strangulation

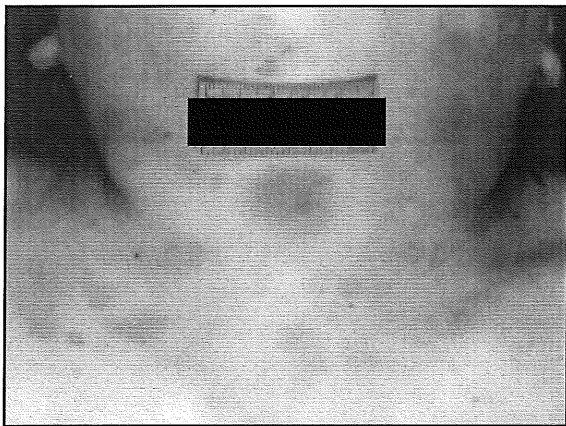












Symptoms

- Throat pain
- Voice changes
- Breathing problems
- Trouble swallowing
- Pain with moving neck
- Syncope
- Near syncope (seeing spots)

Signs of strangulation

- Redness
- Cuts
- Abrasions
- Bruises
- Petechiae
- Psychological changes
- Most victims lack physical evidence of injury-42% in San Diego study of 300 victims

- Strangulation is a potentially lethal level of violence. Often abuse has escalated by the time this violent act is being used. It is not on the level of a slap or a shove.

**Minnesota Senate
Crime Prevention and Public Safety
Committee**

S.F. 934

March 10, 2005

Attempt to strangle would be felony

By Jim Adams
Star Tribune Staff Writer

A Hennepin County team studying domestic violence called for stronger penalties against people who try to strangle a family or household member.

The group supported bills introduced at the state Legislature that would make it a felony rather than a misdemeanor.

Attempting to strangle a partner is "often one of the last abusive acts committed by a violent domestic partner before murder," said a report issued Monday by the Domestic Fatality Review Team.

The state's felony assault law requires use of a weapon or great bodily harm, like a broken neck bone, to charge someone with a felony in an attempt to choke another person. The hope is to allow prosecutors or courts to intervene

before domestic abuse turns deadly, officials said.

An advocate against domestic violence linked the bill to the case of an Eagan woman, Moonku Persaud, who was found strangled and beaten last month. She had previously reported that her boyfriend, Jairam Ganpat, 37, had slapped and choked her, but she hadn't wanted him arrested at the time, according to a criminal complaint that charged him with her murder.

The felony-level bills have been introduced in the Minnesota House and Senate, said Lonna Stevens, legislative coordinator of another advocate of the bill, the Minnesota Coalition of Battered Women.

The coalition said 32 women, or 9 percent of those killed in domestic violence since 1989, were strangled.

Jim Adams is at jadams@startribune.com.

ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS

TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2005

Man faces charges in choking

Couple had history of domestic violence

BY MARA H. GOTTFRIED
Pioneer Press

A St. Paul man who served prison time for stabbing a girlfriend could be charged today in the fatal choking of another girlfriend.

Alexander J. Miller, 32, and Crystal M. Lindorff, 22, had been arguing all Tuesday about his alleged infidelity when he reportedly choked her at the East Side apartment they shared with their 9-month-old son, St. Paul police said Wednesday.

Lindorff's family told police there was a history of domestic violence in the relationship, but she didn't want to report him, said Sgt. Bruce Wynkoop, homicide investigator. The couple lived at 1876 E. Magnolia Ave. for only two months, the

building's owner said, but police were called for a domestic situation there last month.

The case seems to have followed a familiar, but tragic pattern, said Danielle Kluz, spokeswoman for the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women.

"It's very common for a woman not to come forward because of the pattern of intimidation and fear," she said. "Sometimes they think the repercussions are going to be worse than anything the criminal justice system can do, but you can't keep it silent."

Paramedics were summoned to the apartment at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday for a report of a woman not breathing. Lindorff was taken to Regions Hospital and pronounced dead. The Ramsey County medical exam-

iner's office has conducted an autopsy, but the cause and manner of death are still pending.

Though the emergency call initially seemed to be a medical situation, authorities soon became concerned that a crime had occurred. Marks in the area of Lindorff's neck made a police officer at the hospital suspicious, said Paul Schnell, department spokesman.

The argument between the couple was about Miller having another girlfriend, Wynkoop said.

Police arrested Miller at the apartment Tuesday. He was being held Wednesday in the Ramsey County jail on suspicion of homicide.

Miller received a 45-month sentence for second-degree assault after he stabbed a girlfriend in 1997 at an apartment, also on Magnolia Avenue and about a mile from his current

FYI

For help with domestic violence, call the St. Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project at 651-645-2824.

apartment. The woman had suffered a punctured lung.

Lindorff appears to be the 15th victim of domestic violence-related homicides this year in Minnesota; 13 of the victims were women, Kluz said.

Tuesday's case marked the 20th homicide of the year in St. Paul and the third related to domestic violence.

Mara H. Gottfried covers St. Paul public safety. She can be reached at mgottfried@pioneerpress.com or 651-228-5262.

Strangulation suspect has ugly history

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2004 N C 3B

ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS WWW.TWINCITIES.COM

BY TODD NELSON
Pioneer Press

Monday against a violent drifter.

Text messages recovered from a phone partially melted in a fire to cover up the strangulations of a pregnant Winona, Minn., woman and her daughter led to murder charges

Paul Allan Gordon, described in court documents as a reputed gang member and would-be professional boxer with a history of violence, allegedly fled to Mexico after the December slayings in the Mississippi River town of 27,000.

Gordon appeared Monday in Winona County District Court after waiving extradition from San Diego, where he was taken into custody Jan. 4 as he crossed the border back to the United States.

Known by 10 aliases that include "X," "J" and "Lil Casino," Gordon has trained for a professional boxing career and has taken part in pre-Olympic box-

ing efforts, Winona County Attorney Charles MacLean said.

Gordon, 22, has "used firearms, knives, fire and his own hands to injure people in a relatively constant series of incidents for the past eight years," MacLean said he told the judge in arguing that Gordon was a

flight risk and a danger to public safety.

Judge Margaret Shaw Johnson set Gordon's bail at \$20 million on the murder charges. Gordon applied for a public defender, but none had yet been named.

After his arrest, Gordon told investigators that his boxing workouts included training on how to disable someone by choking the person into unconsciousness, according to a criminal complaint filed Monday.

Winona authorities initially believed they were investigating a tragic fire in the Sugar Loaf Apartments, but autopsies determined that Stacy Smith, 29, and her daughter, Taylor Swanson, 10, had been killed — strangled, the complaint revealed. The girl also was beaten and sexually assaulted. Investigators found Gordon's cell phone next to her bed, where he apparently had mistakenly dropped it before leaving town, first for Detroit, then California.

"This is quite an electronic case in many ways," MacLean said. "There are lots of cell-phone records, voice mails and text messages that are very valuable for the case. There's plenty of other evidence; however, the cell-phone evidence is terrific."

The complaint recounts what investigators termed the "often acrimonious" relationship between Gordon and Smith. He was angry that she would not leave him alone, describing her as a "mosquito." She was angry that he would not spend more time with her and also was upset about his

resulted in two pregnancies.

Witnesses told investigators that Smith had been demanding money from Gordon. She also had threatened to tell prosecutors about his alleged drug dealing, according to the complaint. Informants told investigators that Gordon had been an active crack dealer since moving to Winona last year, selling up to \$15,000 worth of cocaine a month.

Witnesses also said Smith had planned to have an abortion and was asking him for \$3,000, or \$1,000 for each month she had carried their child.

A series of increasingly testy cell-phone calls and text messages centering on the \$3,000 demand took place between the two in the days before the killings and fire, according to the complaint.

"Don't do nothing stupid," Gordon wrote once.

"NO ONE IS HAPPY UNLESS MAMA IS!" Smith later replied. "Guess what? SHE AIN'T!"

Gordon became "notably abrupt, pressured and angry" after a call he received at 1:30 a.m. Dec. 16, a witness told investigators. Gordon, then visiting another Winona-area girlfriend, left that woman's apartment between 2 and 2:30 a.m., returning between 3:30 and 4 a.m. He soon announced he could not find his cell phone, calling it twice to try to find it.

"The window of time when Gordon was absent ... lines up precisely with the time the victims were killed and the fires set," Tom Williams, Winona deputy police chief, writes in the complaint.

Winona authorities initially believed they were investigating a tragic fire in the Sugar Loaf Apartments, but autopsies found that Stacy Smith, 29, and her daughter, Taylor Swanson, 10, had been strangled. The girl also had been beaten and sexually assaulted.

train a few hours after the killings, using tickets he had reserved the day before. Once in California, he told a fourth girlfriend he was leaving for Mexico because of charges he was facing in other states.

In Winona County, Gordon faces unrelated assault charges for allegedly pistol-whipping a man, possessing cocaine and brandishing a replica machine gun at officers, according to the complaint.

In Michigan, Gordon has a juvenile record for carrying a concealed weapon, a felony, which was originally charged as assault with intent to murder stemming from a drive-by shooting, MacLean said.

Gordon was convicted last year of sexual assaulting a 12-year-old girl in Arkansas, where he also faces a felony charge of raping a woman while choking her.

In the weeks leading up to the Winona slayings, Gordon

asked witnesses for rat poison and a syringe, saying he wanted to get Smith "off my back," according to the complaint. Witnesses also told investigators that he threatened to burn the houses of anyone who cooperated with law enforcement.

Speaking to investigators after his arrest, Gordon said he felt like he had "no way out" and was "angry with everything going on in my life" shortly before the fire was reported. He first claimed he had lost his cell phone days before the fire, then admitted he had lost it in the early morning hours the day of the fire.

"When the investigators told Gordon where they had found Gordon's lost cell phone — in Taylor Swanson's bedroom right next to her bed — Gordon dropped his head into his hands for an extended period, rubbed the top of his head, sighed and terminated the interview," Williams wrote in the complaint.

Gordon is charged with four counts of first-degree murder; four counts of second-degree murder; first-degree criminal sexual conduct; and first-degree arson. The murder charges include three counts relating to the death of Smith's unborn child.

Winona Mayor Jerry Miller said the slayings have had "a sour impact" on the historic city, which boasts soaring bluffs, steamboat roots, vintage homes and Winona State University.

"When something like that happens in a community like this, there is a lot of apprehension," Miller said.

Todd Nelson can be reached at tanelson@pioneerpress.com or 651.998.5575.

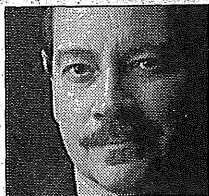
Clothesline Project puts face on domestic violence

I had no idea there was even a name for them.

"Onesies," said a staffer at the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women's central offices in St. Paul as she pointed to a tiny cotton body suit on display on top of a conference room table.

Someone — I later learned it was the children of a battered woman in Freeborn County — had decorated the jumper with star-shape sparkles, a multicolored butterfly and a dandelion with a sad look on its face.

"Newborn baby," read the pink-colored words for the infant boy strangled and dumped in a garbage bag by his 18-year-old birth mother in White Bear Lake last year. The



RUBÉN ROSARIO

kid didn't even get a name before his life was smothered.

Another onesie, belonging to "Rose Marie Heden, beaten to death," rested a few feet away between a half-dozen more pieces of clothing.

"My life was taken away at the tender age of 3 months old in the hands of my father," read the front of the white cotton onesie with three miniature roses vertically sewn chest high.

Another year has ended, with another long list of domestic violence victims and either artwork or clothing commemorating their slayings. The victims in 2004 range from

newborns to Wayne Huotari, 62, who was fatally stabbed Sept. 10 in Minneapolis while unsuccessfully trying to prevent the killing of his stepdaughter and the woman's 26-year-old daughter.

"We have hundreds of other T-shirts and stuff from previous years in the back room," noted Danielle Kluz, who handles communications for the organization.

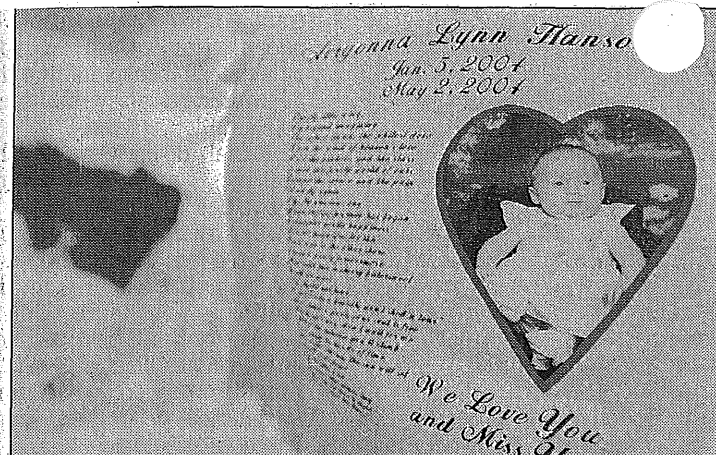
Overall, at least 13 women, nine children younger than 18, and — yes — two men, including Huotari, were victims of domestic violence. All will be remembered through artwork that will be unveiled Thursday as part of the annual Clothesline Project.

Started in 1990 in Massachusetts, the effort now includes about 500 projects around the globe, organizers said.

This year, the Minnesota group is supporting proposed legislation that would make attempted strangulation a presumptive felony offense, rather than a misdemeanor as it currently is in state statutes. Four other states have recently made that legislative change. The push could not have come at a more news-appropriate time.

Strangulation cases just in the past few weeks include an Eagan woman found dead in her home and a pregnant Texas woman and her 7-year-old son. Police accuse boyfriends in the killings.

"We are advocating that acts of strangulation that do not lead to deaths be charged as felonies rather than misdemeanors," explained Lonna



BRANDI JADE THOMAS, PIONEER PRESS

Amanda Schulke made this shirt in memory of her 3-month-old daughter, Avryonna Hanson, who was killed by the child's father. After a rally Thursday at the state Capitol, the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women will unveil an exhibition of artistic T-shirts made to commemorate last year's victims of domestic violence.

Stevens, the group's legislative and public policy coordinator. "We have found through research that strangulation has often been a precursor in cases where women were eventually slain."

That assessment is confirmed in the 2004 report to be released today by Hennepin County's Domestic Fatality Review Team. The group conducted exhaustive and autopsy-like case analyses on 14 of the 93 women, 35 children and four men murdered as a result of domestic violence in the county since 1993.

"Strangulation is often one of the last abusive acts committed by a violent domestic partner before murder," notes the report.

Alyson Olsen, 21, sitting across from the infant pajamas on this day, put a human face on the proposed legislation.

According to her account, as well as a criminal complaint, Olsen was knocked unconscious and choked last summer by an enraged boyfriend.

"Do you want death, do you want death, 'cause I will give it to you, I will give it to you," a cop who responded to a 911 call reported hearing moments before he entered the apartment.

The defendant, Jason Heurung, was charged with misdemeanor assault and making terroristic threats. Heurung is contesting the charges.

Stearns County prosecutor Janelle Kendall would not specifically address the case but in general favors the proposed legislation.

"Domestic assaults stem from a power and need to control and dominate. And many times, there are injuries that are inflicted that are not always visible and which present a difficult problem in proving beyond a reasonable doubt," Kendall said. "But the fact that it may be hard in some cases doesn't mean that we shouldn't try and also train cops to immediately document the injuries."

Olsen testified about her alleged assault recently before members of a legislative committee mulling the new bill.

"I felt great because I went from being a victim to someone who now had a voice," Olsen said. "I believe they listened."

Ruben Rosario can be reached at rrosario@pioneerpress.com or 651-228-5454.

RALLY AT THE CAPITOL

The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women will hold a rally at the State Capitol Rotunda on Thursday at 1:30 p.m. An unveiling of the group's annual Clothesline Project will follow at 3:30 p.m. at the organization's headquarters, 590 Park St., St. Paul. For more information, call 651-646-5177.

ONLINE

To view the following, go to www.twincities.com:

- The group's unofficial "femicide" report for 2004, which lists all reported or known cases of domestic violence-related fatalities in the state last year.

- Hennepin County Fatality Review Team's 2004 report, which will be officially released and discussed today by the county's chief judge and other officials at 12:30 p.m. at Hennepin County Government Center's Domestic Abuse Service Center, Room A-022, in downtown Minneapolis.

- A previous column by Rubén Rosario about the team.

- The full texts of the domestic violence reports.

CRIMINAL STATUTES

Bill would make choking a felony

Domestic abuse cases prompt call for change

BY SHANNON PRATHER
Pioneer Press

When violence in the home escalates to an abuser grabbing a victim by the neck and squeezing, it's often a sign the abuse could turn lethal, according to domestic violence experts. But in Minnesota, unless the victim dies, the assault is a misdemeanor.

Ramsey County Attorney Susan Gaertner and representatives with the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women are asking lawmakers to change the law so prosecutors can charge abusers who choke their victims in a domestic violence dispute with a felony.

Gaertner said the change is needed because it's difficult to use the state's felony assault statute, which requires the use of a weapon or evidence of great bodily harm. That means the victim must suffer a broken bone or serious bleeding.

The charge for choking someone, but not killing them, is only a misdemeanor, Gaertner said. "Essentially it's a slap on the wrist," she added.

The proposed law would make intentionally impeding normal breathing or circulation of the blood by applying pres-

sure on the throat or neck or blocking the nose or throat a felony punishable with up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. It does not require that police detect immediate signs of bodily harm — broken bones or blood.

"It's highly lethal, but oftentimes the ligature marks on the neck — if it's from hands, a telephone cord or pantyhose — don't show up right away," said Lonna Stevens, public policy and legislative coordinator with the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women. "Enhancing it to a felony would get law enforcement to document it clearly and follow up with medical attention as soon as possible, just as they would treat a knife wound."

Choking in other settings, such as a bar brawl, would remain a misdemeanor.

"This has been the subject of a great deal of conversation. Attempted strangulations have



Ramsey County Attorney Susan Gaertner is seeking to change the law.

not been a big issue in your average bar fight. Those tend to be with knuckles and beer bottles upside the head," Gaertner said. "This reflects the place attempted strangulation has in patterns of escalating domestic violence."

North Carolina, Missouri and Oregon already have passed laws increasing penalties for domestic abusers who choke their victims, Gaertner said. Nebraska makes choking a felony in all cases.

Rep. Steve Smith, R-Mound, has agreed to author the bill in the State House. Smith, who chairs the Public Safety and Finance Committee, is taking fellow committee members on a field trip to the Coalition for Battered Women's offices today for an informational hearing.

According to a study compiled by the coalition, at least 50 women and children have been strangled in Minnesota between 1989 and 2004 by a mate, family member or member of their household. Making nonlethal choking a felony would allow prosecutors and the courts to intervene before the abuse turned fatal, experts and prosecutors say.

Shannon Prather can be reached at sprather@pioneerpress.com or 651-228-5452.

The proposed law would make intentionally impeding normal breathing or circulation of the blood by applying pressure on the throat or neck or blocking the nose or throat a felony punishable with up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. It does not require that police detect immediate signs of bodily harm — broken bones or blood.

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

March 10, 2005

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

590 Park Street, Suite 410
Saint Paul, MN 55103

Voice: (651) 646-6177

Fax: (651) 646-1527

Web: www.mcbw.org

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.

**Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women
Special Femicide Report: Strangulation and Women and Children Murdered in
Minnesota, 1989-2005**

In Minnesota from 1989– March 10, 2005:

At least 35 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 19 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 11 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 3 times as many women were strangled to death from 1989-2005 by an intimate partner or family member than by a friend, acquaintance, stranger or an unknown perpetrator.

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

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

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. 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.

5. 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.

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6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. Cynthia Grube, 26**Appleton****October 26, 1993**

Cynthia's body was found dumped at an abandoned farm. She had been strangled to death. The farm belonged to the grandmother of Cynthia's husband, Keith Grube. Authorities believe he strangled Cynthia in their home and then dumped her body at the farm. Grube was charged with two counts of second-degree murder in Cynthia's death and was sentenced to life in prison.

10. 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.

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11. 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.

12. 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 wilderness 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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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22. 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.

23. 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.

24. 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.

25. 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.

26. 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.

27. 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.

28. 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.

29. 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.

30. 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.

31. 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.

32. 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.

33. 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."

34. 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.

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35. 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 asphyxiation by strangulation. Steenbock had called 911 to say that he believed his fiancée had fallen and hit her head in the shower. However, when police interviewed him later, Steenbock 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 had been 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."

4. 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.

5. Koua Eai Hang, 11**St. Paul****September 3, 1998****6. Samson Hang, 9****7. Nail Hang, 8****8. Tang Lung Hang, 7****9. A-ee Hang, 6****10. Tang Kee Hang, 5**

Khoua 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. Khoua 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 Khoua 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. Khoua Her was convicted of six counts of second-degree murder. She is not expected to be released until 2032.

11. 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.

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. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

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4. 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 to eventually strangling her with a piece of electrical cord. Then he hid her body between two dumpsters and covered it with some pallets and a piece of carpet. Melinda died from 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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

9. 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-tilling 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.

10. 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."

11. 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 Adolfini, "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.

**The 2004 Femicide Report:
Women and Children
Murdered in Minnesota**

**Minnesota Coalition for
Battered Women**

590 Park Street, Suite 410
St. Paul, MN 55103

Voice: (651) 646-6177

Fax: (651) 646-1527

Web: www.mcbw.org

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 of color, women living in poverty, rural women, lesbians, and women and girls used in prostitution and sex trafficking may be underreported in our listing as they may go unreported in mainstream media.

The 2004 Femicide Report is compiled from news accounts. Please contact MCBW 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 in 2004:

At least 13 women were murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a current or former husband, boyfriend, intimate partner, or household member, or family member of the deceased woman.

At least 9 children under the age of 18 were murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was their mother's husband, boyfriend or intimate partner, or was the parent, guardian, baby-sitter, day care provider, or household/family member of the child.

At least 7 women were murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was an acquaintance of the deceased woman or child, or was a stranger or an unknown assailant.

At least 3 friends or family members were murdered in domestic violence-related situations.

At least 12 children have been left motherless.

Women murdered 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. Lisa Mooers, 40

Deerwood

February 25, 2004

Lisa was the victim of a murder-suicide at her rural Deerwood home. The perpetrator was her 80-year-old father-in-law, DuWayne Mooers. Lisa's husband, Don Mooers, found the bodies and called authorities. Lisa's body was found shot to death inside the house and DuWayne's body was found outside. A suicide note that DuWayne had written was found nearby but police did not speculate on a motive. It is known, however, that DuWayne's wife, Elsie, died just a month before the murder. There were no signs of a struggle. Lisa worked as a flight attendant and leaves behind three sons.

2. Pennie Rossland, 43

Coon Rapids

February 29, 2004

The bodies of two gunshot victims were found by an Anoka County deputy sheriff at a boat access ramp on Linwood Lake in Linwood Township. Authorities determined that Steven Malloy, 47, shot Pennie to death and then turned the gun on himself. Pennie Rossland and Steven Malloy had had an ongoing relationship for an extended period of time. Pennie worked as a furniture finisher.

3. Pa Moua Lee, 35

Island Lake Township

March 15, 2004

A sheriff's deputy found Pa Moua and her husband, Xiong Pao Lee, 35, dead of gunshot wounds at their home in Island Lake Township in southwestern Minnesota. An investigation determined that Pa Moua was murdered by her husband, who then committed suicide. The couple had moved to rural Minnesota to escape the hustle and bustle of the Twin Cities. According to relatives, the couple began to have marital problems after Xiong Pao was found to be infertile. Their troubles continued in late December when Pa Moua began having a relationship with a co-worker at the couple's workplace, Schwan Food Company. Although the issue was brought to the attention of family members in Saint Paul, it was supposed to have been resolved through traditional methods of mediation and fines.

4. Helen Strubbe, 40

Glyndon

March 26, 2004

The deaths of a Glyndon couple officially have been ruled a murder-suicide. Helen Strubbe died after she was shot in the head by a .22 caliber rifle fired by her husband, Randy Strubbe, 43. Randy then shot himself in the head. The couple's two children were in the basement at the time of the shootings and the 15 year-old daughter made the call to 911. Helen Strubbe worked as an office specialist in the insurance billing department of MeritCare Hospital in Fargo. She started working at the hospital in 1996.

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5. Lynette Rossin, 48**Goodview****May 8, 2004**

Lynette was found in the bedroom of her former home, dead of gunshot wounds. Her husband, Mike Rossin, 49, was also found dead of gunshot wounds. Police determined that Mike Rossin had shot his wife to death and then committed suicide. The couple was in the process of divorcing. On the night of the murder, Lynette was spending the evening across the street at the home of Goodview Mayor Jack Weimerskirch, along with her sister and brother-in-law. Mike Rossin telephoned the mayor's home and asked Lynette to come over to talk to him. When Lynette did not return after 90 minutes, her sister and brother-in-law went to the Rossin house, where they discovered the bodies. Lynette had been living with her mother a few blocks away from her former home. Her daughter was living with Lynette and her son was living with his father. Lynette was a nurse who worked for 29 years at the same clinic. In her spare time enjoyed golfing, cross stitching, exercising, river life, knitting and crocheting.

6. Diane Levy, 47**Minneapolis****May 15, 2004**

Minneapolis police had been to the home of Diane and Frank Levy to arrest Frank at least seven times after receiving calls reporting domestic abuse. In at least two cases, he threatened to kill Diane with a knife. On the morning of May 15, Frank Levy made good on his threats, stabbing his wife to death more than 30 times, using a kitchen knife and scissors. Diane Levy's 15-year-old daughter told police that she woke up to screams that morning and heard her mother yell, "No, don't do this! What are you doing?" When the daughter went into the couple's bedroom, she saw Frank stabbing her mother. The teen jumped on Frank Levy's back but he fought her off and stabbed her in the process. The girl called out to her uncle, Diane's brother, who was downstairs. The uncle hit Frank Levy with a chair but Levy stabbed him at least seven times before running from the house. Diane Levy died before police could arrive. The uncle was in serious condition at the hospital but survived his injuries. Diane's daughter was treated for stab injuries to her face and released. Later that day, Frank Levy showed up at a local police station and said he had just tried to kill his family. Frank Levy was charged with two counts of first-degree murder, including having a pattern of past domestic abuse, and two counts of first-degree attempted murder. In November, Frank Levy pleaded guilty to second-degree unintentional murder and first-degree assault for stabbing Diane Levy's brother. Under the plea agreement, Levy received 37½ years in prison.

7. 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 up. 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 found that Rooney 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 Rooney. He was charged with two counts of second-degree murder. "This victim suffered a violent death in what appears to be another tragic example of escalating domestic violence," stated Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom.

8. 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 are calling 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 Vang obtained 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 leaves behind a 2-year-old daughter.

9. Angela Sangster, 32**Minneapolis****September 4, 2004**

Norman Howard, 51, is suspected of shooting his girlfriend, Angela, in the head and killing her. Last fall, Angela told police that Howard had said he would kill her, and that he threatened to stab her with a screwdriver in their home. The night of the murder, the couple went together to a Minneapolis bar. Howard became enraged at Sangster when she didn't want to leave the bar when he did. Later that evening, he shot Angela in his car. Later that night, Howard told a friend that he "killed his woman" and then passed out. Norman Howard was charged with two counts of second-degree murder. He was convicted of rape in 1979 and third-degree assault in 1989. Howard was sentenced to ten years in prison for Angela's murder.

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

Police found a horrifying sight when they arrived at a North Minneapolis home, finding a 62 year-old man stabbed to death in his front yard and two women stabbed to death in the basement, Casandra, and her mother, Renee Brown, 44. The man was identified as Brown's stepfather, Wayne Huotari. Nine days before the murder, Current's boyfriend, Bryant Jones, 31, assaulted and strangled her. The day after, 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 6 months in the workhouse. Minneapolis police said they had offered to take Casandra to a shelter. She declined because she was afraid Jones would harm her family if she went to a battered women's shelter. 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. Wayne worked for Willman Trucking for many years and was remembered by neighbors as a kind man.

11. Mary Johnson, 42**Alexandria****October 28, 2004**

The Alexandria Police Department received a call at 6:45 p.m. from Mary, who told the dispatcher that she was being threatened with a gun by her husband, Scott Johnson, 43. When police arrived at the couple's home and failed to make contact with them, the Douglas County SWAT team was called out and set a barricade around the home. After securing the home, the team entered the home and found the couple dead. An autopsy found that Scott Johnson had shot his wife and then turned the gun on himself. The couple was in the process of separating. Mary Johnson is survived by two adult sons.

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

A St. Paul man who 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.

13. 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."

Children murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was their mother's husband, boyfriend or intimate partner, or was the parent, guardian, baby-sitter, childcare provider, or household/family member of the child.

1. Rose Marie Heden, 3 months

Oklee

March 1, 2004

John Heden, 32, was charged with second-degree murder and first-degree criminal sexual conduct in the death of his daughter Rose Marie, 3 months. The Pennington County Sheriff's Department received a call from a man who said his infant was not breathing and had blood coming from her nose. When paramedics arrived, they pronounced the baby girl dead at the scene. The Ramsey County Medical Examiner found that Rose Marie had injuries to her scalp, chin, torso, and genitalia. The cause of death was determined to be brain injuries consistent with shaking the baby, as well as significant injuries to the genitalia. Evidence at the scene included blood on the crib, the bedroom floor, a wet wipe in a trashcan, and on a flannel shirt. Heden had a prior conviction for third-degree criminal sexual conduct in 1990, involving molesting a female child. He served 2 years of probation for this conviction.

2. Gustavo Hunt, 7 months

St. Paul

March 16, 2004

Steven Showcatally, 34, was charged with unintentional second-degree murder in the death of his 7-month-old son, Gustavo. He is accused of losing patience while taking care of his baby and deliberately dropping him in the bathtub. Showcatally took Gustavo to St. Paul Children's Hospital, where he died about three hours later. Doctors determined that the baby suffered multiple skull fractures and hemorrhages beneath his scalp. Showcatally initially told police that he accidentally dropped the boy in the tub and then carried him into the bedroom, not noticing anything unusual. After police challenged this story due to the severity of Gustavo's injuries, the father said he intentionally dropped the child two more times and that he was responsible for the injuries. In January 2005, Showcatally was sentenced to 12½ years in prison. Ramsey County District Judge Salvador Rosas said at sentencing. "There is no justification for your conduct. You took everything [your son] had." The judge also said he wondered how Gustavo's birth mother in Guatemala felt, having given up her son for adoption to a U.S. couple in the hope that he would have a better life.

3. Yasmine Luna, 6 weeks**Rogers****April 9, 2004**

Edward Kurr, 28, was charged with second-degree manslaughter in the death of his 6-week-old baby girl, Yasmine Luna. According to court papers, Kurr said his girlfriend, Lisa Luna, 24, drank a bottle of vodka the night of April 8 before she passed out on a bed in a Super 8 motel room. Kurr also admitted to drinking that evening. He said he left the motel room, where the couple had lived since March, while the baby slept on the bed with Lisa. He returned at 2:30 a.m., fed Yasmine, then placed her between the couple in the bed and fell asleep. When Kurr awoke 30 minutes later, he said Lisa was lying on Yasmine's head and he was lying on the baby's lower body. Kurr said Yasmine was not breathing but had a heartbeat. He said that when he woke up and realized the baby wasn't breathing, he put her in her crib, hoping she would be warm and alive in the morning. He said he knew something was seriously wrong with Yasmine but didn't call 911 because he was afraid he and his girlfriend would get in trouble for drinking. In the morning, Lisa found her baby lifeless and called authorities. Rescue workers were unable to revive Yasmine. Authorities have stated that it is unlikely that Lisa Luna will be charged.

4. Avryonna Hansen, 3 months old**Alexandria****May 2, 2004**

A grand jury has indicted Michael Hansen on murder charges in the death of his 3-month old infant girl, Avryonna Hansen. Shortly before noon on May 2nd, police officers responded to a call that a baby had stopped breathing. Attempts to revive Avryonna failed. A preliminary autopsy indicated a skull fracture, said Alexandria Police Chief Chuck Nettlestad. The Ramsey County medical examiner determined that the baby's death was a homicide. Hansen has been charged with three counts of murder in the second degree, one count of murder in the third degree and two counts of manslaughter.

5. 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 Amanda had given birth and needed help. Anderson pleaded guilty to unintentional second-degree murder and was sentenced to 6 years and 8 months in prison.

6. Mikayla Tester-Olson, 5**St. Paul****September 3, 2004**

A motorist in Polk County, Wisconsin, came upon a horrifying sight at midnight on September 3—the bodies of Mikayla Tester-Olson, 5 and her father, John Tester, 41, inside a car. Police determined that Tester shot his daughter to death and then turned the gun on himself. Tester and Mikayla's mother had divorced two years before. Despite the fact that John Tester had abused his former wife and was jailed four times for violating the order for protection against him, Tester was given unsupervised visitation rights with his daughter. The murder of his daughter was a premeditated act, driven by a desire for revenge on his former wife. Tester rented a car a few days before the murder, borrowed two handguns from a friend, and wrote a letter to his brothers, detailing how his assets should be distributed after his death. At 8 p.m. the night of the killings, Tester called his ex-wife to say he was "sorry" and had Mikayla speak to her mother and say, "she was going on a long journey with daddy." "I think it was his way at getting back at [his ex-wife]," said Gina Tester, a sister-in-law. Mikayla's mother was afraid for her child's life and hoped to have her former husband's right to unsupervised visitation rescinded by the court. Even Mikayla's daycare provider stated that she was afraid that Tester would harm the little girl. "[Mikayla's mother] lived for this little girl," said Mark Anderson, Mikayla's mother's attorney, "She was a very, very dedicated mother and she did everything she could to protect that little girl from people, but [Tester] was the one guy she could never do anything about because he had court-ordered visitation."

7. Jasmin Bigler, 3 months**Princeton****September 21, 2004**

A 19-year-old Princeton man is being held in the death of his 4-month-old daughter, Jasmin Bigler. The baby died in the early hours of the morning after she was taken to Fairview Northland Regional Hospital. Tiffany Bigler, the baby's mother, said she was asleep in her apartment when her boyfriend, Kelly Braun, 19, woke her. "He came running into the room, holding her and screaming, 'She's not breathing, she's not breathing,'" Bigler said. Bigler said her boyfriend admitted to police that he'd hit Jasmin in the back of the head in frustration. Doctors who treated the baby at Ramsey County Medical Center said that her injuries were consistent with being punched in the head and that she had also suffered 11 rib fractures. A neighbor reported she had called police in the past when she heard Braun assaulting Tiffany Bigler. Tiffany Bigler has stated that Braun hit her so hard while pregnant with Jasmin that she went into early labor. "He used to hit me and yell at me and stuff but he never, I never thought he would do it to his own child," she said. Kelly Braun was charged with second-degree murder.

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

Katelyn Thongratsamy, 3, was found shot to death at her 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.

9. 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."

Women murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was an acquaintance of the deceased woman, or was a stranger or an unknown assailant.

1. Satociaree Wilson, 22

Minneapolis

April 11, 2004

Satociaree was shot to death as she in a car with another woman. The woman sitting with her was also shot, but her injuries were not life threatening. Satociaree's father said she was a "beautiful daughter," who had run into trouble on city streets before. "The only thing we can say to her was, 'Get out of the streets.' She wouldn't do it..." A bicyclist returning home that night came upon the scene moments after the shooting. He described a scene of mayhem as Wilson's friends screamed for help. "There were two women running in the middle of the street, because they were in shock," said the man. No suspect has been identified.

2. 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.

3. Deidria Clapp, 38

Eagan

Body found September 6, 2004

Martin Wolter, 42, was arrested after a search of his Blaine home in connection with the murder of Deidria. A passer-by spotted Clapp's body in 5 feet of water in a rock quarry in Belle Prairie Township, near Little Falls, Minnesota. She apparently died from being beaten with a blunt object on the head and body. Plastic weights were tied to her wrists and feet. Wolter, who has a history of alcohol-related driving arrests, was taken to Anoka County jail after several items connecting him to Clapp were found in his residence. Authorities said that they know Clapp had contact with Wolters on the day she was murdered. Wolter was charged with second-degree intentional and unintentional murder. On September 15, he hanged himself in his jail cell.

4. Octavia Adams, 18

St. Paul

September 15, 2004

Octavia was shot while visiting friends in the basement of a St. Paul home. When police arrived at the home, they found the young woman dead. A 16-year-old boy was arrested in connection with Octavia's death. Octavia graduated from Arlington High School in June and was planning on attending college in the fall. She was popular and well known in her neighborhood, where she was a member of the Falcons Drill Team and Drum Corps. Octavia, said her minister, Rev. Daryl Spence, was "an angel." He added, "I just couldn't see her in a casket—all that spirit and all the fun she used to have. You don't think preachers cry? You don't think men cry?"

5. Suzanne Fischer, 59**Ramsey****September 19, 2004**

Suzanne was fatally shot in the head as she lay in bed, sleeping next to her husband. Authorities say Joshua Krueth, 20, broke into the Fischer house to commit the murder. Suzanne's husband awoke and called 911 to report the shooting as the suspect, who was dressed in camouflage, ran away. There was no connection between Krueth and the Fischers. "It's just hard to understand," said Dave Fischer, Suzanne's brother-in-law, "I think if...if the suspect would have sat down and talked to Sue for five minutes, he certainly wouldn't have pulled the trigger." The suspect has also been connected to the murder of Lawrence Plessel, 60, also of Ramsey, who was shot through the window of his kitchen on September 4. After Fischer's murder, an intense manhunt led to the capture of Krueth and the suspected murder weapon. Police have described Krueth as a "serial killer" and a methamphetamine user. Suzanne Fischer, who worked as a nurse, has been described as the kind of nurse you wanted in a crisis. "She brought a soothing calm and a sense of friendship—skills you just can't teach," said Dave Dahl, a colleague at Unity Hospital, where Fischer worked. "And that's what makes this loss so tragic, even to people who never knew her."

6. Patricia Giles, 26**Minneapolis****October 31, 2004**

Patricia was shot to death as she sat in her husband's car in Minneapolis. A dispute developed between the Giles' vehicle and a car driven by Dedrick Jiles, 21. Jiles' brother, Detrick Jiles, 20, allegedly fired three shots at the Giles' SUV and hit Patricia, fatally shooting her. Patricia died at Hennepin County Medical Center from a single gunshot wound to her head. Dedrick Jiles and Detrick Jiles were charged with second-degree murder but charges were later dropped against Detrick Jiles. Police no longer believe he was in the car at the time of the murder.

7. Yasmin Geele, 32**Minneapolis****November 9, 2004**

Yasmin was shot to death in her Minneapolis apartment. Somali community leaders suspect that robbery was the motive in Yasmin's murder and note that gang activity is rising. Mustafa Adam, a volunteer at the Somali Justice Advocacy Center, said, "I see more people who are afraid to go out. [Gang members] try to intimidate everybody." Five people have been arrested in connection with the murder. Abdisalam Hussein, 28, had promised his conspirators that it would be an "easy mission" to steal drugs and money from two women. The other woman in the apartment at the time of the murder was not hurt. Abdishakur Haji, Yasmin's half-brother, said his sister didn't sell khat, the drug mentioned as a possible motive, but that she hung out with people who did. "We used to tell her to stop this," he said. Haji described his sister as a "happy girl" who had a lot of friends and worked at a day care center. Hussien, Fuad Dhuuh, 22, of Burnsville, and the other men—Abdisalam L. Roble, 19, of Brooklyn Park; Abdisalan M. Abdi, 22, and Ismail M. Ali, 20, both of Minneapolis—are each charged with one count of second-degree murder. Although only Ali is accused of using the gun, all five men are charged with murder because they all were involved in the robbery that resulted in Geelle's death, Klobuchar said.

Friends or family members murdered in domestic violence-related situations.

1. Darryl Horton, 48

Minneapolis

March 25, 2004

Joseph Robinson, 46, pleaded guilty to stabbing his ex-girlfriend and killing her boyfriend in March. Robinson spent the evening with victims Laurie Brown and Darryl Horton, 48, at Brown's home. Robinson left, only to return because he said police were looking for him. When Laurie Brown opened the door, Robinson began stabbing her. Horton managed to distract Robinson enough to allow Laurie Brown to escape, but then Joseph Robinson stabbed Darryl Horton to death. Laurie Brown survived her stabbing injuries. Robinson will be sentenced to 12 years and nine months for second-degree unintentional murder.

2. Renee Brown, 44

Minneapolis

September 10, 2004

3. Wayne Huotari, 61

Please see Casandra Current in Women Murdered.

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

590 Park Street, Suite 410
St Paul, MN 55103
651-646-6177/800-289-6177

WOMEN AND CHILDREN MURDERED IN MINNESOTA

- 1988 At least 18 women died from domestic violence*
- 1989 At least 18 women died from domestic violence
- 1990 At least 26 women died from domestic violence
- 1991 At least 12 women died from domestic violence
- 1992 At least 31 women died from domestic violence
At least 8 children died from child abuse**
At least 3 women were murdered while being used in prostitution***
At least 2 family members/friends were murdered by a women's current or former partner.
- At least 28 women died from domestic violence
At least 13 children died from child abuse
At least 6 women were murdered while being used in prostitution
At least 5 family members/friends were murdered by a woman's current or former partner
- 1994 At least 19 women died from domestic violence
At least 7 children died from child abuse
At least 2 women were murdered while being used in prostitution
- 1995 At least 29 women died from domestic violence
At least 11 children died from child abuse
At least 3 women and 1 child were murdered by a perpetrator who was an acquaintance or stranger
- 1996 At least 22 women died from domestic violence
At least 17 children died from child abuse
At least 6 women were murdered while being used in prostitution
- 1997 At least 17 women died from domestic violence
At least 5 children died from child abuse
- 1998 At least 22 women died from domestic violence
At least 15 children died from child abuse
- 1999 At least 22 women died from domestic abuse
At least 20 children died from child abuse
At least 1 women is missing
- 2000 At least 40 women died from domestic violence
At least 6 children died from child abuse
At least 5 women were murdered by an acquaintance or unknown perpetrator
At least 1 family member was killed by the women's murderer
At least 70 children were left without a mother
- 2001 At least 33 women died from domestic violence
At least 12 children died from child abuse
At least 6 family members/friends were murdered by a woman's current or former partner
At least 2 women were murdered by an acquaintance or unknown perpetrator
At least 22 children were left without a mother
- 2002 At least 16 women died from domestic violence
At least 13 children died from child abuse
At least 7 women or children were murdered by an acquaintance or unknown perpetrator
At least 24 children were left without a mother
- 2003 At least 14 women died from domestic violence.
At least 10 children died from child abuse.
At least 14 women or children were murdered by an acquaintance or an unknown perpetrator
At least 22 children were left without a mother.
- 2004 At least 13 women died from domestic violence.
At least 9 children died from child abuse.
At least 3 family members/friends were murdered by a woman's current or former partner
At least 7 women were murdered by an acquaintance or an unknown perpetrator
At least 12 children were left without a mother.

*Cases of women murdered where the suspected, alleged or convicted perpetrator was a current or former husband, boyfriend, intimate partner, household or family member. **Cases of children murdered where the suspected, alleged or convicted perpetrator was a husband, boyfriend or intimate partner of the child's mother, or a parent/foster parent, guardian, babysitter, household or family member.

***MCBW recognizes prostitution as a system of violence against women and children.

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NO. 121

NO. 121

**Senate Counsel, Research,
and Fiscal Analysis**

G-17 STATE CAPITOL
75 REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BLVD.
ST. PAUL, MN 55155-1806
(651) 296-4791
FAX: (651) 296-7747
JO ANNE ZOFF SELLNER
DIRECTOR

Senate

State of Minnesota

**S.F. No. 1156 -Criminal Sexual Conduct and Harassment Law
Provisions**

Author: Senator Leo T. Foley

Prepared by: Chris Turner, Senate Research (651/296-4350) CT

Date: March 7, 2005

Section 1 amends the definition of “coercion” for the purposes of Minnesota Statutes, sections 609.341 to 609.351 (Criminal Sexual Conduct provisions). Clarifies the language by explicitly including the use by the actor of confinement, or superior size or strength, against the victim, that causes the victim to submit to sexual penetration or contact against the victim’s will.

Section 2 provides that a stepparent of a minor who is a victim of harassment may seek a restraining order on behalf of the minor. Under current law, only a parent or guardian may act on behalf of the minor.

Section 3 waives harassment restraining order filing fees if the petition alleges acts that would constitute a violation of Minnesota Statutes, sections 609.342 to 609.3451 (Criminal Sexual Conduct in the 1st through 5th Degrees). Under current law, filing fees are waived only if the petition alleges conduct that would violate Minnesota Statutes, section 609.749 (Harassment and Stalking).

Section 4 expands harassment and stalking crimes to include monitoring a person, whether in person or by technological or other means. Provides that the venue for prosecution of harassment or stalking crimes using wireless or electronic communication may be where either the victim or the actor resides.

Section 5 expands the venue for prosecution of obscene or harassing telephone calls using wireless or electronic communication to include where the sender or the receiver resides. Under current law, the offense may only be prosecuted at the place where the call is made or where it is received.

Section 6 provides that the venue for prosecution of harassment by letter, telegram, or package be where the missive was sent or received, or, in the case of wireless electronic communication, where the sender or receiver resides.

Section 7 provides an August 1, 2005 effective date, applicable to crimes committed on or after that date.

CT:vs

Senators Foley, Pappas, Dille, Ranum and McGinn introduced--

S.F. No. 1156: Referred to the Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety.

1 A bill for an act

2 relating to crimes; defining coercion for purposes of

3 the criminal sexual conduct law to include use of

4 physical confinement or strength to submit the

5 complainant to unlawful sexual conduct; authorizing

6 stepparents to assist a minor in seeking a restraining

7 order; waiving fees for sexual assault victims to

8 obtain a restraining order; modifying laws prohibiting

9 harassing behavior by including new forms of

10 technology used by stalkers to harass victims to be

11 included within the prohibitions of the law; amending

12 Minnesota Statutes 2004, sections 609.341, subdivision

13 14; 609.748, subdivisions 2, 3a; 609.749, subdivision

14 2; 609.79, subdivision 2; 609.795, by adding a

15 subdivision.

16 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

17 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 609.341,

18 subdivision 14, is amended to read:

19 Subd. 14. [COERCION.] "Coercion" means the use by the

20 actor of words or circumstances that cause the complainant

21 reasonably to fear that the actor will inflict bodily harm upon,

22 or held-in-confinement, the complainant or another, or force the

23 use by the actor of confinement, or superior size or strength,

24 against the complainant that causes the complainant to submit to

25 sexual penetration or contact, ~~but~~ against the complainant's

26 will. Proof of coercion does not require proof of a specific

27 act or threat.

28 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 609.748,

29 subdivision 2, is amended to read:

30 Subd. 2. [RESTRAINING ORDER; JURISDICTION.] A person who

1 is a victim of harassment may seek a restraining order from the
2 district court in the manner provided in this section. The
3 parent ~~or~~, guardian, or stepparent of a minor who is a victim of
4 harassment may seek a restraining order from the district court
5 on behalf of the minor.

6 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 609.748,
7 subdivision 3a, is amended to read:

8 Subd. 3a. [FILING FEE; COST OF SERVICE.] The filing fees
9 for a restraining order under this section are waived for the
10 petitioner if the petition alleges acts that would constitute a
11 violation of section 609.749, subdivision 2 or 3, or sections
12 609.342 to 609.3451. The court administrator and the sheriff of
13 any county in this state shall perform their duties relating to
14 service of process without charge to the petitioner. The court
15 shall direct payment of the reasonable costs of service of
16 process if served by a private process server when the sheriff
17 is unavailable or if service is made by publication. The court
18 may direct a respondent to pay to the court administrator the
19 petitioner's filing fees and reasonable costs of service of
20 process if the court determines that the respondent has the
21 ability to pay the petitioner's fees and costs.

22 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 609.749,
23 subdivision 2, is amended to read:

24 Subd. 2. [HARASSMENT AND STALKING CRIMES.] (a) A person
25 who harasses another by committing any of the following acts is
26 guilty of a gross misdemeanor:

27 (1) directly or indirectly manifests a purpose or intent to
28 injure the person, property, or rights of another by the
29 commission of an unlawful act;

30 (2) stalks, follows, monitors, or pursues another, whether
31 in person or through technological or other means;

32 (3) returns to the property of another if the actor is
33 without claim of right to the property or consent of one with
34 authority to consent;

35 (4) repeatedly makes telephone calls, or induces a victim
36 to make telephone calls to the actor, whether or not

1 conversation ensues;

2 (5) makes or causes the telephone of another repeatedly or
3 continuously to ring;

4 (6) repeatedly mails or delivers or causes the delivery by
5 any means, including electronically, of letters, telegrams,
6 messages, packages, or other objects; or

7 (7) knowingly makes false allegations against a peace
8 officer concerning the officer's performance of official duties
9 with intent to influence or tamper with the officer's
10 performance of official duties.

11 (b) The conduct described in paragraph (a), clauses (4) and
12 (5), may be prosecuted at the place where any call is either
13 made or received or, additionally in the case of wireless or
14 electronic communication, where the actor or victim resides.

15 The conduct described in paragraph (a), clause (2), may be
16 prosecuted where the actor or victim resides. The conduct
17 described in paragraph (a), clause (6), may be prosecuted where
18 any letter, telegram, message, package, or other object is
19 either sent or received or, additionally in the case of wireless
20 or electronic communication, where the actor or victim resides.

21 (c) A peace officer may not make a warrantless, custodial
22 arrest of any person for a violation of paragraph (a), clause
23 (7).

24 Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 609.79,
25 subdivision 2, is amended to read:

26 Subd. 2. [VENUE.] The offense may be prosecuted either at
27 the place where the call is made or where it is received or,
28 additionally in the case of wireless or electronic
29 communication, where the sender or receiver resides.

30 Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 609.795, is
31 amended by adding a subdivision to read:

32 Subd. 3. [VENUE.] The offense may be prosecuted either at
33 the place where the letter, telegram, or package is sent or
34 received or, alternatively in the case of wireless electronic
35 communication, where the sender or receiver resides.

36 Sec. 7. [EFFECTIVE DATE.]

01/28/05

[REVISOR] RPK/HS 05-2121

- 1 Sections 1 to 6 are effective August 1, 2005, and apply to
- 2 crimes committed on or after that date.