

Domestic Violence Claimed 68 Lives in Wisconsin in 2020



2020 Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report

***Including a Special Feature on Justice, Remembrance, & Healing for
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples***

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Foreword

According to the United Nations, all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified amid the pandemic. International media has referred to this rise in domestic violence during COVID-19 as a “shadow pandemic.”

As a result, 2020 brought unparalleled challenges for DV programs, survivors, and communities across WI. Survivors of violence and their children experienced significantly higher amounts of distress and have more complex needs as a result of the pandemic. Just as COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC), the pandemic has inequitably impacted BIPOC survivors of sexual and domestic violence. Tribal DV/SA programs are chronically underfunded, leaving Native women and girls more vulnerable to violence.

As we grapple with the impacts of COVID-19 on our lives and the economy, a racial justice reckoning 400 years in the making, and urgent issues of climate justice, the challenges that our most marginalized community members face - as well as the inter-connectivity amongst historically siloed issues - has become clearer to more people than ever before.

This report highlights once more the urgent need to think differently about homicide prevention work and what safety looks like for our communities. It is undeniable that the current system of policing and incarceration does nothing to prevent violence from happening in the first place. We must divest from the idea that the criminal legal system keeps us safe. It does not. Housing keeps us safe. Prevention education keeps us safe. Free healthcare keeps us safe. Flexible financial support keeps us safe. Community programming keeps us safe. Life without poverty keeps us safe. We must prioritize and invest in all of these efforts that offer solutions. As we state on page 38 in ‘Preventing Domestic Violence Homicides,’ we must do better.

Methodology

Our definition of homicide is the killing of one human being by another. This encompasses criminal, justifiable, self-defense, and reckless homicides. We consider a homicide domestic violence-related if:

- The victims and perpetrators were spouses or partners, former spouses or former partners, adults with children in common, and adults or teens that had been in a dating relationship.
- It was a homicide of a person other than the intimate partner, and it occurred within the context of domestic violence. This encompasses cases where the circumstances of the murder included obsessive control of the perpetrator's current or former partner that extended to their new partner. We also include the homicide of a bystander or someone who attempted to protect a domestic violence victim from future harm.
- The homicide was a child's death that occurred as an extension of or in response to ongoing abuse between adult intimate partners. For example, when a partner or estranged partner killed their children in order to exact revenge on their partner, it is considered domestic violence-related.
- A responding officer was in a position in which they needed to use deadly force against an individual to prevent the homicide or assault of another person. The count of domestic violence homicide victims occasionally includes perpetrators killed by responding law enforcement officers (also referred to as homicide by legal intervention).
- Beginning with the report for 2010, we include cases that involve a parent or grandparent killed by an adult child or grandchild, as well as adult step-children or step-grandchildren killing a step-parent or step-grandparent. We do not include these cases, however, if the defendant was found not guilty by reason of mental illness or lacked the capacity to stand trial. See the Limitations section on page 14 for an extended explanation of this criteria.

The report also accounts for overall deaths related to domestic violence homicide, including perpetrator deaths. Most perpetrator deaths are suicides. In each case of homicide-suicide, we listed the murdered person in our heading as the homicide victim.

We seek to be as consistent and as accurate as possible year to year in determining which homicides to include in the report. Our summaries of domestic violence homicides are compiled from information that is readily available via public sources and limited follow-up inquiries. The amount of attention such sources pay to one domestic violence-related homicide in comparison to another varies greatly.

We request Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data submitted to Department of Justice, criminal complaints, and police reports obtained from the jurisdiction in which the homicide occurred. The UCR does not always include all the homicides that we include in our report, and therefore we supplement with data from other sources. The sex, race, and ethnicity classifications of victims and perpetrators are obtained from the above listed sources that we use to compile our report.

Executive Summary

Since 2000, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin has chronicled deaths due to domestic violence in our state. In 2020, individuals died in Wisconsin due to domestic violence at a rate of approximately one death every five days. The basic findings contained in this report are outlined below.

2020 compared to 2019	2020	2019
All domestic violence-related homicide deaths	60	53
Incidents of domestic violence homicide	50	48
Victims of domestic violence homicide (excluding by legal intervention)	58	52
Homicides by legal intervention (responding law enforcement)	2	1
Perpetrator suicide (excluding by legal intervention)	8	18
Attempted homicide incidents with perpetrator suicide	0	1
Total deaths (victim and perpetrator)	68	72

Other findings in the *2020 Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report* include:

- Perpetrators of domestic violence homicide incidents were overwhelmingly male. In 2020, **90% of perpetrators were male**. This figure excludes the two homicides that occurred during legal intervention. These incidents have also been excluded from other perpetrator demographic statistics.
- **Fifty-five percent of the victims of domestic violence homicide were not a current or former intimate partner of the perpetrator**, whereas 45% were a current or former intimate partner of the perpetrator.
- In 2020, **at least 10 of the 26 victims of intimate partner homicide were killed after the relationship ended** or when one person in the relationship was taking steps to end the relationship. This figure demonstrates that leaving does not equate to safety. It also supports the main message of this report: no victim in Wisconsin should have to take the courageous step of leaving an abusive relationship without the safety and support offered by domestic violence victim advocates and without the benefit of a coordinated community response.
- The ages of victims in this report range from three to 73 years old. Perpetrators' ages ranged from 17 to 71 years old. **The average age for perpetrators was 37 years old, and the average age for victims was 38 years old.**
- Homicides occurred in **17 counties in Wisconsin**. Approximately 10 homicide incidents occurred in rural areas and 40 in urban areas, according to how both are defined in US Census data.

- Firearms remain the most common means of perpetrating domestic violence homicides. In 2020, **firearms were the weapons used in 52% of domestic violence homicide incidents**, not including two homicides by legal intervention. At least 9 of the 25 perpetrators who used a firearm to commit a domestic violence homicide in 2020 were legally prohibited from having firearms.
- **There were eight perpetrator suicides in 2020.** Perpetrator suicides in our report are connected to the homicide they committed or attempted to commit in the immediate time prior to their suicide. This reflects the **connection between homicidality and suicidality in domestic violence cases** and should thus be considered when discussing domestic violence and homicide prevention.
- Many of the 2020 homicide cases reflect the risk factors that research has found to be associated with lethal violence. These include, among other factors: threats to use or actual use of a weapon, threats to kill, stalking, strangulation, obsessive jealousy, and sexual assault.

Historical, National, and Global Context

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, from 1980 to 2005, intimate partner homicides declined by 44% and homicides among other family members decreased by 26%. Similarly, nonfatal domestic violence decreased by about 63% from 1994 to 2010. Yet, the decline has varied significantly for different populations. The data indicate that between 1976 and 2005, “the number of Black males killed by intimates dropped by 83%, white males by 61%, Black females by 52%, and white females by 6%.” This downward trend has been attributed to increased awareness, services, and intervention.¹

In 2017, the Centers for Disease Control released an analysis on the prevalence and circumstances surrounding female homicide deaths in the United States. Their study analyzed the deaths of 10,018 women from 18 states between the years 2003 and 2014 by looking at data from the National Violent Death Reporting System. In addition to the finding that over half of female homicides in the US are intimate partner violence (IPV) related and perpetrated with a firearm, the study found that non-Hispanic Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women are killed at nearly three times the rate of non-Hispanic white women.³ Despite the aforementioned downward trend of the number of homicides, disparities in the number of victims of certain racial and ethnic groups still persist.

On a global level, a systematic review published in *The Lancet* in 2013 reported that one in seven homicides overall are committed by an intimate partner. Though domestic violence homicide victims are both males and females, the latter experience higher risk and mortality. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime issued a report in 2019 titled, “Global Study on Homicide: Gender-related killing of women and girls”, which provides insights into the issue of femicide on a worldwide scale. They report that 58% of women who were killed intentionally in 2017 were killed by their intimate partner or a family member. This equals approximately 50,000 women globally who were victims of domestic violence homicide in 2017, which rose from 48,000 in 2012.⁴

¹ National Institute of Justice, “The Decline of Intimate Partner Homicide,” July 1, 2005, [nij.ojp.gov: http://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/decline-intimate-partner-homicide](http://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/decline-intimate-partner-homicide)

² Stöckl, H., Devries, K., Rotstein, A., Abrahams, N., Campbell, J., Watts, C., & Moreno, C. G. (2013). The global prevalence of intimate partner homicide: a systematic review. *The Lancet*, 382(9895), 859-865.

³ Petrosky E, Blair JM, Betz CJ, Fowler KA, Jack SP, Lyons BH. Racial and Ethnic Differences in Homicides of Adult Women and the Role of Intimate Partner Violence — United States, 2003–2014. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2017;66:741– 746. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6628a1External>

⁴ UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019* (Vienna, 2019)

2020 Key Findings

Overview

	2020
Domestic violence homicide incidents	50
Victims of domestic violence homicide (excluding by legal intervention)	58
Homicides by legal intervention (responding law enforcement)*	2
All domestic violence-related homicide deaths	60
Homicide incidents with perpetrator suicides	8
Attempted homicide incidents with perpetrator suicide	0
Total deaths (victims and perpetrators)	68
Homicide incidents with two or more victims	6
Female victims	36
Male victims	24
Female perpetrators	5
Male perpetrators	43

*Officer demographics are not included in the rest of the tables and percentages found elsewhere in this report.

Relationship of victim to female perpetrator

When the perpetrator was female, the victim was:	2020
Current male partner	3
Current female partner	1
Former male partner	1

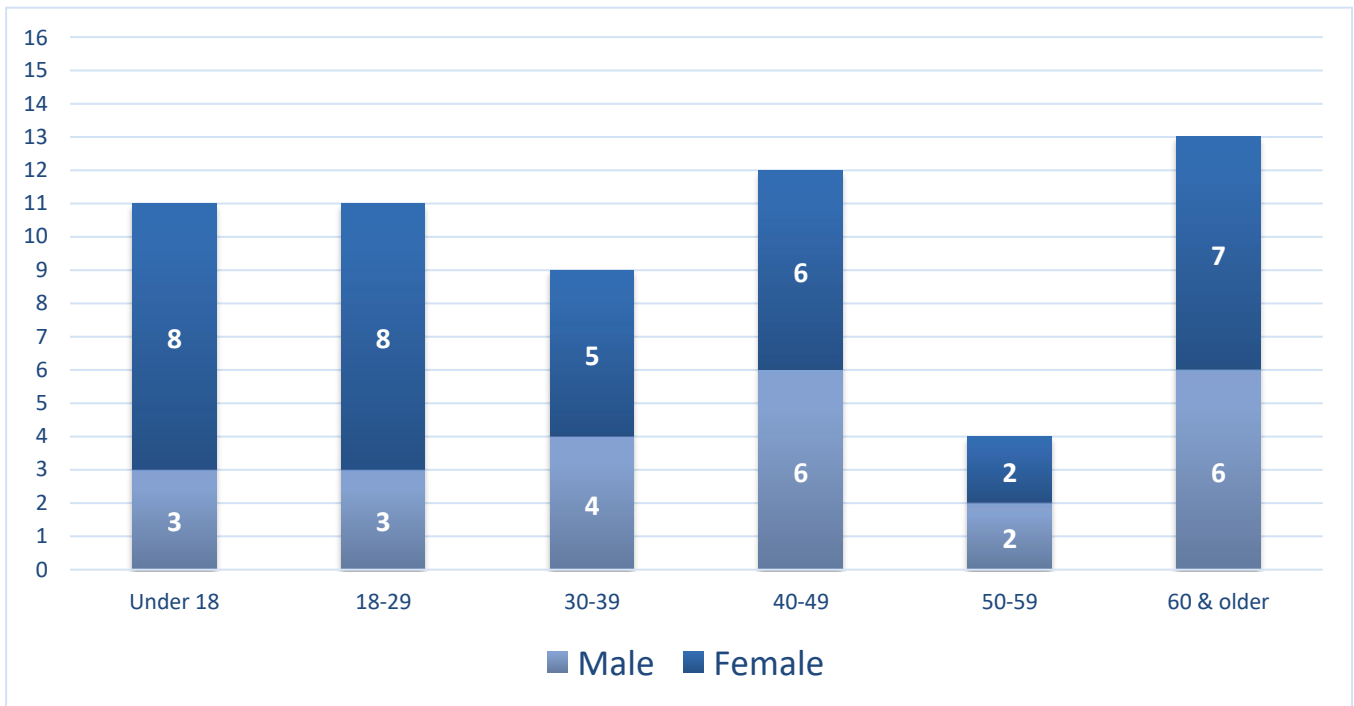
Relationship of victim to male perpetrator

When the perpetrator was male, the victim was:	2020
Current female partner	18
Perpetrator's child	6
Child of perpetrator's girlfriend/ex-girlfriend (non-biological child of perpetrator)	5
Parent or step-parent	4
Former or estranged female partner	4
Bystander	3
Grandparent	3
Other family of perpetrator	2
New boyfriend of perpetrator's ex-girlfriend	2
Boyfriend of perpetrator's co-worker/friend	1
Perpetrator's friend	1
Friend of perpetrator's mother	1
Friend of perpetrator's ex-girlfriend	1
Father of perpetrator's ex-girlfriend	1
Brother of perpetrator's girlfriend	1

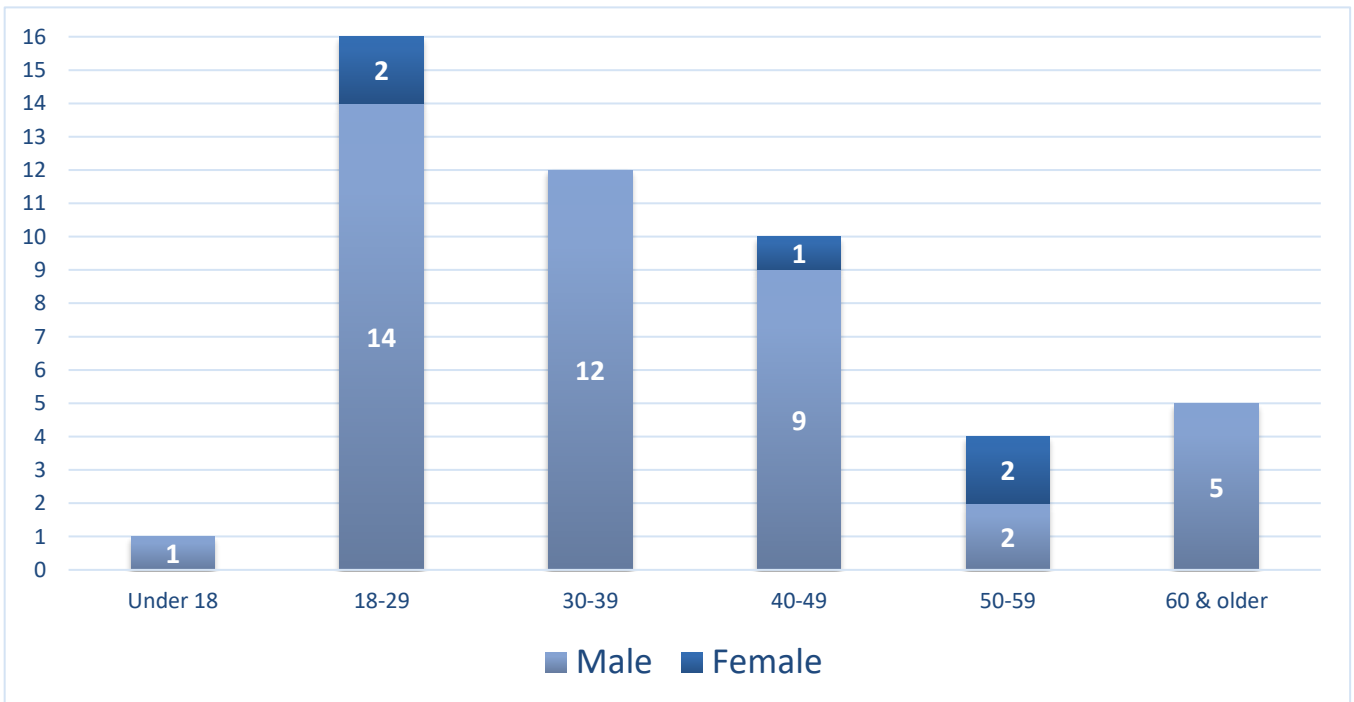
Perpetrator suicide

	2020
Homicide incidents with perpetrator suicide	8
Homicide-suicide incidents involving firearms	7
Male perpetrators of homicide-suicide	8
Attempted homicide with perpetrator suicide	0
Female perpetrators of homicide-suicide	0

Age & sex of victims



Age & sex of perpetrators



Method of homicide

Method	Number*	Percentage (out of # of incidents)*
Firearm	25	52%
Stabbing or Cutting	12	25%
Blunt Force	6	13%
Strangulation or Suffocation	2	4%
Unknown	2	4%
Ran over with vehicle	1	2%

*These numbers and percentages do not include homicide involving legal intervention.

Regarding the role of firearms in domestic violence homicide incidents:

- Domestic violence assaults involving a gun are 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force.¹
- Black women are twice as likely to be fatally shot by an intimate partner compared to white women.²
- In the United States, 4.5 million women have reported being threatened with a gun by an intimate partner.³
- **In Wisconsin, over 1/3 of the perpetrators in 2020 who used a gun to commit a domestic violence homicide were legally prohibited from possessing a firearm.**

¹Saltzman, Linda E., James A. Mercy, Patrick W. O'Carroll, Mark L. Rosenberg, and Philip H. Rhodes. "Weapon Involvement and Injury Outcomes in Family and Intimate Assaults." JAMA 267, no. 22 (1992): 3043-3047.

²Petrosky E., et al. "Racial and Ethnic Differences in Homicides of Adult Women and the Role of Intimate Partner Violence — United States, 2003–2014". MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. (2017).

³Sorenson, S. B., & Schut, R. A. "Nonfatal Gun Use in Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review of the Literature". Trauma, Violence & Abuse. (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838016668589>.

Location of homicide incidents

Location	2020
Home of the victim and/or perpetrator	38
Public space (i.e. on a street, outside of a business)	7
Another residence	2
Unknown	2
Motel	1

Race/ethnicity and sex of victims

	White	Black	Latinx	Native American	Asian	Unknown
Male	15	9	0	0	0	0
Female	16	17	2	0	1	0

Race/ethnicity and sex of perpetrators

	White	Black	Latinx	Native American	Asian	Unknown
Male	23	19	1	0	0	0
Female	2	3	0	0	0	0

Limitations

We have summarized limitations of the data we report annually in the paragraphs below. Consistency in how we define and therefore report data is important so that comparisons can be made from year to year and trends examined. We've outlined limitations to these definitions below.

Wisconsin Residents Killed Outside of Wisconsin

Our homicide report details domestic violence homicides that occur in the state of Wisconsin almost exclusively. Exceptions in past reports have been made to include deaths of Wisconsin residents that occur within hours or minutes of leaving Wisconsin. Often domestic violence-related deaths of Wisconsin residents who are killed outside of our state do not end up on our radar. There are undoubtedly homicides that fit this definition that our limited research for producing this report would not have captured. We know that domestic violence is not confined by state lines.

Most states produce similar reports to ours; however, the methodology and criteria for inclusion in such reports vary widely from state to state. Situations where the homicide incident involves Wisconsin residents but happens while in another state, are a relatively rare circumstance.

Expanded 2010 Definition

As noted on page 6, beginning with the report for 2010, we include cases that involve a parent or grandparent killed by an adult child or grandchild, as well as adult step-children or step-grandchildren killing a step-parent or step-grandparent. We began including these cases in 2010 at the advising of advocates for victims of elder abuse, in particular, our colleagues at the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life, which is an initiative of End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin. We included these cases in our report because the preceding dynamics of violence in families in which adult parents or grandparents are killed by their adult children or grandchildren often exhibit similar characteristics of power and control. The perpetrator's ongoing abuse frequently relies on tactics of coercion, intimidation, and unique vulnerabilities inherent in a close familial relationship.

Because our original motivation to include these cases stemmed from an acknowledgement that intentional use of power and control tactics is a pattern in family abuse outside of intimate partner relationships, we excluded cases in which there is a clear indicator that mental health issues were a predominant factor in the homicide. Therefore, we have excluded cases in which the defendant was found not guilty by reason of mental illness or lacked the capacity to stand trial. One case is not included in the 2020 report for this reason.

In making these distinctions, we are aware that our effort to categorize homicides is imperfect and may exclude cases that could illuminate potentially significant aspects of violence that happens in families. For instance, our definition does not include situations in which an adult parent or step-parent causes the death of an adult child or step-child. These homicides appear to be rare and thus difficult to generalize about; however, we would be challenged to give a satisfying reason as to why one type of case is included and the other is not. Our exclusion of patricide and matricide cases that seem closely related to mental illness reflects our belief that the analogous cases of intimate partner homicide—that is, intimate partner violence homicides primarily caused by mental illness—are relatively rare. We know from research and experience that mental illness alone rarely explains why an abusive person kills their partner; yet, we

acknowledge that these efforts to conceptually cordon off cases that are closely linked to mental illness from those that are not may prevent us from attending to the complex etiologies of domestic violence homicide.

Furthermore, we do not include cases where the perpetrator was a minor child who killed a parent or step-parent, or grandparent or step-grandparent.

Child Homicides

We include child killings that occurred as an extension of or in response to ongoing abuse between adult intimate partners against others as domestic violence homicides. For example, when a partner or estranged partner killed their children or their partner's children in order to exact revenge on their partner, it is considered domestic violence-related.

We believe our limited ability to recognize these cases likely results in an undercount of these homicides. Homicide of a child is often viewed as an isolated incident of child abuse. An investigation of a child homicide can often overlook past domestic violence, or the domestic violence might not be included in the public record. While we believe that a larger number of child deaths are directly related to an ongoing pattern of domestic abuse, our current methods of tracking homicides do not allow us to consistently identify children killed by perpetrators of domestic violence. These cases are not included because we lack the information necessary to link the killings to intimate partner violence (and thus to the report's definition of domestic violence homicide).

Cold Cases

In our years of gathering domestic violence homicide information, we have learned that not every homicide case is initially recognized as such. Some domestic violence homicides are ruled suicides or inconclusive, turning cold and forgotten. The perpetrator faces no consequences and is often treated as a victim who lost a loved one, perhaps receiving a life insurance check for the life they ended. Recently, due to developments in technology and evidence processing, these crimes have renewed hope of being solved. We honor the lives of those included in this report, and the lives of those lost in Wisconsin in years that we have collected data that we have not yet been able to attribute to domestic violence. Please see the 2017 Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report page 41 for additional information on cold cases.

2020 Domestic Violence Homicides

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

One powerful aspect of this report is to add a human touch to the homicide numbers and statistics. Unlike in previous reports, out of respect for the privacy rights of homicide victims and their surviving family members, we have not used names of the homicide victims, perpetrators, and others mentioned in the case narratives this year. Technically, keeping the victim's information private is the main concern; however, if we included the perpetrators' names it could potentially compromise the homicide victim's privacy. Additionally, if we were to include perpetrator's full names and only victim initials, it may humanize the perpetrator more so than the person whose life they were responsible for ending. We want to minimize the potential this report has to cause further harm to those impacted by these tragedies. Many of these cases were covered in the media to varying degrees, but some were not in the media at all.

NOTE: Case status reflects information available at the time of publication of this report. The status of an open case can be found via Wisconsin Circuit Court Access at: <http://wcca.wicourts.gov>

Individuals' ages are listed as of the date of the homicide. In cases of homicide by legal intervention, no victim age or name is included in the header as an acknowledgement that they were actually a domestic abuse perpetrator.

County	In the death of...
BARRON	<p>September 20, 2020 Township of Chetek <i>24-year-old GM</i></p> <p>The mother of 24-year-old GM found him deceased outside of her home where GM and his girlfriend, DB, had been staying for several weeks. An investigation into the incident discovered that AB, the 25-year-old estranged husband of DB, scouted out the home before going in and shooting GM in the head twice as he slept. AB then attempted to get rid of the evidence tying him to the incident. Court records indicate that AB faced a domestic abuse disorderly conduct charge in 2018, during which time he was ordered to not have abusive contact with DB, however that charge was ultimately dismissed. AB was charged with first-degree intentional homicide for killing GM and the case has not concluded.</p>

BROWN**February 29, 2020 | De Pere***5-year-old CW*

When officers arrived at the scene of this incident, they found 5-year-old CW lying in the driveway with his mother, TH, attending to him, and the mother's 38-year-old ex-boyfriend, MG, frantic. When interviewed by police, MG told them that he dropped CW and his mother, TH, off at home and thought that TH had ushered CW to the front of his truck, so he started backing out. He then heard TH screaming and realized he may have run over CW.

TH told police that she ended her relationship with MG six days prior to this incident and moved her belongings out of his house; however, they were still in communication and seeing each other. TH detailed a history of violent, jealous, and controlling behavior throughout their relationship, including MG holding a knife up to her throat at one point, and constantly looking through her phone.

According to the criminal complaint, earlier the day of this incident TH had gone to an indoor waterpark with CW to meet a male friend, DD, and DD's children. While she was there, she received a text message from MG inviting CW and TH over for dinner, to which she agreed. Later that evening MG picked TH and CW up and was driving to his house and they talked about turning around to go back to TH's house for something. While heading back to TH's, DD texted her to say he and his kids had a fun time earlier at the waterpark. MG grabbed her phone and accused her of cheating on him, then called DD and confronted him. They pulled into TH's driveway and MG was continuing to look through TH's phone. TH said she opened the door, placed CW outside, and MG threw her phone out the door into the snow. TH got out and as she was closing the truck door, MG "gunned" the accelerator and TH saw CW get run over. TH told police that she did not think MG intended to kill CW. MG was charged with homicide by negligent operation of a vehicle. The case has not concluded.

March 24, 2020 | Green Bay*38-year-old CB*

33-year-old MS killed his girlfriend's brother, 38-year-old CB, after an argument with his girlfriend, JF. JF told police that after the argument she left the apartment and went to a friend's home for the night, and that MS attempted to contact JF several times throughout the night and into the morning, but she chose to ignore the messages because they were arguing. When she returned to the home, she discovered her brother unresponsive with a gunshot wound, and MS was not in the residence. He was apprehended later in Milwaukee. At the time he killed CB, MS was out on

bond for a violent attack on JF, with a condition that he not possess any dangerous weapons. MS was convicted of a felony intimidation of a witness charge in 2018 and prohibited from possessing firearms as a result of that as well. For CB's death, MS was charged with first-degree intentional homicide, possessing a firearm as a convicted felon, and bail jumping. The case has not concluded.

May 4, 2020 | Village of Allouez

64-year-old SH

SH, age 64, was killed by her husband GH, age 69. GH then died by suicide. SH filed for divorce in November 2019 out of concern that GH's health issues would cause financial detriment for SH if he should need to be hospitalized. At that time, the couple had agreed that GH would continue living in the residence until he could find another place. According to SH's son, SH ordinarily traveled frequently for work, but due to the pandemic had been working at home. The son shared with police that all the extra time together put a strain on the marriage, and that GH had recently been served with some legal paperwork instructing GH that he had to be out of the home by 5/15/20. SH shared with her son that this upset GH, and GH told SH that "he wasn't going anywhere."

August 28, 2020 | Ashwaubenon

54-year-old GB

When police responded to a call for service at a motel on the morning of August 28, 2020, they found DS, 46, outside, who told them that his on-and-off girlfriend of four months, 54-year-old GB, was inside their motel room and unresponsive. DS told police that GB had not been feeling well the evening before and early that morning. DS said that he left the room to go to a convenience store and that when he returned, he found GB in the bathtub and unconscious. Emergency responders noticed visible bumps, bruising, and cuts on GB, which DS initially attributed to injuries from consensual sexual intercourse, but later changed his story to say that she had hit her head on a nightstand in the room when getting out of bed. A witness from a neighboring motel room told police that he heard an argument coming from the room DS and GB were staying in early that morning; however, DS denied that they argued or that he harmed GB.

According to online court records, DS has a history of perpetrating violence in past relationships, including a conviction for two domestic-abuse related misdemeanors in both 2014 and 2018, and a four-year domestic abuse restraining order granted against him in 2014. DS was charged with first-degree intentional homicide for the GB's death but pleaded no contest to a reduced charge of first-degree reckless homicide. He was sentenced to 40 years in prison plus 15 years of extended supervision.

County***In the death of...*****CLARK****October 3, 2020 | Unknown location***27-year-old CA*

27-year-old CA was reported missing on October 4, 2020. In June of 2021, her ex-boyfriend, 41-year-old JCP, was charged in her death, although CA's body has not yet been recovered.

The night before her disappearance, CA picked up a friend and drove to Marshfield to meet up with another friend, and CA told her friends JCP was following her. According to the criminal complaint in this case, three weeks prior, CA moved out of the place she was staying with JCP. Friends of CA's told police that that since she moved out, CA would look out her window at the sound of any vehicle passing by.

Another person interviewed by police stated that in August of 2020, CA showed him bruises on her wrist and arm stemming from an argument about CA hanging out with men at a bar while JCP and CA were broken up. JCP told CA that if he ever heard that she was hanging out with these men, he would hurt her. As CA got out of the vehicle, JCP grabbed her by the arm and wrist, causing the bruising. This person also shared that JCP told CA he would drive the car full speed, crash, and they would both die before he would let her leave the vehicle.

The police also interviewed a woman who had cut JCP's hair a week prior to CA's disappearance. She told police some of JCP's comments were alarming to her, and she described his demeanor as "angry." The woman stated that JCP made comments about how CA would never keep him from their child. Another witness told police that CA once told him that if anything happens to her, it was JCP.

JCP is charged with first-degree intentional homicide, hiding a corpse, and stalking. The case has not concluded.

County***In the death of...*****DANE****July 1, 2020 | Madison***25-year-old CG*

25-year-old CG spotted his ex-girlfriend, 22-year-old HG, driving, and began following her. She told police she drove into a parking lot and CG got out of his car and started an argument with her. As he was attempting to get into HG's vehicle, she shot him. He died a short time later. HG was initially arrested and charged in CG's death, however, the Dane County District Attorney's Office ultimately declined to pursue charges against her, citing self-defense.

July 30, 2020 | Madison

13-year-old AC

13-year-old AC was fatally stabbed by her father, 44-year-old TC. According to the criminal complaint in the case, prior to the attack, TC was intoxicated and was planning to leave the house to go get more beer. TC's wife, DC, told him that if he left to go get more beer that they would be done, and then ultimately DC got ready and left the house to go get more beer for TC. Upon returning to the house, TC was wielding a knife. DC inquired as to AC's whereabouts and TC said that he already killed her, then he began jabbing the knife towards DC, stabbing and cutting her several times. DC was able to get the knife away from TC and escape to a neighbor's home to call 911. TC was charged with first-degree intentional homicide and attempted first-degree intentional homicide, and the case has not concluded.

December 28, 2020 | Sun Prairie

44-year-old JE

JE, 44, ended the relationship with her boyfriend, 45-year-old JB, weeks before she was found shot to death on December 28, 2020. JB was also found dead in the home from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Two months earlier, JB was charged with felony strangulation and suffocation along with four other domestic abuse-related misdemeanor charges in which JE was named as the victim. As a condition of his release on a signature bond for these charges, JB was ordered to not possess weapons and not have any contact with JE. JE had previously confided in family and friends about JB's abuse, but they did not sense that she was in grave danger. One friend explicitly expressed concern to JE about JB's potential to kill her, but JE brushed off the concern and told her that "JB wouldn't do that."

County

In the death of...

DOOR

August 25, 2020 | Sturgeon Bay

32-year-old KM

According to the criminal complaint, 52-year-old SS contacted Door County Dispatch on August 25, 2020 and reported that she "just did something really terrible." SS stated that she had just stabbed her ex-girlfriend, 32-year-old KM, and that she did not know if she was still alive. When questioned, SS told police what led up to the incident. She stated that a few hours prior, KM returned to the residence from work, and that SS wanted to talk with KM about her day, but KM said she just wanted to relax. This angered SS and the thought crossed her mind to kill KM, and after thinking about it for several minutes, she stabbed KM in the neck. KM started fighting her, so she stabbed KM a few more times before she collapsed in the hallway. SS told police that this wasn't the first time she had considered killing KM, and that the thought has crossed her mind

previously when KM “ticks her off.” SS was charged with first-degree intentional homicide to which she pleaded no contest. She was sentenced to life in prison.

County

In the death of...

DOUGLAS

September 29, 2020 | Superior
62-year-old CB

The criminal complaint in this case states that 62-year-old CB had expressed concerns about her 39-year-old son RB’s behavior before he stabbed her multiple times, killing her. A police officer had responded to a separate call from RB less than two hours before the stabbing occurred. Investigators shared with the court that RB initially talked about the death as an accident, but later admitted to stabbing his mother. He told police that CB was “acting unnatural” and wanted to take him to the hospital. RB is charged with first-degree intentional homicide, and the case has not concluded.

County

In the death of...

EAU CLAIRE

November 22, 2020 | Town of Washington
Perpetrator killed by law enforcement

RL, age 37, was fatally shot by law enforcement while armed with a knife, advancing on officers, and refusing commands to drop his weapon. Officers were called after RL physically assaulted and strangled his wife to the point where she felt as though she was going to die. RL was described as having erratic and violent behavior during multiple 911 calls that day. The shooting of RL by police was ruled justified by the Eau Claire County District Attorney.

County

In the death of...

KENOSHA

May 17, 2020 | Kenosha
40-year-old RG

ZA, age 40, killed RG, age 40, the new boyfriend of the mother of his children, SB. After not hearing from RG for a couple of days, SB went over to his apartment and found it in disarray, so she called the police. Remains of RG were found partially burned in a firepit on ZA’s property.

A few days before the murder, SB was spending time with RG when she received a text message from ZA repeating what RG had just said to her, indicating that ZA was somehow listening in on their conversation. According to the criminal complaint, a forensic examination of ZA’s computer revealed a folder containing photos of RG, screenshots of information about RG from CCAP, photos of his business information, electronic maps with RG’s residence circled, and his home address. When the police interviewed a teenage child of ZA and SB, they told the police

that ZA also asked the child to record SB and report back to ZA. ZA is charged with first-degree intentional homicide and hiding a corpse, along with two felony stalking charges. The case is not concluded.

August 13, 2020 | Village of Somers

70-year-old CL

On August 13, 2020, BL broke into the home of his grandfather, 70-year-old CL, and bludgeoned him to death with a hammer while he slept. BL had not seen CL in over ten years but seemed to be perseverating about his grandfather in the time leading up to the murder, and told his father that he went to CL's home pretending to be a census worker to confirm that was where he lived. He further told his father he was thinking about "taking him out," because he was convinced CL would harm someone else. CL was a registered sex offender, having been convicted in 1991 of sexually assaulting a child who was a member of his family.

BL's roommate told police that BL "was a little off" in the time prior to the homicide. She stated that he had talked about CL a lot and "walked around like he was on a mission." She stated that the BL had been very upset recently and he talked to her about what CL did and how he hated CL. BL pleaded guilty to first-degree intentional homicide and sentenced to life in prison with eligibility for parole in 20 years.

County

In the death of...

KEWAUNEE

April 27, 2020 | Algoma

56-year-old LM

LM, age 56, was killed by her husband DM, 71. DM then died by suicide. LM's siblings shared with police that LM had planned to divorce DM soon, indicating that LM had experienced mental and emotional abuse throughout the marriage and that DM had an explosive temper. They further shared that DM was possessive and controlling of LM – dictating who she could speak to and what she was allowed to do – but that LM had minimized the danger she was in and felt safe due to having a firearm near where she slept.

County

In the death of...

MILWAUKEE

January 24, 2020 | Milwaukee

63-year-old MB

40-year-old OC was stalking his ex, JG, with whom he shared a child in common, despite there being an active domestic abuse restraining order barring him from having contact with her or her residence. On January 24, JG's current boyfriend was driving a 63-year-old woman, MB, to work, and

he stopped to pick up JG at her home on the way. OC ambushed JG's boyfriend's van, firing shots towards the vehicle and home of JG. MB suffered fatal gunshot wounds, and JG and her boyfriend both received non-fatal gunshot injuries.

When questioned after the incident, JG told police that OC had threatened to kill her before, she believed that he was capable of doing so, and that she was afraid for her life. OC was stalking her via text message, repeatedly showing up uninvited, and following JG around, despite there being an active restraining order.

OC was convicted of a felony in 2009 and thus was prohibited from possessing a firearm at the time of this incident. OC faces charges of first-degree reckless homicide, two counts of first-degree reckless injury, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. A stalking charge was also filed against OC on January 31, 2020. Both cases have not concluded.

January 26, 2020 | Glendale

30-year-old DC

25-year-old JAH shot and killed 30-year-old DC in a mall parking lot. A criminal complaint in this case indicates DC's girlfriend, CB, and JAH were co-workers, and arriving at work at the same time in separate vehicles on January 26, 2020. DC was jealous of their friendship and showed up and confronted CB. At one point DC went to the trunk of CB's car and retrieved a tire iron, got in the vehicle with her, and told her to drive over to where JAH was parked. DC got out and broke the windows in JAH's vehicle. DC and JAH got into an altercation and a witness told police they saw JAH point a handgun at DC. DC had his hands in the air and started running away from JAH, at which point JAH began shooting towards DC until he fell to the pavement. JAH pleaded guilty to second degree reckless homicide and second-degree reckless endangering safety and was sentenced to 12 years in prison and 8 years of extended supervision.

February 8, 2020 | Milwaukee

26-year-old AB

5-year-old ZI

4-year-old CB

25-year-old AI admitted that a domestic fight escalated to the point that he strangled the mother of his children, 26-year-old AB, and their two daughters, ZI, age 5, and CB, age 4. He then burned their bodies before fleeing to Tennessee. Police in Tennessee received a call from AI's father on February 15. He stated that AI confessed to killing the mother of his children and his children in Milwaukee. After he was taken into custody, AI told police that he planned on starting a new life in Memphis. AI further shared that things had been tense between himself and AB since the death of their

one-year-old son, the funeral for whom was the day before these killings. AI went to work after the funeral and told police that when he got off work in the early morning hours of February 8, he returned home and argued with AB. AI said he pushed AB's head into the wall and strangled her with both hands.

According to the criminal complaint, after killing AB, AI decided "he did not want the children...to live in a world where they did not have their mother." He indicated he then strangled both the children. The bodies of AB, ZI, and CB were found in a garage in Milwaukee. AI pleaded guilty to three charges of first-degree intentional homicide and was sentenced to life in prison.

February 29, 2020 | Milwaukee

Perpetrator killed by law enforcement

Media coverage of this incident indicates that the night of February 29, 2020, 49-year-old AT and his wife were out celebrating, and as the night went on, AT became aggressive and at one point attacked his wife outside of a bar. His wife ran back inside for help and when officers arrived, they were put in a position of using deadly force against AT to thwart any further harm to his wife or bystanders. Family members of AT and his wife indicated that in recent months they were experiencing marital problems.

March 29, 2020 | Milwaukee

30-year-old BP

Police said BP, a 30-year-old Milwaukee man, was found dead from a gunshot wound inside a residence on March 29, 2020. A 40-year-old woman was arrested at the scene but ultimately did not face charges related to the incident. The investigation indicated the shooting was related to domestic violence and the homicide perpetrator was acting in self-defense. According to online court records, BP had a history of domestic violence including several domestic-abuse related misdemeanor convictions. A domestic abuse restraining order was filed two months prior to this incident but was dismissed by the court because BP had not been served.

April 19, 2020 | Milwaukee

60-year-old GH

Police responded to a shooting to find 60-year-old GH unresponsive in a vehicle outside a residence. A witness who was at the residence told police that prior to that, he heard 25-year-old AK arguing with his ex, JJ, and AK eventually left. He returned awhile later, and JJ told police that she was sitting in her living room on the couch when a cinder block was thrown through her front glass window. JJ stated she looked through the window and observed AK standing outside before he threw another cinder block

through the window. JJ then gathered up her children and her nieces and nephews and went to the basement for safety. Several minutes later she heard 2 to 3 gunshots from outside the residence. AK had shot in the direction of JJ's house, hitting GH in the vehicle he was sitting in, killing him. AK was charged with first-degree reckless homicide for the death of GH, and the case has not concluded.

JJ's brother told police that JJ kicked AK out of the house a few weeks prior. AK had a history of violence, having been convicted of a domestic-abuse related battery charge in 2016. AK was also a convicted felon, and thus prohibited from possessing a firearm at the time of this incident.

April 27, 2020 | Milwaukee

41-year-old TT

14-year-old DT

16-year-old TA

17-year-old LS

19-year-old MS

43-year-old CS placed two 911 calls the morning of April 27, 2020 and said, "Um, I just massacred my whole family." He identified himself and waited outside the residence for police to arrive. Online court records show that CS had previous domestic abuse-related convictions and was prohibited from possessing a firearm at the time of this incident due to several of these convictions being felonies. CS faced five counts of first-degree reckless homicide and felon in possession of a firearm to which he pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to the maximum 205 years in prison.

May 5, 2020 | Milwaukee

48-year-old CK

CK was killed by an ex-boyfriend, 51-year-old WJ, who waited for CK outside her place of employment and then gunned her down when she arrived for her shift. According to the criminal complaint in this case, when police arrived, WJ was goading law enforcement to shoot him, stating, "Kill me," and, "You're going to have to shoot me," while standing over CK's body. One officer on scene saw WJ swivel towards him with the gun in his hand and heard a "pop," prompting the officer to fire a round, hitting WJ. CK succumbed to her injuries and was pronounced dead on scene, and WJ was treated for a non-fatal gunshot wound. He is facing first-degree intentional homicide and second-degree recklessly endangering safety charges. Family members told media that CK and WJ had been separated for months, but WJ was not accepting that it was over.

June 5, 2020 | Milwaukee

26-year-old AG

26-year-old AG was fatally shot by her boyfriend, 25-year-old DD. Police said during an argument DD “retrieved a firearm and shot AG once in the stomach.” She was taken to a local hospital, where she died from her injuries.

A “Go Fund Me” fundraiser organized by family members indicates that AG’s “life was taken in a unexpected & senseless act of domestic violence. Her boyfriend shot & killed her leaving behind [AG’s] 4yr old daughter. Now a mother & father must bury their child & a child will grow up without her mama.”

DD is charged with second-degree reckless homicide and the case has not concluded.

July 12, 2020 | Milwaukee

48-year-old MM

48-year-old MM was stabbed to death by her boyfriend of two months, 35-year-old AS. According to a criminal complaint, the morning of the homicide, AS called his brother and told him he was suicidal, and his brother went to AS’ residence. Shortly after he arrived, the brother witnessed AS and MM arguing for about five minutes, which included AS accusing MM of loving the nephew of AS more than she loved him. The argument ended with AS fatally stabbing MM.

AS had a history of domestic violence. Online court records show that at the time of the homicide, AS was facing stalking and four domestic violence-related misdemeanor charges involving another victim. For his role in the death of MM, AS pleaded guilty to a second-degree reckless homicide charge and was sentenced to serve 12 years in prison and ten years on extended supervision.

July 12, 2020 | Milwaukee

46-year-old MN

MN, 46, was fatally assaulted by 24-year-old JS, the ex-boyfriend of his female friend, MK. According to the criminal complaint, MN and MK were at Bradford Beach when JS approached them and attacked MN, striking him several times in the head and face. JS then said to MK, “(Expletive) you. I should have done this a long time ago to you.”

According to online court records, JS had a history of committing domestic violence, and was found guilty in 2017 of three domestic abuse-related misdemeanors. For the death of MN, JS was charged with felony murder-

battery, and was found guilty at a jury trial. He was sentenced to ten years in prison and three years of extended supervision.

July 30, 2020 | Milwaukee

63-year-old KF

On July 30, 2020, 42-year-old TM walked into the police department to report that he killed his girlfriend of seven years, 63-year-old KF. When asked about a motive, TM told police he questioned KF about her taking his phone and she denied it, but he believed that she was lying about it, so he shot her. A criminal complaint described a call to the residence from the month prior in which TM was experiencing a mental health crisis. TM told police that he had not been taking an anti-psychotic medication prescribed to him at the time he killed KF. TM had previously been convicted of a felony and thus prohibited from possessing a firearm at the time he shot KF. He is charged with first-degree intentional homicide and possession of a firearm by a felon. The case has not concluded.

July 30, 2020 | Milwaukee

35-year-old JC

36-year-old RD and a woman with whom he was intimately involved, 35-year-old JC, were arguing about RD being intimately involved with other people when JC got up and tried to leave. RD told police that he was trying to calm her down and prevent her from leaving which led to a physical fight, and that JC was fighting him to try and get away. RD's nephews came to see what was happening, giving JC a chance to run out of the house. RD ran after her and caught up to her in a field where another physical struggle ensued, ultimately ending with RD fatally strangling JC. He then put her body in a nearby dumpster and covered it up with items. He turned himself in to police on August 1st, telling them he "got into it with someone," and where they could find JC's body. RD had a violent past, including a 2014 strangulation and two other felony domestic abuse-related convictions. He was on extended supervision for these crimes at the time he killed JC.

September 3, 2020 | Milwaukee

59-year-old CG

The night of September 3rd, 28-year-old AB, AB's brother, and the father of AB's child, CG, were hanging out together and drinking. At one point, AB's brother and CG got into an argument regarding CG moving back in with AB. When AB attempted to step in and intervene, CG got physical towards her. Both AB and her brother grabbed separate knives and stabbed CG, killing him. There was a history of documented abuse in AB and CG's relationship. CG was charged in August of 2019 with domestic-abuse related battery and disorderly conduct, listing AB as the victim, but those charges were

ultimately dismissed. In this incident, AB was charged with homicide by negligent handling of a dangerous weapon and harboring/aiding a felon. The case has not concluded.

September 7, 2020 | Milwaukee

62-year-old LG

On September 8th, police responded to a Milwaukee apartment for a welfare check after 62-year-old LG did not show up for work. They found her son, 26-year-old AC, at the residence and LG laying on the floor nearby, covered in blood and beyond help. AC told police he was responsible for stabbing his mother and was taken into custody. He is charged with first-degree intentional homicide and the case has not concluded.

October 3, 2020 | Milwaukee

24-year-old OL

Limited media coverage of this incident indicates that 25-year-old DD killed his girlfriend, 24-year-old OL, after a night out drinking. A review of online court records does not appear to indicate that DD is currently facing charges in the death of OL. An open records request into this incident remains unanswered at the time of publishing this report.

November 8, 2020 | Milwaukee

38-year-old DM

34-year-old JS fatally shot his girlfriend, 38-year-old DM, outside the home of a gathering they were both attending. According to the criminal complaint, a witness told police he heard people arguing and looked out his window and saw a man following a woman. The witness looked away and heard a shot, then looked back out and saw that the woman was now on the ground, and saw the man who had been following her earlier remove a lanyard with keys from her pocket, then leave. JS was pulled over in the victim's car and arrested later that evening.

Online court records show that JS had a history of domestic violence. He had two separate domestic abuse injunctions granted against him in 2009 and 2016, the latter of which was active at the time of this homicide. Additionally, JS had a pending substantial battery charge, and a condition of his bond in this case was to not possess dangerous weapons or firearms.

For the death of DM, JS was charged with first-degree intentional homicide, felony bail jumping, and possessing a firearm while subject to an injunction. The case has not concluded.

December 5, 2020 | Milwaukee

17-year-old DSM

According to a criminal complaint in this case, 17-year-old MS and his girlfriend, 17-year-old DSM, were at a house party the night that MS fatally shot DSM. A witness told police that DSM was sitting on the lap of MS and playfully slapping his face and head. DSM got up to move to the other side of the room and the witness heard her say to MS “you ain’t going to do anything with that,” and the witness turned to find MS pointing a handgun at DSM. MS fired a single shot, fatally injuring DSM.

MS was charged with second-degree reckless homicide and possession of a firearm – adjudicated delinquent of a felony. The case has not concluded.

December 24, 2020 | Milwaukee

47-year-old LJ

TC, 63, and his girlfriend, SD, got into an argument that resulted in TC striking SD in the face. TC then left the apartment, and SD went to her neighbor’s apartment. That neighbor, MM, and her boyfriend, LJ, returned with SD to her apartment later to have dinner and drinks. While they were there, TC called SD, said he was outside, and he questioned SD about why MM and LJ were over. TC entered the apartment a few minutes later, visibly angry and jealous, and argued with SD, MM, and LJ. After a short time, TC went to the bedroom and retrieved a firearm, then fatally shot LJ.

TC had domestic abuse charges pending at the time of this incident, stemming from two separate incidents in August of 2020 involving SD as the victim. As a condition of his bond, TC was ordered to not possess any dangerous weapons. TC is charged with first-degree reckless homicide for the death of LJ, and the case has not concluded.

County

In the death of...

OUTAGAMIE

February 17, 2020 | Kaukauna

5-year-old WB

3-year-old DB

The day that he was scheduled to appear in court to address custody of his biological children, MB, age 35, showed up at the Kaukauna home of MS, the mother of his children. He broke in and stabbed the children to death while they were sleeping. MS and MB both told police that they do not have a good relationship with each other, and that MB paid child support but had little contact with the children, 5-year-old WB and 3-year-old DB.

An acquaintance of MB told police that a week after the homicides they were at MB and his wife EB’s home in the living room talking about who could have killed the children. MB proceeded to go into detail about how

hypothetically, he would have carried out the murders in order to prevent the children from screaming. This acquaintance also stated MB was upset about paying child support because MS would not let him see the children and MB did not believe he was the father.

MB is charged with two counts of first-degree intentional homicide for the deaths of his children. He is also facing felony charges related to an attempted escape and hostage taking situation while he was in jail. The criminal complaint indicates that in June of 2020, MB and another person on his cellblock, DW, (who is another domestic violence homicide offender from the February 27, 2020 incident described below) teamed up and restrained a corrections officer in the jail and threatened her with a sharpened pencil, demanding that she facilitate their escape. Both cases have not concluded.

February 27, 2020 | Appleton

3-year-old ZC

The night of this fatal attack, 3-year-old ZC's mother, TC, said that DW, the father of her unborn child, was over as she was putting her daughter, ZC, to bed. TC told police that DW was trying to kiss her, but she told him she didn't want to. TC said the next thing she knew DW grabbed her head and sprayed something in her eyes. TC told police DW could see she was trying to use her phone to call 911 so he tried grabbing onto it while continuing to beat her. She said somehow, she got up by her door and was able to open the sliding door and get out while screaming, "help, help, help me please." TC told police she wished she could have tried to grab ZC, but DW was trying to kill her, and then she wouldn't be able to get out for either of them. TC said when she stepped out, DW closed the door and locked it. A short while later, DW opened the door and ran out towards the back, and TC went in and found ZC barely alive. Both ZC and TC were transported to the hospital, where ZC died of her injuries. TC survived the attack.

TC told police that she met DW online, and when he moved to Appleton in July of 2019 he was initially living at her apartment, but that she was concerned because he didn't have a job and wasn't saving money. She further stated that she was pregnant with DW's child and was afraid to tell him she did not want to be with him anymore.

When questioned about a motive, DW said he was upset at TC because she didn't want to be together and didn't want him to touch her anymore. DW told police he came up with the plan to kill TC, ZC, and his unborn child about a week prior but had started thinking about it months ago. DW said that killing TC would mean he didn't have to deal with her anymore and it would unburden him from his anger. DW said because TC didn't want to be with him, didn't want him around, and acted like she didn't care, he decided to kill them. He said by killing them he would have "freedom and happiness."

DW was charged with first-degree intentional homicide, attempted first-degree intentional homicide, and attempted first-degree intentional homicide of an unborn child, the latter of which was ultimately dismissed. He was sentenced to life in prison. DW is serving a consecutive sentence for the felony charges related to the jail hostage-taking escape attempt described in the case narrative on the previous page, where he teamed up with another domestic abuse homicide perpetrator from that case to try and facilitate an escape.

September 21, 2020 | Little Chute

24-year-old EW

MW, 25 and EW, 24 had been married for a little over a year when MW fatally shot EW before turning the gun on himself. An investigation into the incident found dozens of text messages between them capturing arguments related to money and MW's drinking habits. There were also indications of emotional and physical abuse. In one text message, EW called out her husband for threatening to shoot her during an argument, and in another message, EW asked MW not to say things to her like "you wanna die."

County

In the death of...

PIERCE

April 24, 2020 | Township of Clifton

60-year-old CT

AT, 32, called 911 the morning of April 24 to report his father had been shot before contact with AT was lost. When officers arrived at the home CT and AT shared, they were unable to make contact with anyone inside. When they eventually entered the home, they found both AT and his father, 60-year-old CT, dead from gunshot wounds. There is nothing available to indicate that there either was or was not violence or abuse happening in the household.

County

In the death of...

RUSK

June 6, 2020 | Town of Marshall

73-year-old RR

70-year-old BR

RR, age 73, and BR, age 70, were killed by their grandson, 21-year-old AR, and AR's 17-year-old acquaintance, JF. AR, JF, and another person went to AR's grandparents' home with the intent to rob them. AR disclosed to police that JF shot his grandfather and that he (AR) fired two rounds towards BR. The criminal complaint for this incident indicates that AR had an open court case with bond conditions that he have no contact with either of his grandparents and commit no further crimes. For this incident, AR was charged with two counts of first-degree intentional homicide and several other felony and misdemeanor charges. The case has not concluded.

County***In the death of...*****WASHINGTON**

March 11, 2020 | Town of Kewaskum
43-year-old BB

MB, 51, fatally stabbed her husband, 43-year-old BB, then called 911 to report she cut her husband and that she was suicidal and had also cut her wrists. She told police, "He asked me to move out and I killed him." She further elaborated that she found paperwork that morning that indicated he was going to kick her out. The two were legally married but filed for divorce on January 31, 2020. MB pleaded no contest to a first-degree intentional homicide charge and was sentenced to life in prison. She will be eligible for extended supervision after serving 30 years.

County***In the death of...*****WAUKESHA**

March 10, 2020 | Waukesha
34-year-old DR
26-year-old DP

36-year-old AR killed his wife, 34-year-old DR, and his wife's sister, 26-year-old DP. The criminal complaint for this case indicates that the evening of March 10, 911 dispatchers received a call from a woman who stated her brother-in-law was going crazy and trying to stab her sisters, DR and DP. When deputies arrived, they found the sister who called 911 and her mother, GP, outside in the driveway with injuries. As they entered the home, officers saw AR in the upstairs hallway, holding the knife he had used to stab everyone in the house. As deputies were clearing the home, they discovered DP deceased with multiple stab wounds in an upstairs room and DR barely alive. DR succumbed to her injuries a short while later.

Afterwards, GP told police that her son-in-law, AR, was acting obsessive for the last several weeks about the coronavirus. She indicated that on March 10, at approximately 5 a.m., AR woke everybody up in the house telling everybody how much he loved them and that he was sorry about everything that he has said and done. AR said he was going to leave and take all the personal protective equipment that he had to the hospital because they needed it more, according to GP. Later that afternoon, seemingly out of nowhere, AR began stabbing his wife DR in the kitchen. DP, GP, and the other sister tried to intervene, and GP told police that's when he "turned on everybody." AR also killed a family dog.

AR told police "The coronavirus was going to get them, so I had to kill them." AR talked about "helping" the dog, his wife, and DP, but stated that everyone else got away. When asked about "helping" his wife, AR stated, "I stabbed her a bunch and she kept asking why and I said because you didn't listen to me about this, we have go up north, you are not taking it seriously." An autopsy found that DR suffered 19 stab wounds.

AR was charged with two counts of first-degree intentional homicide and two counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide. He was found guilty but not guilty due to mental disease or defect and ordered to spend the rest of his life in a mental health institution.

May 27, 2020 | Waukesha

48-year-old TW

TW, age 48, was fatally shot by her ex-boyfriend of 13 years, DB, 34, who then died by suicide. According to the victim's family, TW had moved to Waukesha in February of 2020 in attempt to separate from DB. In the time immediately preceding this murder-suicide, DB confided in a friend that he was feeling suicidal and had been suspicious of TW seeing someone else. DB's mother told police that he was stressed about his relationship with TW and her leaving him.

August 20, 2020 | Waukesha

64-year-old GE

According to the criminal complaint in this case, SE, 26, was evicted from his apartment in June of 2020 and had to move back in with his father, 64-year-old GE. SE told his roommate, who he thought was responsible for his eviction, a comment to the effect of, "If you kick me out, I will have to move back in with my father and you will be making me a murderer." This roommate also told authorities that throughout their time living together, SE would be mean to her and act erratically, but was never violent. The morning of August 20, SE asked another family member to go over to GE's residence to check on his cat, and upon arrival, this family member found GE on the kitchen floor, barely breathing. GE succumbed to his injuries on September 2. Police interviews with family members and friends of SE and GE illuminated some inconsistencies in SE's story and the timeline he gave regarding his whereabouts in the days preceding the attack on GE. SE was charged with first-degree intentional homicide and was found guilty at a jury trial. He was sentenced to life in prison.

September 1, 2020 | Menomonee Falls

20-year-old SH

According to the criminal complaint for this case, on the evening of September 1, SH called her sister, whom she was supposed to meet around 7:00 PM and said that she would be running late. SH's sister told police she could hear SH's boyfriend of a few years, HM, age 20, yelling in the background during the call. When SH arrived to meet her sister and another friend around 8:00 PM, SH told them she was now single and that she had broken up with HM. Later that night after returning home, SH

spoke with her sister again over the phone, and when they hung up, SH indicated she was going to bed.

A downstairs neighbor of SH and HM told police that around 11:00 PM he heard an argument coming from the upstairs apartment, which was not uncommon. The neighbor told police that he had heard numerous fights and arguments weekly to every other week coming from SH and HM's apartment since they moved in, lasting anywhere from an hour to three hours. He further stated that the argument the evening of September 1st was unusually short, that it escalated within 20 minutes and ended with a scream from SH. Shortly after first responders arrived on the scene and after performing life-saving measures, they declared SH deceased. The investigation into the incident revealed that HM stabbed SH once in the chest, then called 911 to get help, telling the dispatcher that SH stabbed him and that as he was trying to snatch the knife from her hand, he "pushed the knife towards her." SH's mother told police that HM was verbally abusive towards SH and that she had concerns about his conduct in the past. For the death of SH, HM was charged with first-degree intentional homicide. The case has not concluded.

December 15, 2020 | Village of Nashotah

67-year-old SA

There is very little information readily available about this incident, but initial police reports indicate that a call came into dispatch advising that 69-year-old TD had shot his girlfriend and was going to kill himself. When officers arrived on scene, they discovered TD dead in the garage from an apparent gunshot wound, and SA deceased inside a bedroom in the home. There is nothing available to indicate that there was violence or abuse happening between the parties.

County

In the death of...

WINNEBAGO

February 2, 2020 | Oshkosh

67-year-old JP

28-year-old IS fatally stabbed 67-year-old JP during an argument that took place in the home he shared with his mother, WS. According to the criminal complaint, earlier in the day WS and her friend, JP, went to pick IS up from the hospital, and when they did, they approached IS with a contract detailing what he would need to do if he wanted to keep living in the home, including to get a job and helping to clean. IS refused to sign the contract and told WS he was going to get his money and get his own place to live and that, "anyone who got in [his] way was dead." Later at home, WS and IS were again talking about the contract, and IS told WS that JP had to go. He then knocked WS to the ground and proceeded to attack JP, and at one point IS retrieved a knife from the kitchen. A struggle ensued and ended with IS stabbing JP in the neck. Fearing for her own safety, WS ran and hid

in the basement and called 911. JP succumbed to his injuries shortly after first responders arrived. IS was charged with first-degree reckless homicide and sentenced to 30 years in prison.

August 4, 2020 | Oshkosh

59-year-old JG

JG, age 59, was fatally shot by his daughter's ex-boyfriend, 39-year-old JA. According to the criminal complaint, JA and JG's daughter, RB, had dated for five years but broke up a few months prior. RB told police that JA became upset earlier in the day when she told him that her dad, JG, and a family friend, JM, were going to be working on a vehicle that JA co-owned with RB. JA showed up and shot the three of them, then fled to Green County. RB and JM survived.

The criminal complaint indicates that in the days before the shooting, the two exchanged messages in which RB declined JA's requests to get back together. JA then suggested that they move in together, to which she replied: "I was and still am too afraid to move in with you. I lived with you for a few months and I was scared." At one point in their exchange, RB references past abuse stating, "you wanna know why I was scared of you. You put your hands on me. Choked me. Left marks."

JA was found guilty of first-degree intentional homicide and two counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility for release.

October 16, 2020 | Oshkosh

47-year-old AK

Officers responded to a parking lot in Oshkosh on October 16, 2020 to find 47-year-old AK dead in the driver's seat of her car with a gunshot wound, and her 61-year-old husband, DK, in the passenger seat, barely alive. He died from his injuries shortly after emergency medical personnel arrived on scene. Security footage from a nearby business showed AK getting into her vehicle, and then her husband exiting a vehicle nearby and approaching AK's vehicle. He leaned into the driver's side window, where AK was sitting, then reached into his jacket, before getting into the passenger side seat and shooting himself. Online court records show that AK petitioned for divorce less than two months prior to this incident. The divorce paperwork was found in the car DK was driving.

DK's son told police that AK and DK met online in 2013 while AK was living in the Philippines. AK came to the United States and the two married in 2014. AK's son told police that abuse has been taking place since the beginning of the marriage. The day before AK was killed, DK's son went to see his father at home and described DK as not being in a good head space,

with tears in his eyes while discussing his finances with his son and instructing his son what to do if DK should pass away.

DK had a history of perpetrating domestic abuse. Online court records show a domestic abuse restraining order and a disorderly conduct charge from 2002, with DK's ex-wife as the victim in those cases.

October 21, 2020 | Omro

36-year-old MM

40-year-old LW

AC, 52, called 911 to report that his house was on fire, that someone had broken into the home, and that his wife, 36-year-old MM, was inside and not breathing. When police arrived, they found 40-year-old LW dead with a gunshot wound in the living room and a strong smell of a gas or another fire accelerant throughout the residence. They found MM dead in the bedroom. Police ascertained that she was shot prior to an attempt to start her on fire. AC told police that he, MM, and LW had been out at a club the evening before. Surveillance video showed an argument between AK and MM, which MD, another person who was with them, told police was regarding some missing money. MD told police when they returned to the home of AC and MM, the couple retreated into their bedroom and MD remained in the living room with LW. A short while later they heard a gunshot. When MD and LW went to see what happened, AC told them that he found the money that supposedly had been missing. AC instructed MD and LW to go with them to the garage to obtain a gas can. MD told police that LW was "freaking out," and AC fatally turned the gun on him. AC then instructed MD to go with him to a bar to clean so that AC would have an alibi. When he returned home, he called 911 with the story about a break-in while he was away.

AC was charged with two counts of first-degree intentional homicide and one count of mutilating a corpse. The case has not concluded. It should be noted that AC was convicted of a felony in 2016 and therefore prohibited from possessing a firearm at the time of this incident.

County

In the death of...

WOOD

January 17, 2020 | Nekoosa

20-year-old SR

20-year-old SR, unable to walk or talk and in a wheelchair, was fatally abused by her mother's live-in boyfriend, 43-year-old PC, as her mother was taking a bath. PC told investigators that the night of the incident he went into SR's room to check on her. He said he grabbed her and attempted to roll her over, and that she fell off the bed onto the floor and struck her head. PC claimed that it was accidental, however, the severity of the injuries was inconsistent with how PC described them to have happened.

At a jury trial in February 2021, SR's mother took the stand and described that she was aware of previous instances where SR appeared to have injuries but did not report them because PC had hit her in the past and she was afraid of what he would do. She stated that PC intimidated and coerced her into asking the coroner to not perform an autopsy on SR's head, presumably because he knew what it would show. PC was found guilty of first-degree intentional homicide at a jury trial and sentenced to life in prison.

Preventing Domestic Violence Homicides

2020 was a year marked by systemic violence. In the reckoning between a global pandemic and the white supremacist, patriarchal, capitalist and settler colonialist institutions that dictate our over-reliance on criminal legal responses to domestic and sexual violence, we are ever reminded by the people included in this report - reminded by their brutal, unconscionable, often predictable deaths - that our systems routinely fail those they purport to protect. How can we in good conscience continue to insist that legal system approaches are enough to keep people alive? This report - and the voices of grieving communities across Wisconsin - continue to insist that they are not.

Activist and organizer Mariame Kaba says, "Many survivors want de-escalation, not criminalization...it is only in developing real solutions to harm that we stand a chance of centering and meeting the needs of all survivors." How can we advocate investing in systems that historically and continually exploit Black and brown lives, that neither value nor respect the bodily autonomy of women, non-binary, and trans folx, that continually seek to solve violence with more violence, if our ultimate goal is to end all forms of oppression? We cannot.

Homicide prevention is as multi-faceted as the lives of the 60 victims in this report. We are grateful to systems actors who DO offer safety and healing to the survivors whose stories thankfully do not appear in these pages. We must also insist that community-wide investment in flexible resources that allow survivors to meet their own complex, evolving safety needs would be a more effective alternative. The systems we have long relied upon do little to reduce the occurrence of harm before it happens, and nothing to alter the social and political conditions that facilitate increasingly, predictably lethal violence. Homicide prevention must go deeper.

Rather than dictating what survivors can access with a menu of advocacy services required by funders to keep our doors open, might we truly afford survivors the ability to decide what is best for themselves and their children? Rather than utilizing lingo and assessments and lists to attempt to intervene for the most endangered, multi-dimensional, and marginalized of survivors, might we push beyond the narrow realm of mainstream advocacy and address the socio-political, cultural drivers of oppression at its roots? Our work evolves, but we and the funders who support our work must be accountable to the power we wield as systems ourselves. We must listen to what advocates in Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color have been saying for years – the criminal legal system does not hold the answers for reducing domestic and sexual violence.

Spotlight: We Are Here MKE

The heightened stress and anxiety associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the isolation that may accompany social distancing, has been triggering and dangerous for survivors. Domestic violence incidents in Milwaukee spiked in 2020, where lack of access to healthcare, affordable housing, and economic opportunities, largely felt in communities of color, collided with the “shadow pandemic” of domestic violence. A review of victim and perpetrator demographics from Milwaukee County cases in this report indicated that in 84% of the cases, the homicide victim was identified in case records as a person of color (20 Black, 1 Latinx out of 25 total victims), while 16/18, (89%) of perpetrators from Milwaukee County were Black. The other four victims and two perpetrators were white.

Culturally specific domestic violence and sexual assault victim service providers in Milwaukee County came together to address a challenge they were all experiencing when it came to reaching the communities their programs are best designed to serve. They shared a common experience of not having access to the information and decision-making spaces necessary to meet the needs of their communities, and were not equitably represented or meaningfully heard in decision-making conversations about funding and the policies and protocols that directly impact victims and survivors from their communities. The result was mainstream programs receiving higher levels of funding and awareness, leaving culturally specific programs underfunded and under-resourced, despite their expertise.

“Domestic violence is an issue people only want to talk about within their communities. So, if communities don’t have the resources, help doesn’t always reach the people in need.”

– Antonia Vann, The Asha Project, from an interview in the 2013 Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report

[We Are Here MKE](#) is an initiative and awareness campaign led by the culturally specific domestic and sexual violence programs in Milwaukee. We Are Here MKE envisions a world where ALL survivors can have access to safety and live fully in their dignity with love and respect in Milwaukee. The initiative was created to amplify the expertise of culturally specific programs in their respective communities and bolster awareness of culturally specific programs’ existence, so that survivors from those communities – who for reasons including bias, racism, and mistrust of systems based in historical systemic violence do not feel comfortable utilizing mainstream programs – know that alternatives exist, and finding safety is possible.

The collective includes:

- [The Asha Project](#), an initiative under End Domestic Abuse WI;
- Our Peaceful Home, a project of the [Milwaukee Muslim Women’s Coalition](#);
- [UMOS Latina Resource Center](#);
- The [Hmong American Women’s Association](#);
- Diverse & Resilient’s [Room to Be Safe Anti-Violence Program](#);
- [HIR Wellness Institute](#); and
- [Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center](#)

Visit the We Are Here MKE website to learn more: <https://weareheremke.org/>

They Trespass Her Body Like They Trespass This Land¹ Toward Justice, Remembrance & Healing for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples²

A special feature of the End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin 2020 Homicide Report

Tegan Swanson
Systems Change Coordinator at End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin
member, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) Task Force of Wisconsin



for advocacy strategies non-Native systems can implement to end MMIWG2S violence, see p. 51

for featured voices from Wisconsin's MMIWG2S movement leadership, see p. 53

and for our grateful Acknowledgments, p. 56

¹ from the 1491s' [To the Indigenous Woman](#)

² This report will reference a variety of acronyms for different facets of the same violence: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), Women, Girls, and Two Spirit (MMIWG2S), Peoples (MMIP), or Relatives (MMIR). Similarly, different ways of referring to Native or Indigenous peoples include terminology adopted by bodies of government (e.g. *American Indian* or *Alaska Native*), autonyms (the name a people use for themselves in their own language, e.g. ᐱᐢᓂᓂᐱᐃᐅᐃᐅ or *Anishinaabeg*), and official tribal titles (e.g. the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians). These linguistic differences are important, historically complex, and incredibly personal. This author accepts responsibility and apologizes for any and all mistakes, misrepresentation, or offenses to this end.

And so, you see, her absence stopped time.

— Louise Erdrich, *The Round House*³

winner of the 2012 National Book Award for Fiction
enrolled member, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians

Rae Elaine Tourtillott - 19 year old daughter of Josephine and Bernard Tourtillott, namesake of Raymond and Elaine, 1984 Menominee Princess, renowned fancy dancer, and mother to seven-week-old Alysse - disappeared into the night on October 15th, 1986, after attending a birthday party with friends on the Menominee Reservation one cool autumn evening.⁴ Those who knew her were immediately alarmed when she did not call to check in the next morning, when she did not attend a relative's wedding, when she did not come home to her beloved newborn daughter. They were alarmed because Rae Elaine was not the kind to disappear. She was, as her auntie referred to her, *my little Rae of sunshine*, known to be a generous caregiver to younger relatives; someone who was devoted and respectful to her elders; a proud Menominee passionate about learning and practicing her culture.

"She was nine months younger than me," says Andrea "Andy" Lemke-Rochon, cousin and member of Wisconsin's MMIW Task Force, "but she grew up on the reservation and I didn't...so in many ways she felt like my elder." Her loved ones describe an attentive, dignified, nurturing young woman. In telling stories about her, they also smile when they remember Rae Elaine as someone who embodied a deep, endearing sense of Native joy and mischief. "She knew the Our Father in Menominee," says Andy, "and she also knew the dirtiest swears."

So when Rae Elaine went missing, the hole she left behind was immeasurable. "It was so painful, not knowing where she was, if she was out somewhere alone," says Andy. "She was so smart and so strong. For months, I prayed she had just been taken - that she would find a way to escape and come back home."

WHEREAS

according to a 2016 report from the National Institute of Justice, 84% of American Indian and Alaskan Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime, more than half of whom experienced sexual violence;

WHEREAS,

according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, homicide is the third leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaskan Native women between 10 and 24 years of age and the fifth leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaskan Native women between 25 and 34 years of age;

WHEREAS,

in 2016, the National Crime Information Center reported nearly 6,000 cases of missing American Indian and Alaskan Native women and girls, yet the U.S. Department of Justice was tracking only 119 cases in the NamUS missing persons database;

and WHEREAS,

no reliable data exists on the actual number of missing Indigenous women and girls in the United States, and instances of violence continue to be directed against Indigenous women, living both on reservations and in urban areas, at high rates...⁵

What does it really mean to be *Missing*?

So asked Alice Skenandore, founder and Executive Director of Wise Women Gathering Place, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe tribal member, midwife, advocate, and trusted elder to the anti-violence movement here in Wisconsin. The question arose at the

³ [Review of *The Round House* from the New York Times](#)

⁴ [Remembering Rae Elaine Tourtillott and Preventing Future Violence](#)

⁵ [City of Madison Common Council Resolution #21-00307](#)

June 2021 Wisconsin MMIW Task Force meeting,⁶ in response to discussion about myriad statistics, paradigms, and approaches the Task Force might consider when attempting to tell the stories of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, and other relatives of Wisconsin's twelve Native nations.⁷ I heard Alice's question as a request for definition, but also as a gentle insistence that we remember: the problem itself inherently *defies* such definition. The problem is *precisely because of* settler colonialist systems, white supremacist policies, and deeply ingrained misogynist attitudes that result in Indigenous relatives dying or disappearing without attention, without accountability, and without hope for the families who are left behind.

"Our relatives go missing three times," insists Jordan Marie Brings Three White Horses Daniel, a Kul Wicasa Oyate/Lower Brule Sioux MMIW activist in the documentary short *No More Stolen Sisters: Real America with Jorge Ramos*. "They go missing in life, they go missing in the media, and they go missing in the data."⁸

Despite being the original inhabitants and stewards of *Turtle Island*, or the lands now known collectively as North America, Native peoples are rarely adequately accounted for in surveys or other Western scientific data metrics. There were more than 590 distinct and sovereign Native nations with a combined population estimated between 10 and 45 million people before first contact, though many Native activists and scholars would argue estimates are likely low. By 1900, the Native population was 237,000 - *less than half a percent* of those who were here first.⁹

Today's Native American people are the literal survivors of multi-generational, ongoing genocide.¹⁰ After more than 500 years of racial and gender-based violence committed against them by the State, the 2020 US Census had 9.7 million respondents identify themselves as *American Indian or Alaska Native* - just 2.9% of the overall populace.¹¹ In Wisconsin, 48,384 people identified as such, though again, tribal leadership caution that COVID-19, accessibility, distrust of government outreach, and other complex factors likely mean this is still an underestimate.¹² More insidious and mathematic still - as their communities have been continually decimated by historic and contemporary policies related to child welfare¹³, state violence and incarceration¹⁴, reproductive rights¹⁵, and overall public health inequities, their numbers often do not constitute a *statistically significant sample* in broad demographics. They are grouped together with other similarly *statistically insignificant* peoples, referred to as *other*, and erased.¹⁶

Data that does exist often only measures those who live on designated reservations; what does it mean when the Urban Indian Health Institute indicates 71% of Native America lives off reservation?¹⁷ Survey outreach approaches also often fail to account for homelessness in their accessibility and logistical metrics; if we know that at least 80% of women and children who experience homelessness have also experienced domestic or sexual violence, and if 67 out of 10,000 Indigenous peoples are experiencing housing insecurity today, how many Indigenous victims or survivors have been made invisible in the data?¹⁸ Indigenous identities are the only category in the United States dependent on the idea of racialized *blood quantum*; how many Indigenous peoples are missing from the data because their qualification as a tribal member is based on settler-colonialist criteria? Because their relatives were raped by white men, their ancestors were stolen as children, or they were otherwise severed from their culture by forced assimilation?¹⁹

Having been forcibly moved and removed from their ancestral lands; having experienced generations of broken treaties, starvation land-rights restrictions, spiritual criminalization, and environmental exploitation; having been literally stolen from their relatives or taken into sexual slavery from the time of first contact²⁰ - what does it really mean to be counted as *American Indian or Alaska Native* by systems that only ever intended to ensure you would someday never exist at all?

⁶ [MMIW Task Force of Wisconsin](#)

⁷ [Wisconsin First Nations](#)

⁸ [No More Stolen Sisters - Real America with Jorge Ramos](#)

⁹ [Counting the Dead: Estimating the Loss of Life in the Indigenous Holocaust, 1492-Present](#)

¹⁰ [Canadian Inquiry Calls Killings of Indigenous Women Genocide](#)

¹¹ [2020 U.S. Census: Native population increased by 86.5 percent](#)

¹² [Census Has Struggled to Count American Indians. Some Tribes Fear COVID-19 Made It Worse.](#)

¹³ [Wisconsin Had At Least 10 Native American Boarding Schools. Here's What To Know About Them](#)

¹⁴ [Survey: Wisconsin Led US in American Indian Incarceration Rate in 2013](#)

¹⁵ [A 1970 Law Led to the Mass Sterilization of Native American Women. That History Still Matters](#)

¹⁶ [The Beginning and End of Rape, Sarah Deer \(2\)](#)

¹⁷ [Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls](#)

¹⁸ [Nat'l Alliance to End Homelessness - State of Homelessness: a Look at Race & Ethnicity](#)

¹⁹ [Some Native Americans Fear Blood Quantum is Formula for 'Paper Genocide'](#)

²⁰ [Colonization, Homelessness, and the Prostitution and Sex Trafficking of Native Women](#)

**We have had a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples crisis
since Europeans came to this continent in the late 1400's.**

- Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Dept. of the Interior, May 5th, 2021
member of the Pueblo of Laguna, 35th generation New Mexican,
first ever Native American to serve in a US Federal cabinet position

**The river, the town, the village,
The bedroom, our kitchen. They eat everything.
Or burn it.
They kill what they cannot take. They rape. What they cannot kill they take.**

- Joy Harjo, "How to Write a Poem in a Time of War"²¹
U.S. Poet Laureate, member of the Mvskoke/Creek Nation

To be missing

also means reckoning with the reality that Indigenous people, especially young women like Rae Elaine Tourtillott, are both more likely to experience lethal sexual and domestic violence, and more likely to be lost in the systemic darkness that follows: a cacophony of statutory confusion, lack of communication, racist stigma, and compounding trauma. When I ask Andy Lemke-Rochon if systems-level factors might have changed what happened with her dear cousin's case, she says with both a stark and wavering voice, "Rae Elaine was missing for six months. She was alone, in the dark, for six months. It was a jurisdictional nightmare."

For Rae Elaine, a beautiful young woman whose sure, dancing steps skillfully mimicked a butterfly in the Menominee way, who was eager to practice the Indigenous medicines her great-grandmother had taught her, and whose disappearance left her relatives in disbelief at a reality wherein someone could be so cruel as to steal a mother from her infant daughter, this nightmare was a geographic, bureaucratic mess that might necessarily have involved the Menominee tribal police, local non-tribal law enforcement, the Shawano County Sheriff's Department, the Wisconsin Department of Justice, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the FBI. A web of inconsistencies between statutes, protocols, and legal definitions at the tribal, state, and federal levels did not help effectively govern how criminal legal systems responded to her disappearance.

"And I'm sure some people thought '*She's probably out partying*,'" says Andy, a painful euphemism for both the traumatic impacts of alcohol and drugs in Native communities, as well as the pernicious stigmas non-Native systems often use to justify ignoring or criminalizing Indigenous peoples experiencing harm. "Maybe they thought she'd show up in a few days, and didn't take it seriously. But colonialism was about stamping out Native people," Andy continues. "And still today, that leads to systems not taking Missing and Murdered Indigenous women seriously."

By all accounts, Rae Elaine was not *out partying* - but it should not have mattered even if she had been. Her disappearance deserved immediate alarm, coordinated emergency response across all responsible legal jurisdictions, creative investigative strategies, serious media attention at the state and local level, and committed organizational resources. Crime experts continue to assert that an urgent response in the first few days is crucial to solving especially violent incidents. Yet there were reports of unexplainable delays in response to her case; largely volunteer search teams with little or no forensic training; evidence that was gathered and then went missing; communications requested and never sent between jurisdictions.

Six months later, on April 9th, 1987, tribal police and the FBI went searching in a remote, wooded area of the Menominee Reservation, and a small part of Rae Elaine was found.²²

WHEREAS,

Indigenous women experience racism and prejudice through invisibility, driven by a lack of media coverage. Instead of nationwide manhunts, alerts, and round-the-clock news coverage when an affluent, white woman goes missing, news coverage can be minimal to nonexistent when an Indigenous woman or girl goes missing. Many missing and murdered Indigenous women today remain unnamed and their disappearances unknown or unheard of;

²¹ ["How to Write a Poem in a Time of War"](#)

²² [FBI Most Wanted Seeking Information - Rae Elaine Tourtillott](#)

and WHEREAS,

local law enforcement in urban areas rarely work with a victim's Tribal Nation, denying that Nation's inherent sovereignty and denying that Nation the chance to access data to protect its own citizens...²³

No one knows how many are missing.

Of the approximately 6,000 MMIWG2S relatives that have been identified by family members, many have gone unreported or misclassified in legal systems. Of the *reported* 2,448 MMIW cases in the United States since 1990, eighty-eight percent remain unsolved according to Sovereign Bodies Institute (SBI), an organization that "builds on Indigenous traditions of data gathering and knowledge transfer to create, disseminate, and put into action research on gender and sexual violence against Indigenous people."²⁴ SBI also reminds us there is no Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples international database - despite the fact that intersections between tribal jurisdictions and systems of local, county, state, and federal United States government should always be considered *international*, given tribes' status as sovereign nations with the right to govern themselves.²⁵

The reality in Rae Elaine Tourtillott's case, and in so many others, is that stigma compounds with ego and ignorance; jurisdictional gaps compound with under-resourced social services; lack of media attention compounds invisibility; and white feminist approaches to anti-violence work compound misogynistic carelessness for an Indigenous woman's one sacred, unique life. Dr. Renee Gralewicz, Brothertown Indian Nation Peacemaker, retired Professor of Anthropology in the UW Systems, and co-chair of the Wisconsin MMIW Task Force Legal/Policy subcommittee, stated it plainly in a Fox 11 News interview from 2019: "When we have people who fall in that stereotype of poverty, drug addiction, prostitution, those people with those characteristics seem less important than this nice middle class family next to them...I'm sure the police force say they deserve to have their time in court, they deserve to have their murder solved, but they just don't seem as a priority."²⁶

Settler-colonial paradigms about power and gender underlie legal systems. These systems determine who deserves protection (Euro-American, cisgender, heterosexual, male and sometimes female²⁷, Christian, wealthy) and who deserves to be ignored, dismissed, or punished (anyone else). These beliefs have been codified in cruel ways that might be breathtaking if they were not also so commonplace in the United States. If you consider yourself an advocate in the field of domestic or sexual violence, human trafficking, or other sensitive crimes, please read *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America*. According to author Sarah Deer, a 2014 MacArthur Fellow, professor at William Mitchell College of Law in Minnesota, and citizen of the Mvskoke/Creek Nation of Oklahoma, a majority of sexual violence in the United States is intraracial, meaning perpetrators target and harm victims/survivors of their same race. The singular exception to this is Indigenous women, who report a majority - at least 80 and as many as 97% - of those who commit violence against them are non-Native.

"Imagine living in a world in which almost every woman you know has been raped," writes Prof. Deer. "Now imagine living in a world in which four generations of women and their ancestors have been raped. Now imagine that not a single rapist has ever been prosecuted for these crimes. That dynamic is a reality for many Native women - and thus for some survivors, it can be difficult to separate the more immediate experience of their assault from the larger experience that their people have endured through a history of forced removal, displacement, and destruction. All these events are attacks on the human soul..."²⁸

The foundation for normalized, legalized violence against Indigenous women, across the United States and specifically in the Great Lakes region, has entangled, settler-colonial roots, including:

- **Christopher Columbus**, who explicitly sought Indigenous women and girls to buy and sell into sexual slavery, and whose brutality has been intentionally obscured and perversely celebrated in the United States, in every space from kindergarten classrooms and shopping malls to legislative bodies.²⁹
- Othering, racist narratives about Indigenous peoples being "merciless Indian s*****s" are as foundational to the United States as **the Declaration of Independence**.³⁰

²³ [City of Madison Common Council Resolution #21-00307](#)

²⁴ [Sovereign Bodies Institute](#)

²⁵ [An Issue of Sovereignty - Nat'l Conference of State Legislatures](#)

²⁶ [Jurisdictional questions a challenge in cases of murdered and missing Indigenous women](#)

²⁷ [White tears, white rage: Victimhood and \(as\) violence in mainstream feminism](#)

²⁸ [Deer 12](#)

²⁹ [Colonization, Homelessness, and the Prostitution and Sex Trafficking of Native Women](#)

³⁰ [The Declaration of Independence](#)

- **the Dakota Uprising** and the subsequent day-after-Christmas 1862 executions of 38 Native warriors, who were responding in part to a series of violences committed with impunity by white settlers against Indigenous women.³¹ Condemned to be hanged during a military tribunal on Wahpeton/Oceti Šakowin land now called Mankato, Minnesota, **the Dakota 38** represent the largest mass execution in United States history.³²
- **the Major Crimes Act of 1885** was a federal law passed in white supremacist fear of the successful affirmation of Lakota sovereignty over intratribal matters in US Supreme Court case *Ex Parte Crow Dog*. The MCA thereafter ensured Native defendants could be prosecuted by federal jurisdiction for *major crimes* like rape, murder, and kidnapping. Though it did not divest tribal nations of authority over like crimes committed on tribal land against their citizens (and thus concurrent jurisdiction still exists), "the practical impact...is that few tribes have pursued prosecution...[instead] of a rape case being handled within a community that applies the laws, beliefs, and traditions of its people."³³
- **Public Law 280** of 1953, wherein the federal government's authority to respond to rape was replaced by state authority in six states, including Wisconsin. Yet "[neither] states nor the tribes...were provided with any additional resources with which to enforce crimes in Indian country. As a result, PL-280 has led to widespread criminal justice dysfunction...leaving tribal communities at the mercy of criminals who prey on the vulnerable."³⁴
- **the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968**, which "is largely a misnomer...in truth, ICRA is a Eurocentric response to challenges that developed in tribal courts due to forced assimilation and hegemony...[which] imposes a limit on the punishment a tribal court can impose...to misdemeanor (minor crimes)... As with the Major Crimes Act and PL-280, however, there was no explicit divestiture of jurisdiction. Therefore, tribes can prosecute rape - but have not been able to imprison the defendant for more than one year."³⁵
- **The 1978 Supreme Court decision in *Oliphant v. Suquamish*** removed tribal court criminal jurisdiction over non-Native perpetrators, effectively signaling to predatory non-Native individuals they could commit intimate violence, sex and labor trafficking offenses, and drug-related crimes on reservations against Indigenous peoples with impunity. "From a survivor's perspective, the *Oliphant* decision means that **non-Native men who rape Native women on tribal lands** completely escape tribal criminal sanctions."³⁶
- Though the "partial Oliphant fix" of the **Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010** and the **Violence Against Women (VAWA) reauthorization of 2013** mean that tribes have jurisdiction over non-Native perpetrators of crimes statutorily defined as *domestic violence* on tribal lands, to truly end violence against Indigenous women, "Congress needs to return full jurisdiction to tribal governments *and* support the infrastructure of tribal governments to provide justice for...survivors."³⁷

Until the mid-twentieth century,

a majority of state criminal legal systems only reckoned there had been a crime at all when the victim of such violence was a white woman. Even as that has changed, its disparate legacy lingers in reportage, prosecution, and convictions.³⁸ The likelihood of a state or federal system pursuing charges in an Indigenous woman's case is low; the likelihood of pursuing such justice against a non-Native assailant lower still. Again - if a majority of sexual and domestic violence against Indigenous women is committed by non-Native white men, whether or not a tribe is subject to PL-280, this is a serious jurisdictional gap. In Wisconsin, the only Native nation not subject to PL-280 are the Menominee, meaning they hold jurisdiction over crimes committed on their land...unless the crime involves someone non-Native or someone who is not a member of the Menominee tribe.³⁹ The Oliphant fix that came with

³¹ [Deer 33-34](#)

³² [The Traumatic True History and Name List of the Dakota 38](#)

³³ [Deer 35-37](#)

³⁴ [Deer 37-38](#)

³⁵ [Deer 39-40](#) *Sentence restrictions in some cases were lifted by the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010.

³⁶ [Deer 7](#)

³⁷ [Deer 41-42, 100-106](#)

³⁸ [Deer 24](#)

³⁹ [Tribal Relationships with State and Federal Governments Prove Complicated](#). For more, see [the Tribal Court Clearinghouse on PL-280](#).

VAWA in 2013 applies to acts of domestic violence *recognized* by state law and court systems as crimes - but advocates and survivors well know this is not enough. What of the many situations wherein a survivor's story is dismissed, or they have no proof, or the violent behavior falls outside of statutory definitions? What of the large majority of Indigenous peoples not living on tribal lands?

"It's clear that no system or institution is coming to our rescue," says *Naeqtum Metaemob* Kristin Welch, of the Marten Clan of the Menominee nation, founder and Executive Director of Waking Women Healing Institute, co-chair of the MMIW Task Force Subcommittee on Family & Community Impact, and longtime MMIWG2S activist. "They are fully aware of these acts of violence and intentional destruction of life. Yet they are choosing to do nothing. The solutions they provide are not enough. It's not enough to tell survivors to file a complaint or wait two years for another report to come out that only highlights the problem. We need meaningful actions of change, we need immediate help for our families and survivors now. We need systems and institutions to respond to the issues of MMIWG2S with the urgency and resources as if we are in a crisis...because we are."

**The abuse of women is well known in history,
and tells you a lot about what is happening to our earth.**

- Tamakawastewin LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, water protector, tribal historian,
citizen of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, founder of Sacred Stone Camp

They trespass her body like they trespass this land. ⁴⁰

- from *To the Indigenous Woman*, by the 1491s
Dallas Goldtooth (Mdewakanton Dakota/Diné), Sterlin Harjo (Seminole/Mvskoke),
Migizi Pensoneau (Ponca/Ojibwe), Ryan Red Corn (Osage Nation),
and Bobby Dues (Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota)

When Rae Elaine Tourtillott was murdered,

it was also the connections she held with her parents and siblings, her elders, her relatives, and their homelands that were lost; it was her Menominee ancestors, whose language, medicines, memories, stories, and spirits she carried with her who were in danger of going missing, too; it is Alysse, Rae Elaine's beloved daughter, and the future generations who will carry her good heart and her mischievous spirit forward.

Alysse Arce is now a thirty-five year old mother herself. Andy says she sees Rae Elaine in the way Alysse throws her head back and laughs, and in the joyful life of Rae Elaine's grandson, Colton. Alysse herself speaks beautifully of her mother and of her memory in *No More Stolen Sisters*.⁴¹ She also advocates for other MMIWG2S families with a passion born, terribly, of deep grief. In June of 2020, 22-year-old mother Katelyn Kelley went missing from the same Menominee Reservation community where Rae Elaine was stolen, and Alysse called systems to account. "It baffles me," she says, "that *in 34 years* we haven't learned anything about how to manage and solve these cases." Instead, Rae Elaine's case is still cold. No one has ever been charged. And Katelyn Kelley's body was found in March of 2021; she too is mourned by her family, her relatives, her community, and her young child.⁴²

"There's another young Indigenous daughter not coming home," says Dr. Renee Gralewicz, the Brothertown Indian Nation peacemaker who was also one of two original authors of 2019 Wisconsin Assembly Bill 548,⁴³ bipartisan legislation that would have created the MMIW Task Force, but which legislators failed to even bring before committee. "It's nice that we will know where she will rest for the rest of her life. Where her soul will be. But it would be so much nicer if she wasn't stolen in the first place...If our elected leaders would really care about all of their constituents, about all of us, there would be more action than words."⁴⁴

⁴⁰ [the 1491s](#)

⁴¹ [No More Stolen Sisters - Real America with Jorge Ramos](#)

⁴² [Investigation continues one year after disappearance of Menominee tribal member](#)

⁴³ [2019 Wisconsin Assembly Bill 548](#)

⁴⁴ [Human remains found on reservation belong to missing woman](#)

WHEREAS,

Wisconsin has been ranked as sixth in the nation in sexual trafficking, according to the Human Trafficking Institute, with urban centers being the hubs in the I-90/94 corridor, which has led to many Native women, girls, and two spirits being open to exploitation by traffickers; and...⁴⁵

Stolen land and stolen water

have long been correlated with stolen Indigenous relatives, beginning with first contact and continuing on into present-day resource extraction. Oil and gas pipeline projects like the Dakota Access Pipeline, Keystone XL, Line 3, and Line 5, known for their likelihood to cause damage to delicate ecosystems, poison water systems, and exacerbate climate change, are also often mapped through or very near tribal lands that should be protected by treaty rights.⁴⁶ As goes historic precedent, those Indigenous rights to hunt, gather, practice ceremony, and protect the land and water are usually trampled by the rights of multinational conglomerates to make money.

Extraction projects come with permanent disruption of land and water systems, but they also come with a temporary influx of "work camp modular housing," more commonly known as man-camps. The pattern that follows is horrifically predictable: hundreds of itinerant, mostly male, mostly non-Native crews populate short-term housing settlements in rural, under-resourced areas while they are employed to build pipeline infrastructure by energy corporations like Enbridge and TransCanada. Again, as these men are usually not tribal members, tribal jurisdiction over their behavior is limited at best. Domestic and sexual violence increases. Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit relatives go missing, are found murdered. "Violence against our earth and water is perpetrated on a daily basis," says Patina Park, Executive Director of the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center. "Against those things absolutely vital to our very existence. We can't be surprised that people who would rape our land are also raping our people."⁴⁷

Opponents of Enbridge Line 3 have long warned both environmental damage and Missing and Murdered Indigenous peoples would be of consequence if the pipeline were allowed to be completed.⁴⁸ The transnational Canadian tar sands pipeline would traverse through Anishinaabeg lands of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe and the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, cross the headwaters of the Mississippi River, and terminate in Lake Superior - the largest body of fresh water in North America. Spills have already occurred as construction has continued, and in June of 2021, a sting operation arrested six men suspected of human sex trafficking.⁴⁹ "As experts and Indigenous women predicted, this pipeline project has brought men into our communities who have chosen to prey on our women," says Winona LaDuke, a member of the White Earth Nation, longtime environmental activist, and Executive Director of Honor the Earth. Two of the men arrested in June worked for Enbridge. Two other workers had already been charged earlier this year in a separate trafficking ring associated with the same pipeline.

Lake Superior - and its *twin ports*, Duluth, MN and Superior, WI - is the third largest hub for human trafficking in North America. If a Missing or Murdered Indigenous person were found on a shipping boat docked or in transit on the lake, for example, jurisdictional challenges to the case might also include international maritime laws, inter-state policies, and complex naval protocol regarding search and seizure.⁵⁰ When completed, Line 3 will only add additional shipping business to the port. MMIWG2S advocates in Wisconsin and Michigan have warned the same dangers follow other environmental exploitation projects like Enbridge Line 5,^{51,52} which threatens the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and for the Back Forty Mine at the mouth of the Menominee River.⁵³

Enbridge claims to have offered anti-trafficking training to their employees; they have also given at least two million dollars (to date) to more than 40 local law enforcement jurisdictions to brutalize peaceful water protectors, many while in ceremony as per their treaty rights.⁵⁴ Legal challenges to these extraction projects mire in myriad courts, sometimes for years, all the while

⁴⁵ [City of Madison Common Council Resolution #21-00307](#)

⁴⁶ [The Connection Between Pipelines and Sexual Violence](#)

⁴⁷ [Sexual violence in extraction zones](#)

⁴⁸ [Protestors against Line 3 tar sands pipeline face arrests and rubber bullets](#)

⁴⁹ [Six men, including two Line 3 workers, arrested in human trafficking sting](#)

⁵⁰ [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of General Counsel: The Great Lakes](#)

⁵¹ [Line 5 - Sierra Club](#)

⁵² [Tribes worry Line 5 tunnel construction could bring sex trafficking, violence to Native communities](#)

⁵³ [Michigan Judge Denies Permit for Back Forty Mine on the Banks of the Menominee River](#)

⁵⁴ [An Oil Company Paid Police \\$2 Million to Defend Its Pipeline from Protests](#)

construction, destruction, and violence continue.⁵⁵ Tribal legal experts like the White Earth Band of Ojibwe's Attorney Frank Bibeau are asserting protections based on tribal laws regarding the Rights of Nature, including those of *manoomin* (wild rice).⁵⁶ But which party to the case is likely to have more resources? Much like an abusive partner draining their survivor's financial ability to combat them in family or civil legal proceedings, so go petrochemical companies against Indigenous communities.

If Indigenous women near resource extraction projects know they are more vulnerable to trafficking, sexual assault, domestic abuse, and murder, particularly by men who are not subject to tribal jurisdiction; if their communities are chronically underfunded, and one of the only available safety resources they have is to call police officers paid by the very company that employs their attackers; if they are not legally protected from harm even on the reservation lands where their tribes were forcibly moved - where on Turtle Island are Native women safe?

WHEREAS,

the Wisconsin State Department of Justice formed the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force in 2020 to collect and study data and identify solutions; and

WHEREAS,

Department of Interior Secretary Deb Haaland created the Missing and Murdered Unit within the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Justice Services to collect and analyze data, and to collaborate with different law enforcement and governmental agencies...

WHEREAS,

Indigenous women often hesitate or are unable to access help and needed services after experiences of gender-based violence because their unique needs are often not understood or met by mainstream agencies. Structural factors such as racism, stigma, and criminalization of substance use and mental health issues, culturally incongruent shelter policies, siloed programming, and gender inequality interact in complex ways, resulting in gaps, and inefficient and inadequate services for women who identify as Indigenous...⁵⁷

Though leadership in the Wisconsin legislature have shown no serious commitment

to ending violence against Indigenous peoples, the WI Department of Justice did support the formation of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force, an Indigenous-led body charged with examining social systems' factors and responses that exacerbate domestic, sexual, and trafficking violence against Native peoples in Wisconsin, and in making recommendations about improving data collection and systems' responses. Yet the Task Force is only funded with \$600,000, mostly to collect and report on information that Native communities have long been begging non-Native systems to acknowledge. Justine Rufus, MMIW Task Force co-chair, member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, resident of the Red Cliff Band, and Rural Coordinator for the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, demands we must do more. "We [Native communities] already knew this was a problem - writing a report will only tell us what we already know. We need serious investment at every level."

Wisconsin's twelve tribal nations and its approximately 50,000 Native citizens need systems change and jurisdictional sovereignty. Their communities are also long-deserving of financial and proprietary reparations for the theft of their lands and the legal and financial impacts of generations of broken treaties - if you've not heard of the Land Back movement, please consider learning more from organizations like NDN Collective.⁵⁸ More specifically, Missing and Murdered Indigenous peoples and their families, relatives, and communities deserve equitable investment in culturally-specific, Indigenous-led healing initiatives to end violence, and to address the complex impacts of generational traumas like residential school abuses, spiritual and religious persecution, and environmental genocide.

There are state, national and international-level MMIW initiatives. Canada's National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls produced hundreds of pages of research and a series of recommendations, including those implemented in the Yukon Territories.^{59,60} In 2021, the historic appointment of Pueblo of Laguna and 35th generation New Mexican Deb Haaland as Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior was followed by a series of federal level (re-

⁵⁵ [As Line 3 nears completion, pipeline battles are far from over](#)

⁵⁶ [First "Rights of Nature" enforcement case filed in tribal court to enforce treaty guarantees](#)

⁵⁷ [City of Madison Common Council Resolution #21-00307](#)

⁵⁸ [NDN Collective - Dedicated to Building Indigenous Power](#)

⁵⁹ [Nat'l Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)

⁶⁰ [Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity & Justice: Yukon's Missing and Murdered Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit+ People strategy](#)

) commitments to MMIWG2S issues, including Operation Lady Justice.⁶¹ As part of Minnesota's COVID-19 Recovery Budget, in July of 2021 the State of Minnesota established a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives office with a one million dollar biennium budget. Minnesota Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan, White Earth Band of Ojibwe member, survivor, and mother to an eight-year-old daughter, says, "[I] don't want her to experience the same things I've experienced...I'm hell-bent on changing the current conditions so that she and [other] Native children will not have to experience that in their lifetime."⁶² Wisconsin's Indigenous leadership and domestic and sexual violence advocates have requested similar financial and administrative investment from Gov. Tony Evers and Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, the latter himself a member of the Wisconsin MMIW Task Force. **As of this publishing, no such commitment has been made.**

Many of Wisconsin's MMIW Task Force members are also Indigenous domestic or sexual violence advocates for tribal programs or culturally-specific organizations.⁶³ They highlight inequitable funding opportunities, chronically under-funded community resources, and burdensome grant requirements as huge barriers to their ability to offer meaningful services to their Indigenous relatives. In 2018, the federal government recognized its own failure, admitting in the United States Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) report *Broken Promises: Continuing Federal Funding Shortfall for Native Americans* that "[f]ederal funding...across the government remains grossly inadequate to meet the most basic needs the federal government is obligated to provide."⁶⁴ Issues of transportation, cell service or internet access, and other accessibility barriers are even more rampant for Native survivors in Wisconsin - in fact, there are only *two* tribal domestic violence shelters in the entire state. Thus, mainstream domestic and sexual violence organizations have often been the only available option for Native survivors - and *if/when* they are accessible at all, might also cause more harm when programs perpetuate racialized stigmas against clientele or use approaches not centered in an Indigenous survivor's cultural and spiritual values.

But really -- all of this aside - even if the criminal legal systems that do exist were to communicate decisively and without territorial clamor; even if they were to apply jurisprudence equally and without bias; and all of these courts and systems of social service were fully resourced and able to offer effective support to victims, families, and harm-doers alike - some advocates in Indigenous communities argue that a solely criminal legal response to violence does not offer healing to survivors or those who have harmed them; that these systems offer more violence in the paradigm of whiteness and settler-colonialism.

**not so much redemption
as the law of moon and season
calls for justice**

**one day, the lawmakers must
exit their echoing halls, fall in
with the grandmothers dancing
carry it cry it clean**

until they're home, until they are all home⁶⁵

- Anna Marie Sewell, from "Washing the World"
Poet and performer, Mi'gmaq, Anishinaabe, and Polish

"Red is the color that spirit still sees,"

Andy Lemke-Rochon tells me when she shares the jacket she wears in memory of Rae Elaine. Embroidered on the back is the image of a Native woman in a red dress, facing away, toward the moon with one arm raised and one held, invisibly, in front of her body. Andy explains the importance of each detail - Grandmother, the moon, is also the light that held Rae Elaine while she was missing those six months, alone in the darkness of the Menominee Reservation forest; the arm we cannot see holds an eagle feather fan in front of her womb, one sacred and powerful element protecting another; the woman's dress is red, making the image visible to Rae Elaine's spirit, as well as reflecting the most common symbol for the MMIR movement across Turtle Island.

⁶¹ [Operation Lady Justice: the Presidential Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives](#)

⁶² [Minnesota's First MMIW Office to Open](#)

⁶³ [MMIW Task Force Membership](#)

⁶⁴ [Written testimony of Sarah Deer to the Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States, 14 Mar 2019](#)

⁶⁵ ["Washing the World"](#)

"When I was younger, I certainly had a sense of anger," Andy continues. "And I've still never been able to wrap my head around how someone could take a beautiful life. It was a fundamental shift for me - a loss of faith. But I have to think, you have to be so badly damaged as a soul, so disconnected from spirit, to take a mother away from her baby. We don't heal with anger, by Othering. There's no sense of belonging there. And we are connected to every living thing. Rae Elaine was so nurturing, so connected and loving, with such a deep heart...so my advocacy doesn't come from a place of anger anymore."

Stereotypes that dehumanize and sexualize Native women make it easier for individual perpetrators to harm them; for systems to devalue their lives and dismiss the violence they experience as expected or even deserved; for media to ignore them entirely, or to portray them as ghosts undone by addiction and trauma. Having had the opportunity to share space with Indigenous leaders and survivors in anti-violence and environmental advocacy, I would describe them as brilliant, insightful, persistent, creative, hopeful. Powerful. Sometimes angry, yes, and rightfully so. Resilient in the face of a society hell-bent on erasing them in body, mind, spirit, and memory - but I hesitate to celebrate resiliency when it so often comes as the cost of such intentional, institutional violence. I hesitate to celebrate resiliency when it is praised in lieu of transformative change.

"What has happened to us as human beings where we've become so careless with life?" asks Waking Women Healing Institute's Kristin Welch in the *No More Stolen Sisters* documentary. "These are our sisters, these are our children...and sometimes it feels like it doesn't end. I'm tired of hearing the stories."

WHEREAS,

I did not desire in childhood to be a part of this but desired most of all to be a part. A piece combined with others to make up a whole. Some but not all of something...the comfort of being together. I think of Plains winds snow drifts ice and limbs the exposure and when I slide my arms into a wool coat and put my hand to the door knob, ready to brave the sub-zero dark, someone says be careful out there always consider the snow your friend. Think badly of it, snow will burn you. I walk out remembering that for millenia we have called ourselves Lakota meaning friend or ally. This relationship to the other. Some but not all, still our piece to everything..

WHEREAS,

speaking, itself, is *defiance* - the closest I can come to difference. Whereas I confess these are numbered hours spent responding to a national apology which concerns us, my family. These hours alone to think, without. My hope: my daughter understands wholeness for what it is, not for what it's not, all of it the pieces;⁶⁶

"We are reclaiming our minds, bodies, and spirit

as Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit, and providing choice as to how we decide to heal, tend to our beings, develop community," says *Naegtum Metaemob* Kristin Welch, Waking Women Healing Institute's founder and Executive Director. "If we provide spaces of learning and re-connecting to indigenous identity, we see healing, creation of accessible and equitable healthcare, and liberation from oppressive structures."

Namaewkukin Rachel Fernandez, member of the Menominee Nation, founder and Executive Director of *Maeqtekuahkibkin* *Metaemob*sak Woodland Women, member of American Indians Against Abuse and co-chair of the Data Subcommittee of the MMIW Task Force, agrees. "We need to call people in and call people out. The table is ours and we need to be acknowledged, hold systems accountable, and demand responsibility and justice for our genocide. We do not compromise on our traumas. We need safety, justice, and healing. Our stories. Our truth. What we do now will be the legacy we leave for our future generations."

So lies the way forward. Native communities hold the answers that will end the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two Spirit crisis. Their youth and their elders, their medicines, their ceremony and environmental ethic, their cultural paradigms, their approach to healing and justice, and their knowledge. Not to be assimilated into mainstream programs, or appropriated by funding frameworks, but to exist and flourish in their sovereign nations, held within Indigenous-led programs and organizations that receive equitable and sustainable resources at the local, tribal, state, and federal levels. **For featured voices from Wisconsin's Indigenous MMIWG2S leadership, and to learn more about how you can support their work, see page 53.**

⁶⁶ [Whereas, Poems by Layli Long Soldier \(p. 64, 75-76\)](#)

How can non-Native advocates & systems help to end violence against Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples?

- **What She Say It Be Law.**⁶⁷ Advocate that full and complete jurisdiction be restored to sovereign tribal nations. Remind lawmakers that in order for this to be successful, jurisdiction must come with meaningful, equitable financial investment for tribal legal systems and Indigenous-led anti-violence healing services. Demand non-Native perpetrators of harm be held accountable for violences against MMIP. Encourage your senators to **reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**, especially provisions that strengthen and expand tribal sovereignty.
- **MMIWG2SR have been invisible long enough.** Do your multi-disciplinary teams include Native partners? Regardless of whether you live in an urban or a rural area, connect with your local partners in law enforcement, child welfare, health care, education, housing, and AODA services, and make sure they are aware of MMIW advocacy. Are their data collection practices inclusive of Indigenous communities? What barriers to support might exist for Indigenous survivors? Learn more from the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center.⁶⁸
- **Environmental exploitation and gender-based violence are connected.** Refuse to silo advocacy efforts - that division only serves to foster white supremacist, settler-colonialist, and capitalist power structures. Ask your local leadership in politics, finance, business, and education to honor the treaties, respect Indigenous sovereignty, and advocate for the end of violent environmental exploitation.
- **No one is illegal on stolen land.** And no one can be homeless in meaningful community. Demand local, state, and federal governments cease to criminalize trauma and poverty, and ensure that every human has access to safe, affordable, accessible housing. Advocate for humane immigration policies. How are your local housing coalitions supporting Indigenous survivors in accessing culturally-centered services?
- **Settler-colonial genocidal policies stole children from their families,** and many of those children and their descendants are still here. Remember and demand justice for the children who were killed. Advocate for holistic, transformative juvenile justice, healing-centered services, non-carceral responses to non-violent "crime," and keeping vulnerable Indigenous children in community. We need to reform the colonial system to hold those institutions which killed those missing children accountable.
- **Story-telling is advocacy.** Do you have connections to news, print, visual, or social media? Are you elevating the voices of Indigenous communities? Are you doing so with care and respect for the MMIP families and their beauty, their grief? Share MMIW alerts, and support search efforts. Share celebrations of culture, joy, and humor. Elevate Indigenous storytellers.
- **Systems perpetuate power in the micro and the macrocosm.** If you are an advocate, how are you leveraging privilege in your organization or with community partners to support Indigenous survivors? If you are a grant funder, how do your requirements restrict Native communities from accessing your money or actualizing programs centered around their own Ways of Knowing?⁶⁹ If you are a local or a state political leader, how does settler-colonialism impact voting laws, municipal code, statutory definition? How can you involve Indigenous leadership to change that?

⁶⁷ [Deer 16-17](#), from one of the first written Mvskoke laws clearly addressing gendered violence, "And be it farther enacted if any person or persons should undertake to force a woman and did it by force, it shall be left to woman what punishment she should satisfied with to whip or pay what she say it be law."

⁶⁸ [National Indigenous Women's Resource Center Jurisdiction and Crime Victims' Rights, MMIW Toolkit](#)

⁶⁹ from [Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants](#) by Robin Wall Kimmerer, mother, scientist, decorated professor, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation

We breathe and speak and sing for survival. We carve out in lines; we write — *I know joy I know pain I know love*

I know love I know— lessons we've carried throughout time. Should I go missing: don't stop searching; drag every river until it turns red and the waters of our names

stretch a flood so wide it catches everything. And we find each other whole and sacred, alive and breathing and breathing and breathing.

- Tanaya Winder⁷⁰ from "Love Lessons in a Time of Settler Colonialism"
Poet, writer, and educator, enrolled member of the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe, descendant of the Southern Ute, Pyramid Lake Paiute, Navajo, and Black tribes

"Rae Elaine always had sure, straight steps,"

says Andy, "and maybe that's why she was such a beautiful dancer." She shares another piece of art with me, a painting of a Native woman in motion with a bright, golden glow around her. "She died in darkness, but this is how I think of her, fancy dancing surrounded by light. You know, she tried to teach me to dance, but I have duck feet - she'd laugh, tell me *try to walk in my tracks*. Sometimes now, I still try to walk in her tracks. I go out in my yard and lay down in the prairie flowers with the butterflies in the sun - and there she is."

WHEREAS,

we commemorate the lives of missing and murdered American Indian and Alaskan Native women and girls whose cases are documented and undocumented in public records and media and demonstrate solidarity with the families of the victims

and **WHEREAS,**

some of the Wisconsin Indigenous women we know about include: Bad River Ojibwe members Angeline Whitebird-Sweet, murdered in 1989, Charlene Couture, missing since 2009, Sheila St. Clair, missing since 2015, and Tess White, murdered in 2016; Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe members Susan Poupart, murdered in 1990, LaVonne Frank, murdered 1997, Donna (LaBarge) Peterson, murdered in 2004, and Emily Anne Marie Wayman, murdered in 2010; Ho-Chunk members Jennifer Wesho, murdered in 1989, Jacinda Muir, murdered in 2015, and Kozee Decorah, murdered in May 2020; Menominee members Lisa Ninham, missing since 1990, Rae Elaine Tourtillott, murdered in 1986, Ingrid Washinawatok, murdered in 1999, Katelyn Kelley, murdered in July 2020, and Stephanie Greenspon, murdered in August 2020; and Oneida member Lorraine Brown Bear, murdered in 2016...⁷¹

Say their names.

If you have information about Rae Elaine Tourtillott or Katelyn Kelley, please call the Menominee Tribal Police tip line at 715-994-1307 or 715-799-3881

If you have information about another Missing or Murdered Indigenous person, please connect with their tribal police or a member of the MMIW Task Force.

⁷⁰ [Love Lessons in a Time of Settler Colonialism](#)

⁷¹ [City of Madison Common Council Resolution #21-00307](#)

Native Voices of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Movement in Wisconsin

LoVina Louie of the Native Wellness Institute says, "Speak life into your water, into your people, into your children, into yourself. ..Bring our people to ceremony. Culture is the answer to healing."⁷² There are many Indigenous activists and programs doing amazing, culturally-specific healing and justice work here in Wisconsin. See below for more information.

[**American Indians Against Abuse**](#) - a Tribal Coalition providing support to Wisconsin's tribes and Domestic & Sexual Assault Programs. Call (715) 634-9980.

[**HIR Wellness**](#) - intergenerational, communal, and culturally rooted mental health services and wellness programming, and trainings. It is our belief that we heal in relationships, alongside culture, and within community." [Support their work here.](#)

[**Maeqtekuahkihiw Metaemohsak: Woodland Women**](#) - a group whose mission is to promote healing and spiritual growth through traditional teachings and unity. We support community outreach, prevention and education of community based issues. [Support their work here.](#) See below for more.

[**Menikānehkem: Menominee Rebuilders**](#) - a grassroots community organization based on the Menominee Reservation, working to rebuild our communities by relying on our traditional organizing roots and striving for Community Wellness. [Support them here.](#)

[**Native Lives Matter Coalition**](#) - a collective to bring about awareness and advocate for change to address the Social & Environmental Injustice occurring to Native & Indigenous people, Treaty Rights and Environment Protection ~working towards solutions. to Inspire and support the activist movement of Native Lives Matter, to be the catalyst of change and create longstanding solutions within law enforcement & judicial systems. Standing in solidarity to address Police Brutality and Justice! Standing in support and advocate for the families and victims of violence. Standing in support and advocate for Tribal Treaty Rights & Environmental Rights.

[**Waking Women Healing Institute**](#) - Waking Women Healing Institute (WWHI) recognizes that we as indigenous peoples are the solutions to these issues and institutional violence that has attempted to remove us from identity, land, and language. As a survivors led organization we felt we must create a place of learning and healing through re-building kinships amongst indigenous women to our land, original ways of being, and languages. [Support their work here.](#) See below for more.

[**Wise Women Gathering Place**](#) - an independent non-profit organization that provides Native American culturally-specific services to any person harmed by violence. [Support their work here.](#)

Maeqtekuahkihiw Metaemohsak Woodland Women

My name is Rachel Fernandez. I am from the Menominee Nation and my Menominee name is *Namāwkwūkin*, which means Sturgeon Woman. I am an advocate and a survivor.

I am founder and Executive Director of *Maeqtekuahkihiw Metaemohsak* Woodland Women, where we are reclaiming traditional knowledge and awakening our blood memory. Woodland Women has evolved in the teachings from our elders to promote healing and wellness. This group was started by incredible and resilient women 8 years ago. We recognized the need of support for our women who experienced violence and all the layers associated with that violence.

Woodland Women provide cultural advocacy and cultural care, with the guidance and love of our elders, to undo the harm that assimilation, oppression, and genocide have caused to our communities. We encourage connection as life givers. Learning where we come from, where we are at now, and where we are going. We do this in circle where we bead, we sew, we weave, and are told those oral histories that are not written in books. We learn the stories of our ancestors. We heal. As we connect and learn to heal in the present, we look back to our ancestors and we can heal them also. Through that connection we acknowledge and

⁷² [Native Wellness Institute](#)

validate all they went through to bring us here. We can look forward to the next seven generations and how we want to leave a better world, our first mother, to them. Through this connection we can heal, grow, and thrive. This is Woodland Women.

Our connection centers us and grounds us deep in our roots. This meaning brings me comfort in knowing that our sisters and brothers who have been missing and murdered are never forgotten because we will always fight for them, advocate for them, and remember them in a good way through connection.

Hope is waiting. Action is needed now. Our ancestors, our relatives have suffered enough.

As long as I am on this earth I will never stop speaking my truth to power and fighting against gender based violence. I've been sexually assaulted as a child, I survived a suicide attempt, I am a domestic and sexual violence survivor, I was taken and missing for a month in my 20's and survived, I used drugs to numb my pain. Through it all I came out stronger and overcame so much. So I will NEVER stop this fight as long as Creator sees for me. There's so many more like me out there that needs help, love, guidance, support, and justice. There's more. Thank you.

Waking Women Healing Institute

from *Naeqtum Metaemob* Kristin Welch, of the Marten Clan of the Menominee nation, founder and Executive Director of Waking Women Healing Institute:

When we think about why we do this work, we do it because too many of us are survivors of sexual violence, and have been impacted by MMIWG2. We do it because we must, we can't allow our relatives to navigate these systems alone and continually watch them be ignored. We do this so that our daughters, nieces, and mothers don't have to experience the violence that we have, and have had no justice provided to us.

We are in it, every single day the future of our nations are threatened as we continue to lose more relatives to violence and resource extraction. And this is intentional, it is intentional when we are silenced in data, it is intentional when the ability to self-determine is eroded, and it is intentional that nothing is being done. We can continue to hope that one day the very structures that were put in place to destroy us will wake up and decide to suddenly address the violations of UNDRIP, the racist and biased responses, and the compliance through their deafening silence. Or, we can realize that we, the people, are the solution; and then get to work. Work to reconnect to language, land, and our true ways of being. This is where the both our liberation of patriarchal oppressions lay, and this is where we find the tools to build a place for the 7th generation that is free of violence and strong in mind, body, and spirit.

Our organization currently works to RESTORE the Matriarchy, UPLIFT survivor voice, and IGNITE spaces of healing. We serve families of MMIWG2S and survivors of sexual violence using decolonized approaches to healing trauma and developing mind, body, spirit, and emotion across the life span. We restore traditional matriarchal roles within our organization and communities by 1) ensuring leadership and decision-making roles are primarily indigenous women led 2) connecting to land, language, and oral history for healing through our WE ARE BRAVE group 3) utilize traditional governance structures including grandmothers' council 4) regrow connection to our women's teachings. The WE ARE BRAVE group provides access to women's teachings from pre-birthing through elderhood and beyond and creates spaces of empowerment through connecting to identity, while decolonizing approaches to learning, healing, health care, birth work, and leadership development.

We also work to decolonize systems approaches to survivors of sexual violence and MMIWG2S in terms of response and prevention through UPLIFTING survivor voices in spaces of decision making. We work with our survivors first on healing, and when able, sharing of their stories to create policy and systems change. Currently we provide consultation and education to systems such as Universities, Foster Care, DV/SA shelters, and homeless shelters. The education consists of root causes and intersecting issues of MMIWG2S, honoring tribal sovereignty, on how current systems uphold racist/bias and cause harm, and solutions for change with examples of best practices.

At the center of this work are our survivors and families of MMIWG2s who provide not only lived experience examples but calls for action. Our goal for this work is to create visibility in spaces where our stories are not heard or often ignored, and empowering both survivors and community through using voice. We also have formed a MMIWG2S Care and Response team that is composed of advocates, legal experts, community organizers, healer/traditional knowledge holders, MMIWG2S family members, and trauma/body workers. Our team's responsibility is to be the example of indigenous and culturally founded responses to our relatives of MMIWG2S from first meeting through ongoing supports. We provide access to expert systems consults, advocacy, financial resources, media exposure, rally/vigil organizing, and ongoing healing as we help them seek justice for their loved ones.

Finally, we IGNITE spaces of healing through our Great Lakes collaborative work in protecting land, water, and indigenous women/girls/two spirit. Our collaborative consists of both indigenous and allied partners dedicated to land and water

protection from MN, WI, MI, and Chicago. We have participated in Water Walks and created public awareness on Line 3, Line 5, NO BACK 40 through rallies across WI. This Great Lakes collaborative also works to provide direct supports to MMIWG2S families and is focused on prevention of further violence through eliminating resource extraction. Our collaborative recently implemented the MMIW Billboards for Change campaign across MI and WI to 1) raise awareness 2) increase visibility 3) challenge calls for change. In this collaborative we are reclaiming our rights to self-determine and asserting Rights of Nature to protect relatives and creation now, and 7 generations from now.

We are reclaiming our minds, bodies, and spirit as indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit and providing choice as to how we decide to heal, tend to our beings, develop community. If we provide spaces of learning and re-connecting to indigenous identity we see healing, creation of accessible and equitable healthcare, and liberation from oppressive structures. In addition to provide spaces of healing and learning, we must work to hold accountable colonized structures, policy, and acts of destruction that threaten and impede our ability to self-determine. Our MMIWG2S Care and Response team utilizes connection to identity for healing, as well as community organizing to create visibility and pursue justice for and with our relatives. Team provides access to just responses in cases of missing and murdered relatives through advocacy, direct action, and healing work.

We must include land and water protection into our work, in fact, for our organization it's integrated in all we do. Land and water protection is our prevention work against MMIWG2S and sexual violence, and ensure our future has access to clean water and healthy lands; and so we are vigilant of Line 3, Line 5, and NOBACK 40 efforts of resource extraction here in WI. We define our solutions as reclaiming of true self without shame, fear, or judgment. This means there is a reconnection to understanding who we are, where we come from, so we can define where it is we are going. We recognize that the ability to self-determine and reclaiming of our inherent rights of sovereignty over self is a process of learning combined with love and determination. Our solutions, reclaiming matriarchy, uplifting survivor voice, and igniting places of healing are both an unlearning of colonial ways of being, and a picking up of our creation stories to strengthen and heal mind, body, and spirit. We look at this work as protecting the present and future through raising up warriors of the heart, by bringing past knowledge forward.

Acknowledgments

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to the twelve Indigenous nations of Wisconsin:

- [Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa](#)
- [Brothertown Indian Nation](#)
- [Forest County Potawatomi](#)
- [Ho-Chunk Nation](#)
- [Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa](#)
- [Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa](#)
- [Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin](#)
- [Mole Lake \(Sokaogon Chippewa Community\) Band of Lake Superior Chippewa](#)
- [Oneida Nation](#)
- [Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa](#)
- [Saint Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin](#)
- [Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians](#)

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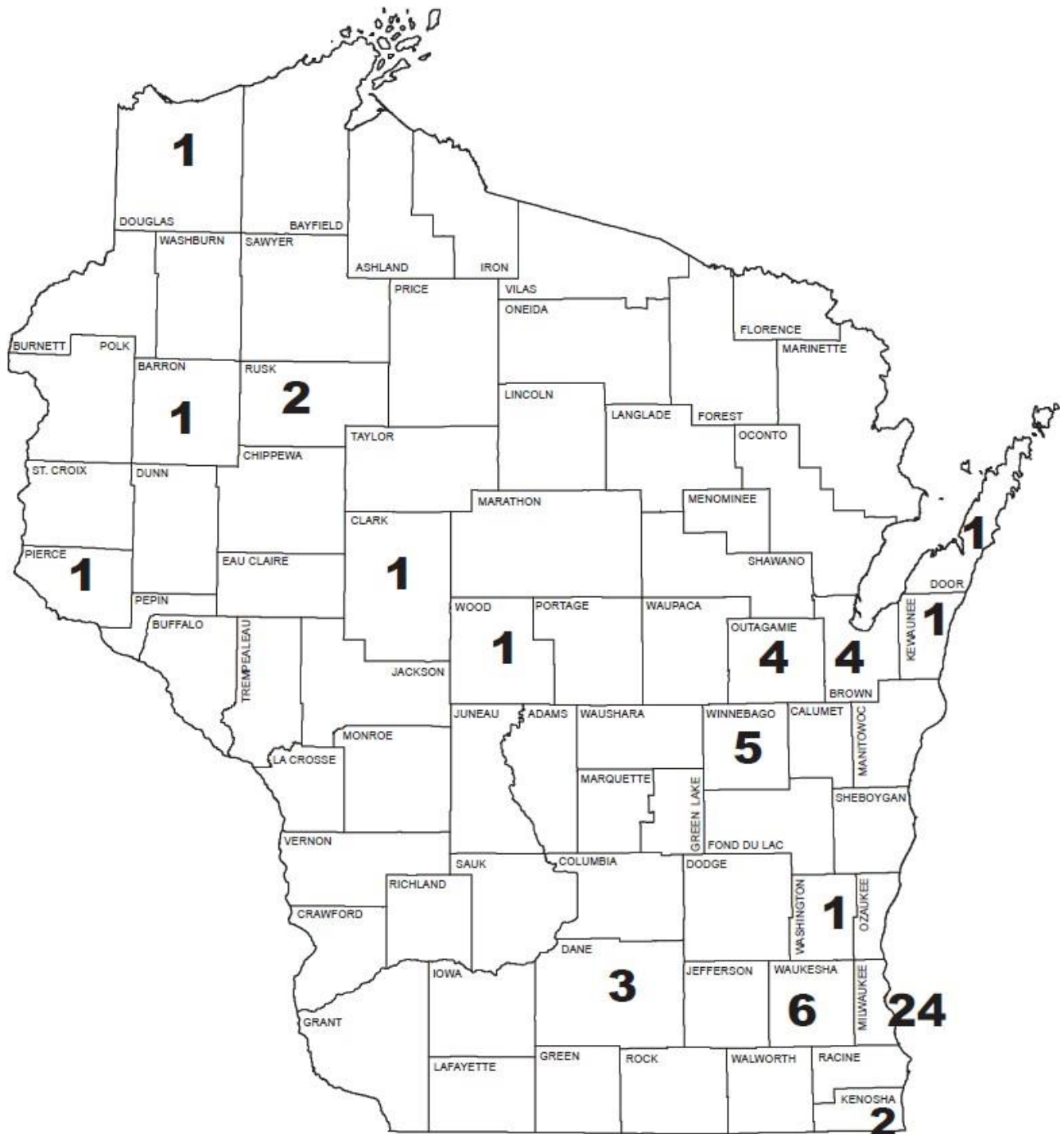
2000 to 2020 Totals

Year	Total Homicide Deaths	Homicides, Pre- 2010 Definition*	Perpetrator Suicides	Total
2020	60	53	8	68
2019	53	52	19	72
2018	39	37	8	47
2017	48	44	14	62
2016	59	54	14	73
2015	49	43	9	58
2014	37	33	6	43
2013	43	41	12	55
2012	48	47	4	52
2011	34	29	3	37
2010	45	37	7	52
2009	52	52	15	67
2008	37	37	10	47
2007	41	41	10	51
2006	28	28	8	36
2005	40	40	6	46
2004	28	28	5	33
2003	45	45	16	61
2002	38	38	11	49
2001	33	33	9	42
2000	33	33	8	41
Totals	890	845	202	1092

*see Methodology on page 6

2020 DV Homicide Map

Domestic violence homicide victims by county, excluding those involving law enforcement intervention.



About End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin

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

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www.endabusewi.org

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