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CHR PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER NAMED 2007 TWIN CITIES PRIDE FESTIVAL GRAND MARSHAL

Dallas Drake Honored for Community Service and Ground-breaking Homicide Research

For more than 20 years, Dallas Drake has been a leader in the GLBT community. His efforts have touched the lives of thousands of people, many of whom are unaware of his involvement and effort.

This year, his efforts have been recognized by the Twin Cities Pride Festival who honored him with their highest award, Grand Marshal. The Grand Marshal award is given to someone who has made a significant positive impact on the Twin Cities GLBT community. The Twin Cities Pride Festival is this nation's third largest GLBT pride event, drawing an estimated 435,000 attendees.

Drake's work has impacted HIV awareness and education, GLBT rights, equal protections for People of Color and people living in poverty, social and political change, and most recently, GLBT homicide research and prevention. Drake was honored this year specifically for his current leadership in his efforts to understand and prevent GLBT homicide through the Center for Homicide Research, an organization he co-founded.

Dr. Cheryl Maloney, Pride's Executive Director, said, "This year we are honoring Dallas Drake as Grand Marshal for his unique passion to lead the charge in addressing and solving gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender murders. We are moved by his dedication, success and commitment to make a difference in the

GLBT community as he faithfully continues to deal with difficult challenges that all too often are abandoned by others."

Dallas Drake said, "I am pleased to be selected as the 2007 Pride Grand Marshal. This is an acknowledgement, not only of my personal accomplishments and commitment to human rights, but symbolic of the work we all do to further the cause of justice and fairness. Many LGBT people, many who may never be recognized for their role and contribution, are working tirelessly to make our community better for everyone. We should reach out and thank and support each and every one of them for their work."



Dallas Drake, 2007 Twin Cities
Pride Grand Marshal and
CHR Principal Researcher

Drake, along with his partner Joe Shulka, co-founded in 1999 the Center for Homicide Research (formerly the Minnesota Gay Homicide Study), a volunteer-driven nonprofit addressing the issue of GLBT homicide. Drake has become the nation's leading expert on GLBT homicide and lethal violence. He has provided resources, education and assistance in homicide

investigations in 12 states, Canada, New Zealand and Great Britain. He has helped identify offenders, strengthen prosecution cases and secure convictions. His work has been credited with solving two gay homicides.

Cheryl Maloney continues, "Dallas is an outstanding example of an un-sung hero in our community."

CENTER HOSTS INTERNATIONAL HOMICIDE RESEARCH CONFERENCE *GLBT Homicide Research a Key Presentation*

In early June, a very distinguished group began arriving in Minneapolis for the annual meeting of the Homicide Research Working Group (HRWG). Each year, the HRWG meeting brings together some of the most well-respected and innovative professionals in the fields of homicide research, criminology, law enforcement, and violence prevention. This year's meeting was hosted by the Center for Homicide Research.

The 2007 HRWG Annual Meeting was produced in partnership with the Center for Homicide Research, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), and the University of Minnesota Department of Sociology. A pre-conference seminar included training through the BCA on several high-profile homicide cases in the Midwest from lead agency staff. An opening night reception at the University of Minnesota included a keynote speech by noted psychiatrist and criminologist, Dr. Carl Malmquist. In total, more than 25 presentations were delivered throughout the conference on topics ranging from serial homicide, female homicide offending, the portrayal of homicide and homicide offenders in the media, homicide solvability and clearance, and bias-related homicides.

One of the key presentations for the conference was made by Dallas Drake and Joe Shulka from the Center for Homicide Research. They outlined the efforts and history of the Center's groundbreaking effort to identify and analyze GLBT homicides since 1969. They also presented an overview of current projects and findings. With more than 3,000 identified GLBT homicides in the CHR dataset, this is the largest, most complete research on GLBT homicide in the world. Numerous HRWG members encouraged Drake and Shulka to share their data with other researchers and to continue this important work. The aim of the Center is to begin making this data available to additional researchers.

One of the goals of the Center is to create community experts on the issue of homicide. To that end, eight researchers and interns from the Center attended this 4-day conference. Student interns represented many of the finest schools in the Midwest.

HRWG's 200 members hail from more than 16 countries across the globe and represent criminal justice agencies; federal, state, and local government agencies; international universities and organizations; medical and health organizations, and numerous nonprofit organizations and advocacy groups. Members include the Federal Bureau of Investigations, National Institute of Justice, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

The Center for Homicide Research has been a HRWG member since 1999. 

HOMICIDE DETECTIVES AND INVESTIGATORS TRAINED *Presentation Draws Standing-Room Only Crowd*

Law enforcement professionals sat shoulder-to-shoulder and lined the walls of the conference room at a presentation made in March by CHR Principal Researcher Dallas Drake at a regional homicide conference for law enforcement and detectives. More than 80 law enforcement professionals attended Drake's four-hour training and discussion on how to identify, understand and investigate homicides involving gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender offenders and victims. This presentation is part of the Center's ongoing effort to assist and educate law enforcement and criminal justice professionals on issues related to homicides involving GLBT people.

The 13th Annual Homicide Conference was held in Green Bay, Wisconsin at the Northeast Wisconsin Technical College and drew attendees from across the United States and Canada.

"Who knew there would be this much interest?" says Steve Daniels, president of the Wisconsin Homicide Investigators Association and conference organizer. "We've had to bring in dozens of extra chairs." he added. Daniels admits though that featuring a topic such as gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender homicide in a regional conference was a gamble. Both he and

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Steve Daniels
Wisconsin Homicide
Investigators
Association

Drake did not anticipate such a large and interested turnout for the presentation. Nearly two-thirds of the conference participants attended the GLBT homicide training.

Drake's presentation and the intense interest it generated demonstrates that there is a great need and desire for credible, usable information for law enforcement professionals on the issue of GLBT violence and homicide. In addition to conference presentations such as this, Drake is also available to provide individualized training and workshops for specific agencies and to provide confidential consultations on active and cold case homicides. 

NEW PARTNERSHIP FORMED WITH MINNESOTA JUSTICE FOUNDATION

In late 2006, the Center for Homicide Research began a new collaboration with the Minnesota Justice Foundation (MJF) to place law students as interns at the Center. MJF is collaboration between Hamline University School of Law, the University of Minnesota Law School, University of St. Thomas School of Law and William Mitchell College of Law.

To learn more about interning at the Center as a law student, contact the Center at (612) 331-4820. 

INTERN PROFILE: HEATHER SCHWEIKERT

Graduation Requirement Becomes Master Internship

Heather Schweikert came to the Center in winter of 2007 as a way to complete her Bachelor's Degree in criminology at the University of Minnesota Duluth. UM-D routinely requires an intensive, 300-hour internship of students in the program. Although for Schweikert the internship started as a graduation requirement, it is now proving to be a blossoming opportunity. Having long since completed her requirement and graduated, she has now reached the level of Master Intern with the Center.



At the Research Center Schweikert started out like most interns, learning about homicide and about various minority communities. She continued by searching out homicide cases containing sometimes dramatically disturbing crime scene behaviors. Her work has been consistent with close attention to detail, both the hallmarks of a good researcher.

In early 2007, Center staff began focusing on research questions related to dismemberment homicides in an effort to answer a homicide investigator's questions on a specific case. Schweikert stepped up to volunteer on this unique project. She began serving as co-project leader and later became the project manager. Her consistency and persistence over time in sticking with this difficult topic is an outstanding example of her leadership ability. She is to be commended for her continued work with the Center as a homicide researcher. 

WORK BEGINS TO ARCHIVE CENTER'S DATABASE OF GLBT HOMICIDES

Effort Would Enable Others to Analyze Data

One of the goals of the Center for Homicide Research is to make its research and its data available to others to aid in decision-making and policy development. In recent months, the Center has begun discussing placing portions of its data on GLBT homicide at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) housed at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. ICPSR is the world's largest archive of digital social science data and is used by researchers from around the world.

The Center has been strongly encouraged by other researchers to begin to make its data available. As the largest and most complete information on GLBT homicide in the world, CHR's data is both unique and very valuable for research.

Considerable work is needed, however, before the data can be archived, including removing identifiable information such as victim and offender names. 

GLBT HOMICIDE 101

An Overview of Research Findings

One of the important aspects of the work of the Center for Homicide Research is to develop new understandings of the unique nature of GLBT homicide. As the data has evolved, some striking differences are developing between GLBT homicides and non-gay homicides.

Weapon Choice Varies Significantly

One of the most striking differences is regarding the choice of weapons involved in homicides. Among heterosexuals, the majority of homicides are committed with a firearm (65%). But among GLBT people, only 30% of the homicides are committed with a firearm. Gay men are half as likely to be shot as a heterosexual homicide victim.

Among GLBT homicide victims as a whole, knives or cutting instruments are the primary weapon. 44% of the homicides of GLBT people involved cutting instruments compared to only 19% of non-GLBT homicides. Gay men are more than twice as likely to be stabbed or cut to death in a homicide incident.

Source: FBI Supplemental Homicide Reports 1976-1997

"Typical" Gay Male Homicide

- Male victim found nude, usually in a bedroom
- No signs of forced entry
- Atypical crime scene, usually involving crime scene staging, graphic violence, or an attempt to hide the body
- High prevalence of strangulation or cutting/stabbing as means of death
- Items taken, usually ATM cards or vehicle
- On average, gay male victim is 5 years older than non-gay male homicide victims (38 v. 33 years)
- On average, offender in gay male homicide is one year younger than non-gay counterpart (29 v 30 years)

"Typical" Lesbian Homicide

- Often intimate partner homicide
- Murder-suicide frequent
- Victims shot in pairs, often "execution style"
- Victims clothed
- Bodies left outdoors
- On average, lesbian victim is 2 years younger than non-gay female homicide victims (32 v. 34 years)
- On average, offender on lesbian homicide is 2 years younger than non-lesbian counterpart (34 v 32 years)

These variations between GLBT homicides and non-gay homicides could greatly assist law enforcement in focusing investigations and identifying potential offender. These could also be used to develop prevention strategies within the GLBT community.

At this time, there are too few homicide cases involving transgender or bisexual people to determine any discernable patterns. Additional research is underway. 

FINDING NEEDLES IN HAYSTACKS

The Arduous Task to Identify GLBT Homicides

If we're lucky, we have a name – the name of a GLBT homicide victim. With a name, CHR research interns can begin the long and difficult process to locate the details of a homicide case. But starting with a name is the “easy” part.

If we're not lucky, the case file begins with something more vague, such as a newspaper article headline like “Gay Man Found Murdered” or “Foul Play Suspected in Double Homicide of Two Women.” Many times, an initial news report is all our team has to start with.

Information about homicides involving GLBT victims and offenders is not consistently identified in law enforcement information, nor is information about these cases available for research. Accurate information is critical to building new knowledge about the unique nature of GLBT homicides, and to developing effective strategies to prevent homicide and create safer communities. But this information is difficult to come by.

On average it takes between six and eight hours to completely research and code each GLBT homicide case.

To locate and access this information, CHR researchers troll through online archives, criminal justice databases, vital records, corrections information, and work the telephones to help answer the import questions of who, what, where, when and how. But their research also needs to answer more difficult questions like “What was the victim-offender relationship?” “Where there multiple offenders and how did this play out in the incident?” “Was bias involved?” “Were the victim and offender intimate partners?” “What was response from law enforcement, the courts, and the community?” “Was a reward offered and how effective was it?”

In the last eight years, CHR researchers have identified over 3,000 GLBT homicide victims in the United States. The details of these cases are coded into a searchable, research database containing more than 200 variables to describe each incident. The Center's database is the largest, most complete information on GLBT homicide in the world. 

CENTER CO-SPONSORS NATIONAL SUMMIT ON HOMICIDE PREVENTION AND INVESTIGATION

The Center for Homicide Research is partnering with the Washington DC-based Performance Institute to present the 2007 National Summit on Homicide Prevention and Investigation. The two-day summit to be held in Arlington, Virginia June 21-22 brings together criminal justice and community leaders to address the recent rise in homicide and violent crime.

INTERN PROFILE: MICHELLE MALASKA

North Dakota Homicides Become Focus of Year-long Internship

Michelle Malaska is approaching her one-year anniversary with CHR as a research intern. She started as a service-learning student from the University of Minnesota as a student enrolled in a course “Sex Crimes and Moral Panic.” Malaska was required to devote 30 hours to a nonprofit organization and chose the Center for her opportunity. Upon completion, she decided to continue on as a research intern.



Malaska is unique among current research interns as she majors in chemistry. But she minors in Sociology: Law, Crime and Deviance. This combination made her an excellent fit for conducting crime research at the Center. Malaska comes to the Center with prior experience, having interned with Dr. Karen Runyon, a forensic document examiner for the Minneapolis Police Department.

Malaska found her niche at the Center after being given the assignment to identify a series of homicide cases in North Dakota. The initial assignment became a full research project, and Malaska developed a database of over 15 years of North Dakota homicides. North Dakota's small population and relatively low homicide rate made this a manageable research project to investigate prevalence of GLBT homicides.

Malaska has learned much about homicide and about missing data. Her homicide counts were nearly double that of officially reported figures. She will be completing her final paper on this project before moving on with her education. 

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Center for Homicide Research is an independent, volunteer-driven, non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the capacity of the GLBT community, criminal justice professionals, and law enforcement to become more effective in identifying, solving and preventing gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender homicides.

Research began in 1992 and incorporated in 1999 as a nonprofit organization called the Minnesota Gay Homicide Study. In 2004, the name was changed to the Center for Homicide Research.

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