

MISSINGWOMEN INVESTIGATION REVIEW

DOUG LEFARD – DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE
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VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
Beyond the Call

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KEY FINDINGS OF REVIEW

This Summary Report is a condensed version of a much more comprehensive report (“the Review”). The Review provides a chronology of events and a critical analysis of the investigation into the then unexplained disappearances of numerous sex trade workers, the majority of whom were associated with the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

We now know that many of the Missing Women fell prey to a serial killer. It should be noted at the outset that while it is clear today who the serial killer was, that is with the benefit of hindsight. Even when a fully functioning multi-jurisdictional team of highly competent and experienced investigators was assembled and had the capacity to review all available information, it still didn’t identify Pickton as a priority suspect and the case broke because of serendipitous circumstances. As well, two other serial murder cases in BC remain unresolved, despite extraordinary investigative efforts; clearly the challenges of a serial killer investigation are immense.

The disappearances of the Missing Women began in the mid-1990s and ended when Robert Pickton was arrested in February 2002. The Review examines the general failures occurring in the Vancouver Police Department investigation, and also the specific failures occurring in the Coquitlam RCMP investigation after they received information and evidence in 1998 and 1999 that directly linked Pickton to homicides of sex trade workers. The Review concludes with recommendations that, if implemented, would correct problems and minimize the probability of such problems from occurring again. Some of these deficiencies have been corrected since they were first identified in 2004, but there are others beyond the control of the VPD that have not been satisfactorily addressed.

The Review determined the following:

1. The VPD should have recognized earlier that there was a serial killer at work and responded appropriately, but the investigation was plagued by a failure at the VPD’s management level to recognize what it was faced with.
2. When the VPD did respond with an investigative unit targeted at investigating the Missing Women as potential serial murders, the investigative team suffered from a lack of resources, poor continuity of staffing, multi-jurisdictional challenges, a lack of training, and a lack of leadership, among other challenges.
3. There was compelling information received and developed by the VPD and the RCMP from August 1998 to late 1999 suggesting that Pickton was the likely killer, and it was sufficient to justify a sustained and intensive investigation. The VPD received the first information about Pickton in July and August 1998, and also received extraordinary information from an unrelated informant in 1999. The information suggested that Downtown Eastside sex trade workers were willingly visiting the Pickton property in Coquitlam and some were being murdered there.
4. The VPD passed on ALL information about Pickton to the RCMP when it received it, because the RCMP had jurisdiction over the investigation of information pertaining to crimes occurring in Coquitlam.

5. The RCMP accepted responsibility for investigating the Pickton information and led an investigation in Coquitlam. This investigation was intensely pursued until mid-1999, but was thereafter essentially abandoned by the RCMP, although the RCMP continued to explicitly assert authority over the investigation. RCMP management appears to have not understood the significance of the evidence they had in 1999 pointing to Pickton, and did not ensure it was collated in such a way as to allow a proper analysis.
6. Notwithstanding the many deficiencies in the VPD investigation, they did not cause the failure of the investigation into Pickton because the RCMP had responsibility for that investigation while the VPD focused on other investigative avenues. If the VPD investigation had been better managed, however, the VPD could have brought more pressure to bear on the RCMP to pursue the Pickton investigation more vigorously.
7. There have been significant improvements in the VPD as a result of the lessons learned from the Missing Women investigation, including better training, analysis, resources, and leadership. There have also been significant improvements in the response to multi-jurisdictional crimes by the VPD, the RCMP, and other police agencies in BC, but other improvements are needed.
8. Had there been a regional police force in the Lower Mainland at the time of the Pickton investigation, the problems created by the multiple policing jurisdictions would have been significantly reduced and a better outcome likely would have resulted – there would have only been one set of organizational priorities.¹

¹ It is notable that, notwithstanding opposition to a regional force, the RCMP in the Lower Mainland are now organized on a regional basis, with an Assistant Commissioner as the “Chief” of all the Lower Mainland RCMP detachments and their Officers in Charge reporting to him. But because of the mix of RCMP and independent police services in the Lower Mainland, there is no one in charge and accountable overall.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PART I: THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION 1997 TO FEBRUARY 2002

INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Eastside of Vancouver is reportedly the poorest neighborhood in Canada, and is home to a highly-marginalized population plagued by substance abuse. “Survival” sex trade workers are among its most vulnerable residents, and live under constant threat of violence and disease.

In 1997, sex trade workers began to go missing at a rate far higher than the low historical patterns. In 1998, Detective Constable Lori Shenher was assigned to find out what had happened to these “Missing Women”, with the expectation that they could be located, as had happened in the past. Detective Constable Shenher made extraordinary efforts to find the Missing Women, but was unsuccessful, and the circumstances suggested a serial killer was responsible. An investigative team was created in 1999, but without bodies, witnesses, or other evidence, it faced immense challenges. It nevertheless identified Pickton as a prime suspect, but that investigation and others were frustrated by the multi-jurisdictional aspect of the investigation, and other organizational and operational obstacles, which are the subject of analysis in Part II of this Review.

1997/1998

In February 1997, a First Nations group provided to police a list of 55 women from the Downtown Eastside alleged to be missing or murdered. When police records were consulted, the list swelled to 71. Constable Dave Dickson, well known in the Downtown Eastside, was loaned to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit to investigate this list. Within weeks, he was able to account for all but two of the 71 women.

But also in early 1997, other sex trade workers began to be reported missing from the Downtown Eastside who could not be found. By the end of the year, nine such women had been reported missing, and this pattern continued into 1998. When one young sex trade worker, Sarah de Vries, went missing in April 1998, her friend and former client Wayne Leng became a vocal advocate for an investigation and a reward, as did Sarah’s sister, Maggie de Vries.

The lack of a systemized method for determining anomalous patterns of missing person reports delayed recognition of the size of the problem, but by early 1998, it was recognized in both the Downtown Eastside community and the VPD that something was amiss. As a result, in July 1998, Detective Constable Lori Shenher was added to the VPD’s Missing Persons Unit to focus on finding the Missing Women. Her supervisor was Sergeant Geramy Field of the Homicide Unit.

In July and August 1998, two tips were provided to the VPD with second-hand information suggesting Robert “Willy” Pickton was responsible for killing Sarah de Vries at his Coquitlam pig farm, and might be responsible for the rest of the Missing Women. William Hiscox was identified as the source of the tips, and he also provided similar information to Wayne Leng.

At around the same time, Inspector Gary Greer, who was in charge of the Downtown Eastside, and Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo, the VPD’s “geographic profiler,” formed a “Working Group” to examine the Missing Women issue and determine if a serial killer might be at work.

On August 18th, 1998, Detective Constable Shenher met with Corporal Mike Connor of the Coquitlam RCMP, a highly experienced investigator who

had charged Pickton in 1997 with an almost fatal knife assault at his pig farm on [Anderson](#), a sex trade worker from the Downtown Eastside (a charge that was eventually stayed). Since the information from Hiscox related to an alleged crime in the Coquitlam RCMP's jurisdiction, Corporal Connor took responsibility for initiating an investigation into the new Pickton information. Detective Constable Shenher interviewed Wayne Leng and [Anderson](#), both of whom she found credible.

In late August 1998, Constable Dickson submitted to his supervising officers a new list of 35 women missing from the Downtown Eastside that he had started creating while investigating the 1997 list of 71.

By the end of August 1998, Detective Constable Shenher submitted an overview of her investigation to date in which she advised that the Missing Women met a similar profile and most had previously not been out of contact with family and others for more than brief periods. She concluded that their disappearances were suspicious, and that "these cases are related and should be treated as such."

On September 2nd, 1998, Detective Constable Shenher made contact with Hiscox who provided considerable information about Pickton, including that he had claimed he could dispose of a body by putting it through a grinder and feeding the remains to his pigs. Hiscox had heard about the [Anderson](#) incident, and had also heard that Pickton had women's identification and belongings on his property.

In September, the "Working Group" met twice. Detective Constable Shenher and Sergeant Field attended the second and larger meeting. The Working Group's plan, developed by Detective

Inspector Rossmo, was to ensure there was broad representation in the group from a variety of policing disciplines, and to develop a list of potential victims, conduct linkage analysis, investigate any identified murder series, and examine crime prevention initiatives. At the second meeting of the Working Group, the Major Crimes Section Inspector strenuously disagreed with its approach. It was his view that the investigation should be kept "in house" in the Major Crime Section. In addition to the professional difference of opinion, there were personality conflicts involved. As a result, the Working Group was disbanded, and a proposed press release Detective Inspector Rossmo had prepared, which set out that the Working Group would "determine if a serial murderer is preying upon people in the Downtown Eastside...", was never released.

On September 16th, 1998, after a number of attempts to find him, Detective Constable Shenher found Hiscox ——————, where he was being treated for depression, and interviewed him extensively. Detective Constable Shenher briefed RCMP

Corporal Connor on the results of this interview, and Corporal Connor conducted further investigation to corroborate the information.

On September 24th, 1998, Corporal Connor requested surveillance of Pickton from the RCMP's "Special 'O'" team, but several days of surveillance revealed nothing suspicious.

On October 15th, 1998, Detective Constable Shenher introduced Hiscox to Corporal Connor, who interviewed him in detail. In summary, Hiscox stated a woman friend of Pickton's named [Quinn](#) had told Hiscox that she had seen women's identification and bloody clothing in Pickton's trailer, that Pickton

had offered to dispose of a body for her if needed, that she thought it was possible Pickton was a serial killer, and that Pickton had asked some friends to “finish off” Anderson for him. Hiscox advised, however, that Quinn was extremely anti-police and wouldn’t be cooperative. Hiscox’s information, while of great interest to the investigation, was hearsay and was considered not to be sufficient to support a search warrant for Pickton’s property.

On November 4th, 1998, Corporal Connor requested aerial surveillance of the Pickton property from RCMP Air Services. He also noted that Staff Sergeant Brock Giles from the VPD Major Crime Section had offered to provide financial assistance for an undercover operation and witness protection to advance the RCMP’s Pickton investigation, and had also suggested there be a joint submission for assistance to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit.

On November 5th, 1998, Constable Dickson submitted another memo expressing his concern about the growing list of women missing from the Downtown Eastside, noting that they could usually be expected to reappear within a few weeks unless foul play was involved.

Throughout the fall of 1998, Detective Constable Shenher, in addition to providing Corporal Connor any information she received about Pickton, worked on a variety of other investigative strategies to find the Missing Women. By December, she learned that three Downtown Eastside sex trade workers named Pipe, Olajide and Younker had been found murdered in 1995 in the Agassiz/Mission area. She also learned that the RCMP considered the three cases to be linked, and that the RCMP’s prime suspect was in custody on another matter. Those circumstances became a matter of great interest to the Missing Women investigation. In December, Detective

Constable Shenher made contact with Hiscox again, but he had no new information.

In 1998, 13 women were reported missing from the Downtown Eastside who could not be found.

1999

On February 9th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher gave a presentation on her investigation at the Carnegie Centre. Detective Inspector Rossmo was present and noted the number of Missing Women. He contacted Deputy Chief Constable Brian McGuinness expressing his concerns about the numbers, and subsequently provided a graph showing how the pattern had changed since 1997.

On February 10th, 1999, VPD investigators met with Corporal Connor and other RCMP members regarding Pickton. Corporal Connor advised that the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit was not interested in taking on the investigation because of a lack of information. It was agreed that RCMP and VPD investigators would show Pickton’s photograph to Downtown Eastside sex trade workers with the hope of linking him to the area. Because of a higher priority case, the Coquitlam RCMP did not assist, but VPD investigators showed Pickton’s photograph to approximately 130 sex trade workers. None admitted to knowing him, likely because he was seen as a “good” date who supplied money and drugs.

Also in February 1999, the VPD’s Detective Inspector Rossmo and Inspector Biddlecombe met with Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness. Inspector Biddlecombe suggested that given sufficient time, the Missing Women could be located, because he

suspected there would historically be a lag time between sex trade workers going missing and being found. Detective Inspector Rossmo conducted further statistical analysis which showed that after two weeks, 90% of reported missing persons are found, and after 22 weeks, 99%. He predicted that of the 28 women from the Downtown Eastside then missing, only two would be found.

On February 18th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher provided a report to Chief Constable Chambers summarizing her investigation to date. In comments to the media in this period, the VPD downplayed the likelihood of a serial killer.

In March 1999, Corporal Connor and Detective Constable Shenher received information that Pickton had visited the New Westminster “stroll.” Also in March, Detective Constable Shenher found one of the Missing Women, Ada Prevost, alive in ———. She had last been seen in 1997 and had been reported missing in 1998. The discovery of Ms. Prevost provided some hope that others on the Missing Women list might have simply left their lives of prostitution and moved elsewhere.

By the end of March 1999, Maggie de Vries and others were advocating for a police task force dedicated to the investigation and a reward for information about the Missing Women. The VPD’s position was that a reward would be counterproductive and that a task force was not yet justified. The Attorney General, Ujjal Dosanjh, offered to contribute to a reward if so requested by the VPD, and in April was briefed on the investigation by the VPD. The RCMP was represented at the meeting by Superintendent Gary Bass.

In April 1999, Constable Dickson was assigned to assist with the Missing Women investigation. In Coquitlam, Corporal Connor arranged a multi-jurisdictional meeting to discuss investigative strategies regarding Pickton. Meanwhile, public pressure continued to build for the creation of a task force and the posting of a reward, and these were resisted by both the VPD and Vancouver’s then-mayor, Philip Owen.

By the April 28th, 1999 Police Board meeting, Mayor Owen had changed his mind about a reward. Maggie de Vries was present at the meeting and was very complimentary of the efforts of Detective Constable Shenher and her partner, but pressed the Board to approve a reward and create a task force. The Board approved a \$100,000 reward, despite the VPD’s concerns that a reward would generate a great many bogus tips and that because there was no evidence against which to filter tips, already scarce resources would be wasted on fruitless investigations (a position not supported privately by Detective Constable Shenher). A task force was not approved.

In May 1999, Corporal Connor continued to pursue the Pickton investigation. He arranged for aerial photographs to be taken in order to look for burial sites on the Pickton property, and for surveillance by Special ‘O’. After several days, the surveillance was discontinued for lack of results. Corporal Connor kept Detective Constable Shenher apprised of his investigation. Meanwhile, in the Downtown Eastside, the first memorial service for the Missing Women was held.

Also in May 1999, Detective Constable Shenher submitted reports recommending a “suspect-focused” investigative team be created, and set out the significant investigative challenges that needed to be met. Sergeant Field wrote a supportive covering

report advising that victim-based enquiries had been exhausted, that there was a strong possibility the Missing Women were the victims of one or more predators, and that the failure to investigate “could result in ... additional disappearances.” In a memo to Acting Deputy Chief Constable Doern, Inspector Biddlecombe supported the creation of an investigative team.

On May 19th, 1999, Sergeant Field hosted a brainstorming session, and shortly after, an investigative team, the “Missing Women Review Team” (MWRT), was created. Detective Constable Shenher was assigned full-time, as were Detective Ron Lepine and Detective Constable Mark Chernoff from the Homicide Squad; a clerical assistant, Gray; as well as a “part-time” analyst, Detective Constable Carl Vinje; who would assist depending on his availability. Sergeant Field was assigned as the MWRT supervisor, but was not relieved of her full-time responsibilities as a Homicide Squad supervisor. Detective Inspector Rossmo was named as a “resource.”

The creation of the MWRT was a significant event in that the investigation was no longer a missing persons investigation with a limited investigative capacity. However, the MWRT was not a full-fledged homicide investigative team either. It was something in between – a policing unit that was investigating suspects but was also conducting a missing persons investigation. The hybrid nature of the MWRT indicates that in May 1999, VPD management suspected it was faced with a significant problem, but for a variety of reasons, was not yet able to acknowledge the problem as a matter of serial crime.

From the investigators’ point of view, however, the MWRT was perceived as a homicide investigation, although one with limited resources and the challenge of a case where there were no bodies and no evidence apart from the unexplained disappearance of a large number of women with a similar profile.

On May 27th, 1999, Detective Inspector Rossmo submitted an analysis of the Missing Women information. He concluded that the increase in reports of missing sex trade workers was statistically significant and that if the Missing Women had met with foul play, the fact that no bodies had been found made multiple killers working independently unlikely. The most likely explanation, concluded Detective Inspector Rossmo, was a serial killer. The analysis was welcomed by Detective Constable Shenher and others in the MWRT who already believed in this theory, but their opinion was not shared by key VPD management staff, who did not consider Detective Inspector Rossmo’s report compelling.

In June 1999, Pickton was identified as the suspect in a threatening incident against a New Westminster sex trade worker, and this information was relayed to Corporal Connor. Although the VPD continued to minimize publicly the likelihood of a serial killer, in the MWRT the investigators vigorously pursued a variety of investigative strategies, including consulting with other agencies that had handled serial killing cases. The RCMP’s Behavioural Science Group provided an analysis of the Missing Women case that was based on the theory that a predator was responsible, and made investigative suggestions.

The resources of the MWRT had quickly proved to be inadequate. Sergeant Field documented the “absolutely essential” need for a full-time analyst, but was unsuccessful in obtaining one. Detective Constable Shenher submitted a report detailing the need for six more investigators, and Detective Constables Cruz, James and Alex Clarke were soon added to the team.

By this time Sergeant Field had recognized that the Missing Women case was likely multi-jurisdictional since the bodies of the victims of serial killers were historically found in rural areas, not urban ones. As a result, beginning in June 1999, she began to vigorously advocate for a Joint Forces Operation (JFO) with the RCMP, but was unsuccessful for a considerable period of time.

On June 24th, 1999, MWRT investigators met with numerous family members of the Missing Women to brief them on the case and to discuss obtaining familial DNA to assist in identifying any remains that might be discovered.

In mid-July 1999, a new informant, Thomas, was referred to the VPD and provided striking information about Pickton to Detective Constable Chernoff. Thomas advised that a woman named Lynn Ellingsen had lived with Pickton and had told Thomas she had assisted Pickton in picking up a sex trade worker and bringing her back to his property. Further, she said she had seen Pickton hang the woman by the neck in his barn, cut strips of flesh off her legs, and murder her. Thomas provided considerable other information, including that Pickton had told him personally that he could dispose of a body “without a trace” if needed. Thomas believed Pickton was responsible for the Missing Women. Upon learning of this information, Detective Lepine immediately abandoned his summer holiday in order to investigate the lead with Detective Constable Chernoff.

On July 27th, 1999, after months of work on a reward poster between City of Vancouver lawyers, provincial government staff, and investigators to finalize the information to be included (e.g., which women would be listed, and wording that would not put women still alive at risk), the VPD released its Missing Women reward poster. It contained

photos of 31 women who had gone missing from the Downtown Eastside since 1978. The offering of a major reward when no crime had been identified was unprecedented.

On July 29th, 1999, the MWRT met to discuss the progress of the investigation, and Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff then went to Coquitlam to meet with the RCMP to discuss the Thomas information. It was agreed that the Coquitlam RCMP would be in charge of the Pickton investigation, but that Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff would continue to handle Thomas. Various investigative strategies for Pickton were discussed.

On July 30th, 1999, Corporal Connor initiated surveillance of Pickton, in what was to be the beginning of a period of intense investigation. The same day, Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff met with Thomas for their third debrief. Thomas provided additional information about Pickton, and stated he had observed handcuffs in his bed and a “special” freezer in his barn, from which Thomas was served strange meat that he came to believe was human. Thomas reiterated that he was told by Ellingsen that she assisted in bringing sex trade workers back to Pickton’s property and had seen one of the women hanging from a meat hook in Pickton’s barn while Pickton cut strips from her legs. Thomas also said that Ellingsen had seen personal property of sex trade workers in Pickton’s trailer.

On July 31st, 1999, the Missing Women case was featured on the “America’s Most Wanted” television show. No tips of value resulted.

On August 3rd and 4th, 1999, Corporal Connor held meetings on the Pickton investigation in Coquitlam to discuss investigative strategies, and in the

afternoon of August 4th he met with Crown counsel to discuss the possibility of obtaining a warrant for video surveillance of Pickton.

The same day, Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff conducted another debrief of Thomas, who advised them that Ellingsen had told another individual named Stevens the same story of seeing the sex trade worker hanging in the barn. Stevens had also told Thomas that Ellingsen was extorting Pickton by threatening to go to police with her information. Thomas agreed to be an “agent” for police to further the investigation.

On August 5th, 1999, the investigators met again in Coquitlam and tasks were assigned to advance the investigation. It was decided that they would try to make Thomas an agent, interview other witnesses, and conduct physical and electronic surveillance of Pickton. Later that day, Thomas was brought in for a formal videotaped interview, but he was in poor condition due to lack of sleep and substance abuse, and the interview was problematic.

On August 6th, 1999, another witness, Wood, came forward to report that Ellingsen had also told her in June 1999 of witnessing the murder in the barn and seeing body parts in Pickton’s freezer, and that Ellingsen believed Pickton was a serial killer. Plans were made to interview Ellingsen and re-interview Thomas.

On August 10th, 1999, Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff conducted a two-hour taped interview of Thomas in which he provided information consistent with his debriefs, and also advised that Stevens believed that Pickton was transporting the remains of his victims to a recycling plant. Also on August 10th, two senior

Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit members, who had been brought in to assist the Coquitlam RCMP’s investigation, conducted an interview of Ellingsen. She denied ever telling anyone she had witnessed a murder in Pickton’s barn and claimed she was talking about seeing a pig butchered.

The Ellingsen interview created a conflict among the investigators, with Corporal Connor and the VPD investigators believing Thomas’s information, and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit investigators believing Ellingsen’s denial that she had witnessed a murder (notwithstanding that her denials were utterly lacking in credibility – she did not simply deny seeing the body, but denied telling anyone the story of seeing the body, and this flew in the face of direct evidence from three witnesses).

On August 11th, 1999, the Pickton investigators met again in Coquitlam to review the case, and the next day, Corporal Connor interviewed both Stevens and Quinn (who was Hiscox’s source of information). Stevens reported that Ellingsen had claimed to have been involved in the murder of a sex trade worker, while Quinn denied all knowledge and claimed Pickton was “gentle.”

The investigators tried to support the evidence they had. Corporal Connor continued to attempt to corroborate the information about Pickton, and Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff continued working with Thomas to obtain more information.

On August 24th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff contacted the Coquitlam RCMP for an update on their progress regarding Pickton, and learned Corporal Connor had been promoted and transferred out of the Pickton investigation. He was replaced on the file by Coquitlam RCMP Constable York.

On August 25th, 1999, Ellingsen was re-interviewed by Constable York and Corporal Walters of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit. The interview lasted 12 minutes. Ellingsen continued to deny knowledge of a murder, but agreed to take a polygraph. On August 31st, the day it was scheduled, Ellingsen changed her mind.

The Coquitlam RCMP made some efforts to locate and interview Pickton, and committed to pursuing the Pickton investigation, but with the transfer of Corporal Connor, who was the driving force in the investigation, and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit's conclusion that Thomas was not credible, the investigation was effectively derailed. Incredibly frustrated with the turn that the RCMP-led investigation had taken, and their inability to change its course, Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff returned to the MWRT to pursue other investigative avenues. Their involvement in the MWRT soon evolved into a part-time assignment, as increasing demands of the Homicide Squad took priority.

While Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff were engaged in the Pickton investigation, the rest of the MWRT had been pursuing other suspects and leads, including aggressively investigating a sex offender named McCartney. McCartney would eventually be charged with assaults against sex trade workers, but the investigators' efforts didn't further the Missing Women investigation.

On September 2nd, 1999, Detective Constable Clarke completed a check of thousands of indigent burial records but was unsuccessful at finding any of the Missing Women.

On September 17th, 1999, after extensive investigation, the MWRT confirmed one of the Missing Women, Linda Coombes, had died of an overdose.

On September 19th, 1999, the MWRT met to review the investigation and the status of 480 tips they had received. Sergeant Field noted some of the problems in the Coquitlam RCMP investigation of Pickton and that Constable York had agreed to submit a proposal for an undercover operation targeting Pickton.

On September 22nd, 1999, RCMP Constable York made contact with Pickton to arrange an interview, but was persuaded to wait for rainy weather when he had less work. No further substantive investigation into Pickton would occur until January 2000.

On October 7th, 1999, Inspector Biddlecombe retired and was replaced by Acting Inspector Matthews.

On October 22nd, 1999, Sergeant Field submitted a comprehensive summary of the investigation to date. She expressed concerns about the lack of full-time staff and noted that since January 1999, new women who had been reported missing had all been found quickly. She further noted that 537 tips had been assigned for follow-up and they were investigating 13 suspects (with Pickton being number one), but that there was "no end to the number of strange violent men..." that might be responsible for the Missing Women. She advised that the MWRT's greatest challenge was the time delay between the women being reported missing and the time they were last seen. She also noted that the Coquitlam RCMP was still investigating Pickton. Recognizing that her own responsibilities running a homicide squad compromised her ability to supervise the MWRT, Sergeant Field recommended a full-time Sergeant for the MWRT, but this was not approved.

In November 1999, the VPD's media liaison, Constable Anne Drennan, acknowledged publicly that there could be a serial killer.

In late November, one of the MWRT's suspects, McCartney, on whom Detective Constables Cruz and James had focused almost exclusively, was by DNA testing eliminated as a suspect in the Agassiz/Mission murders, which the MWRT believed were linked to the Missing Women case. By early December 1999, another convicted sex offender, who had been the RCMP's prime suspect in the Agassiz/Mission murders (and therefore a potential suspect for the Missing Women), was by DNA testing also eliminated as a suspect in the same murders.

On December 9th, 1999, Sergeant Field submitted another update on the investigation to her supervising officers, advising that Pickton was still being investigated by the Coquitlam RCMP, but was "not a priority for them...". She later noted that Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff had essentially gone back to Homicide, Detective Constables Cruz and James remained focused on McCartney, and that based on her conversations with RCMP profilers about serial killer investigations, her "whole focus was on getting the RCMP on board." That day, Detective Constable Shenher's request for a full-time MWRT sergeant was denied by Acting Inspector Matthews.

On December 14th, 1999, sex trade worker Wendy Crawford was reported missing. She was the first woman reported missing from the Downtown Eastside since January 1999 who could not be accounted for.

On December 15th, 1999, the MWRT located two more of the Missing Women, — and —, both of whom were alive and living under new names in Ontario.

On December 29th, 1999, Constable York recorded in her notes that the Coquitlam RCMP Pickton file had been inactive because of other priorities.

2000

On January 10th, 2000, Sergeant Field submitted a status report to Acting Inspector Matthews citing the problems created by the lack of an MWRT analyst, highlighting the challenges of searching medical records, advising that no new women had been reported missing since January of 1999 who weren't accounted for (not yet being aware of the missing person report for Wendy Crawford), setting out various investigative strategies, and summarizing staffing challenges.

On January 13th, 2000, Sergeant Field again met with RCMP profilers for assistance with the Missing Women case. At the meeting, Sergeant Field discussed the status of the RCMP's investigation of Pickton, proposed a BC-wide review of unsolved sex trade worker homicides, and again recommended a Joint Forces Operation with the RCMP.

On January 19th, 2000, RCMP Constables York and Fox interviewed Pickton. They allowed a woman friend of Pickton's to be present as well. The interview was poorly conducted and was generally unproductive. Pickton denied killing sex trade workers, but gave an evasive answer as to whether DNA from any of the Missing Women might be found on his property. Unfortunately, the constables did not ask follow-up questions on the subject. The only potentially useful result from the interview was that Pickton consented to a search of his property, but this offer was not followed up on by the RCMP.

By February 2000, the RCMP had completed a file review of the Pickton case, and a “game plan” was developed to advance the investigation. Some of the recommendations were initiated, but then abandoned because of other priorities.

On February 10th, 2000, MWRT members met with RCMP profilers to discuss strategies to solve the Agassiz/Mission murders, still believing they might be linked to some of the Missing Women. Detective Constable Shenher reported that the profilers were planning to submit a report to their superiors recommending the Pickton file be re-opened and that a Joint Forces Operation (“JFO”) be created.

Meanwhile, the MWRT had acquired familial DNA for 22 of the 27 Missing Women, was still searching medical records, was following-up a variety of tips (some quite bizarre), and was attempting to identify high risk offenders whose custody status might match the pattern of women being reported missing. The investigators were frustrated by the large pool of potential suspects and the lack of information with which to eliminate them. All the while, the investigation and its resources were continuing to deteriorate, and Sergeant Field’s continued efforts to convince the RCMP to create a JFO had not been successful.

In March 2000 another woman, Jennifer Furminger, was reported missing from the Downtown Eastside, having last been seen in December 1999.

On April 4th, 2000, Deputy Chief Constable John Unger took over command of the Investigation Division after Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness retired.

On April 10th, 2000, Sergeant Field advised the Police Board that Detective Constable Clarke had left the MWRT and returned to her former duties, as had Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff. At this point, Sergeant Field felt she could best serve the Missing Women investigation by pursuing a JFO rather than fighting what she believed was a steep uphill battle to keep or acquire additional resources for the MWRT. The Board approved a VPD recommendation to renew the Missing Women reward.

Later in April 2000, Detective Constables Cruz and James showed suspect photographs to sex trade workers and several identified Pickton as having visited the Downtown Eastside, which would have been important information for the investigation. The investigators unfortunately did not share this information with anyone else.

On April 14th, 2000, RCMP Air Services obtained aerial photos of the Pickton property for Constable York.

On April —, 2000, Detective Constables James and Cruz arrested McCartney in —, on a warrant pursuant to their investigation into sexual assaults on sex trade workers in Vancouver (which later resulted in multiple convictions). Although there was no credible evidence that McCartney was responsible for the Missing Women, Detective Constables Cruz and James were convinced that McCartney was the killer and pursued him to the exclusion of other suspects. Their conduct during their investigation, including a badly flawed interview of McCartney, and their performance in the MWRT, resulted in a management review. The following month Detective Constables James and Cruz were released from the MWRT but were not replaced. This deteriorated the MWRT’s investigative capacity once again.

On May 9th, 2000, Sergeant Field advised Inspector Gord Spencer, who had replaced Acting Inspector Matthews the previous month, that she was making progress with having the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit or an RCMP task force take over the Missing Women investigation. She believed the RCMP had now conceded the Missing Women were likely to have been murdered in an RCMP jurisdiction.

On May 10th, 2000, Detective Constable Shenher submitted a status report to Sergeant Field advising that if the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit could help, it should focus on three suspects, naming Pickton as number one.

On May 15th, 2000, Constable York noted she was still working on the Pickton file and asked her supervisor for a file extension (i.e., additional time to conduct more investigation).

In July 2000, the MWRT's database, "SIUSS," continued to create frustration, as it had throughout the investigation. Little progress was being made in the investigation generally, and Detective Constable Shenher, burned out by the investigation, requested a transfer.

On August 10th, 2000, VPD Inspector Spencer made a formal request to the RCMP that it review the VPD's complete investigation, which by this time included follow-up on approximately 1,200 tips, investigation of numerous suspects, and extensive records searches. Because of problems with data management and transfer, the file transfer to the RCMP was delayed until October.

To benefit from another police department's experience in investigating serial murder, in early October 2000, Detective Constable Shenher attended a presentation in Spokane regarding the investigation into serial killer Robert Lee Yates. That month she and other VPD members also searched several areas in the Fraser Valley pursuant to tips about a violent sex offender.

In late October 2000, Detective Constable Shenher appeared on a talk show and openly stated, as she had in the past, that she was certain the Missing Women were victims of foul play. Around the same time, she contacted family members of the Missing Women to tell them she would soon be leaving the investigation.

In November 2000, Sergeant Field presented the Missing Women case to a seminar attended by numerous serious crime investigators from around BC. The consensus of the group was that a serial killer was responsible, the case was probably linked to the Agassiz/Mission murders, and a VPD/RCMP JFO was the only way to properly investigate the case. Sergeant Field also learned that there were numerous unsolved homicides of women along the north/south highway corridors in BC.

On November 21st, 2000, Inspector Spencer met with Staff Sergeant Doug Henderson of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit and they agreed a JFO led by the RCMP's Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit was required.

On November 21st, 2000, Constable York requested that Pickton's DNA (which was on file from the investigation into the attempted murder of Anderson) be compared to the suspect DNA from the Agassiz/Mission murders. The DNA did not match and Pickton was eliminated as a suspect in those murders. After that, there were no more entries made in the file notes on the Coquitlam RCMP's investigation into Pickton.

In December 2000, Detective Constable Shenher was finally transferred from Missing Persons, bitter and discouraged about how the Missing Women investigation had gone. Before she left, she submitted a detailed report summarizing the Missing Women investigation, including the challenges it faced, and her recommendation that future investigators focus on suspects and finding the Missing Women's bodies.

Also in December 2000, two more women, Dawn Crey and Deborah Jones, were reported missing from the Downtown Eastside, both of whom had been seen recently. This marked the beginning of another alarming series of reports of women going missing from the Downtown Eastside.

On December 12th, 2000, Sergeant Field met with then-Sergeant Don Adam of the RCMP to discuss the creation of a JFO. They agreed that the investigators needed to identify all potential victims, prioritize suspects, and determine investigative strategies.

2001

On January 17th and 31st, 2001, the newly formed JFO, named Project Evenhanded, held meetings. Sergeant Field attended the meetings and summarized the VPD investigation and the challenges it faced. RCMP analysts explained that they had determined there were 52 unsolved sex trade worker homicides in BC and 31 unsolved "hitchhiker" murders, both numbers far higher than those in neighboring Alberta. It was agreed that one or more serial killers were responsible for the Missing Women and were adept at disposing of bodies. Investigative approaches were debated and it was determined that the first step for the investigation was to review historical crimes against sex trade workers for the

presence of evidence that could now be analyzed for DNA, and to compare any resulting DNA profiles against potential suspects. In addition, there was agreement that the Agassiz/Mission cases, where suspect DNA was present, were likely connected to the Missing Women. This view, unfortunately, made Pickton a suspect of less interest since his DNA did not match the suspect DNA from those murders.

In February 2001, the VPD's Detective Constable Alex Clarke, Detective Trish Keen, and Constable Paul Verral, a forensic identification expert, were assigned to assist the JFO by reviewing historical offences against hitchhikers and sex trade workers in BC. Detectives Jim McKnight and Phil Little from VPD Homicide were assigned to the JFO as investigators. Several meetings occurred to discuss JFO logistics and methods to develop a suspect list and obtain suspect DNA to compare against DNA evidence located in the historical case review.

In March 2001, development of the JFO's infrastructure continued and the RCMP secured office space in Surrey. Sergeant Adam noted in a memo that the VPD had assigned two full-time investigators but the RCMP had not yet done so.

In April 2001, development of the JFO's infrastructure continued, including selection of an investigative database to replace SIUSS. At this point, the historical review of offences against sex trade workers was well underway. The JFO was advised by the VPD Missing Persons Unit that, despite extensive efforts to find them, sex trade workers Dawn Crey, Deborah Jones and Brenda Wolfe, who had recently been reported missing, could not be located, as well as another woman meeting the profile, Georgina Papin, who was reported missing to the Surrey RCMP.

In May 2001, Sergeant Field briefed VPD Management on the investigation, advising that a serial killer was likely responsible for the Missing Women. The Police Board approved the VPD's recommendation that the \$100,000 reward be renewed and, by the end of the month, a Memorandum of Understanding had been developed between the VPD and the RCMP setting out the goals of the investigation and resource commitments from each agency, which initially totaled twelve full-time members.

By mid-June 2001, multiple exhibits suitable for DNA analysis had been located in the historical review.

In July 2001, despite the VPD being part of a JFO targeted on solving a serial killer case, a member of the VPD nevertheless made statements to a Missing Woman family member minimizing this possibility. In the same month, venomous complaints by Missing Women family members were leveled over comments made to them by a civilian member of the Missing Persons Unit. The civilian member had dealt with many of the family members before Detective Constable Shenher took over the investigation, and was the focus of many complaints against the VPD around the Missing Women investigation.

By late August 2001, several more women who had been seen recently were reported missing to the VPD and RCMP. Through extensive records searches, the JFO learned there were up to 22 more women missing in BC who met the profile of the Missing Women. The JFO members became concerned that, contrary to their assumption when the JFO investigation began, they were not dealing with a "historical" serial murder investigation review in which all the murders had taken place prior to early 1999. In fact, eleven Missing Women had been reported missing and last seen in 2000 and 2001, and six women last seen in 1999 but reported in 2000 and 2001 also met the Missing Women profile. The serial killer was clearly active.

On August 30th, 2001, (now) Staff Sergeant Adam presented senior managers from the VPD and the RCMP with a management briefing on the investigation to seek additional resources. He summarized the investigation to date, set out the investigative challenges (including hundreds of potential suspects) and the JFO's strategies, and stressed the urgency of adding resources and identifying a suspect, advising that "from all indications, sex trade workers are continuing to go missing."

On September 7th, 2001, Staff Sergeant Adam's warning was repeated in a memo from VPD Acting Inspector Al Boyd (who had replaced Inspector Spencer in April) to Deputy Chief Constable Unger in which he recommended the VPD add five more investigators to the JFO and considerable other resources. This request was approved immediately and implemented within weeks. The VPD's efforts to acquire additional funding from the City of Vancouver, so that the investigators to be loaned to the JFO could be replaced, were rebuffed, but the VPD nevertheless proceeded to contribute investigators to the JFO, resulting in numerous vacancies that grew as the size of the JFO increased.

Also in September 2001, several major media articles on the Missing Women investigation appeared. They focused on the VPD's lack of resources during its MWRT investigation, the failure of the RCMP to become involved earlier, and criticism of the VPD and JFO for a lack of results. In one article, the VPD's media spokesperson again minimized the possibility there was a serial killer at large.

In October 2001, VPD members from the Sexual Offence Squad met with Staff Sergeant Adam to provide names of potential suspects, including Pickton.

On October 14th, 2001, JFO investigators met with 35-40 family members of the Missing Women to brief them on the investigation. The meeting reportedly

went well, but there were continued complaints by family members about VPD civilian member [Parker](#) in the Missing Persons Unit. The complaints resulted in a VPD review of Missing Persons Unit policies and specific attention to the conduct of Ms. [Parker](#).

Later in October 2001, concerns were raised that the JFO was not learning quickly enough about new reports of women missing from the Downtown Eastside. In addition, it was noted that the investigation was hampered by not benefiting from the knowledge of Detective Constable Shenher. Staff Sergeant (now Inspector) Adam would later note that the JFO investigators were not familiar with the culture of the Downtown Eastside sex trade workers and wrongly assumed that they were transient, which resulted in time and resources wasted looking for them across Canada.

By late October 2001, the JFO had determined that a highly proactive approach to complement the investigation was required. In other words, police would try to catch the killer by working in a semi-covert capacity in the Downtown Eastside and developing information from sex trade workers and others. Both the RCMP and the VPD immediately responded to the JFO's call for assistance by committing a total of 12 investigators to a proactive team.

In November 2001, the JFO consulted with several American police agencies with experience investigating serial killer cases involving sex trade workers. A supplementary Missing Women poster was released with 18 new Missing Women. The JFO also took responsibility for investigating all new reports made to the VPD Missing Persons Unit of women meeting the profile of the Missing Women.

In November and December 2001, three more women, Heather Bottomley, Mona Wilson and Dianne Rock were reported missing to the VPD. All met the Missing Women profile, and all had been last seen earlier in 2001.

2002

In January 2002, the JFO's semi-covert 12-officer proactive team began operation in the Downtown Eastside.

On February 4th, 2002, the Missing Women investigation took a dramatic turn. A junior Coquitlam RCMP member, Constable Nathan Wells, obtained a search warrant for the Pickton farm based on an informant's information that Pickton was in possession of an illegal firearm. Because Pickton was entered on CPIC as a person of interest to the JFO, Constable Wells advised the JFO of his information and invited JFO investigators to attend while he executed the search warrant the next day.

The JFO was not then targeting Pickton, but it was agreed JFO investigators would wait near the property while it was searched. During the search for the firearm, the investigators observed a piece of identification and an inhaler belonging to two of the Missing Women. As a result, the JFO investigators were called on to the property. The weapons search was suspended and the property was sealed off. JFO investigators began work on a warrant to search for evidence related to the murder of the Missing Women, which was executed the next day.

This investigation turned into the largest serial murder investigation in Canadian history. The VPD initially contributed 29 police investigators and two civilian employees who joined dozens of RCMP members in the investigation at the Pickton property. The investigative team eventually swelled to over 280 police and civilian employees at its peak. Within weeks, Pickton was charged with the murders of two of the Missing Women, and has since been charged with the murders of a total of 26 Missing Women.

PART II: ANALYSIS OF THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

INTRODUCTION

Part II of the Report provides a detailed analysis of the investigation and is summarized here. The analysis identifies the internal and external factors that contributed to a serial killer operating in the Lower Mainland for so long.

Much of the MWRT's work was of a high quality and was admirably carried out by the investigators. However, there is no doubt that the VPD's investigation could have been improved. There were three primary causes of the deficiencies in the VPD investigation: (a) the failure of the VPD to accept the serial killer theory in a timely way and a corresponding failure to provide the investigation with sufficient resources, (b) a failure to follow major case management principles, and (c) jurisdictional problems.

With respect to the Pickton investigation specifically, despite the excellent work of the RCMP's Corporal Mike Connor while he was assigned to the Pickton investigation, it was the RCMP's failed pre-2002 investigation into Pickton, not the deficiencies in the VPD investigation, that allowed Pickton to continue operating for so long. However, although the Pickton investigation was the RCMP's responsibility, VPD management should have shown more leadership and put more high-level pressure on the RCMP to investigate Pickton more vigorously.

Analysis of these and other key issues is provided, as well as recommendations for the future.

THE VPD'S LACK OF COMMITMENT TO THE SERIAL KILLER THEORY

By the summer of 1999, there was ample evidence, albeit statistical and circumstantial, to believe that a serial killer was most likely responsible for the Missing Women. The longer the Missing Women remained missing despite exhaustive efforts to find them – and despite their historically frequent contact with society in various ways – the more compelling was this evidence. There was strong evidence pointing to Pickton as the killer, which could only add to the credibility of the serial killer theory. Further, it was already known that an unidentified serial killer had murdered sex trade workers Pipe, Olajide and Younker in 1995, all of whom were associated with the Downtown Eastside.

The theory that a serial killer was behind the disappearances was always present in the investigation, but senior police officers in charge of overseeing the Missing Women investigation didn't commit to the serial killer theory for several reasons. These included an erroneous belief that the Missing Women were transient, and that other theories could explain their absence. There was a mindset among several police managers that physical evidence (i.e., a body) was required to begin a murder investigation, although this view was not shared by all the investigators. In addition, insufficient weight was attached to Detective Inspector Rossmo's statistical and epidemiological-style analysis of the Missing Women. For a variety of reasons, key VPD management personnel either did not read or did not give much weight to the analysis. In part, this was the result of personality conflicts with Detective Inspector Rossmo, and in part it was due to a belief that statistical evidence alone could not justify concluding that the Missing Women had been murdered, despite the compelling circumstantial evidence that supported the statistical analysis.

Senior police managers also placed too much emphasis on the fact that Constable Dickson had accounted for the majority of women on a previous list of missing women in 1997, and had little regard for the more concerning fact that he had accomplished that task quite easily, yet the Missing Women couldn't be located despite a much more exhaustive investigation.

Finally, by the time the MWRT got underway, and throughout the rest of 1999 and most of 2000, it appeared that no new women had gone missing from the Downtown Eastside. This lessened the perceived urgency, and investigative priority, of the case.

Throughout 2000, there was no proper management assessment of the investigation, and it deteriorated. Various managers in the Investigation Division took a hands-off approach to the investigation, and consequently had insufficient knowledge of the many problems within the MWRT, and with the investigative approach. A diffusion and dilution of information as it moved up the chain of command contributed to this problem, as did the rapid turnover of management staff. In addition, there was a lack of clarity around the goals of the investigation: the problem that the investigative team was facing wasn't clearly defined and so the response was erratic. Sergeant Field and the investigative team were not given the support they needed by VPD management, who did not recognize the seriousness of the problem. This case underscores the importance of proper, periodic management reviews of significant investigations.

BIAS AGAINST SEX TRADE WORKERS

Allegations have been made against the VPD that the problems with the investigation were the result of an institutional bias against sex trade workers: that if the women were from higher income neighborhoods in Vancouver, the investigation would have received a different priority. Some critics have also suggested that the failure of the VPD to post a warning to sex trade workers that a serial killer was operating in the Downtown Eastside is evidence of this institutional bias against sex trade workers.

There is no doubt that the disappearance of a large number of women with more conventional lives than sex trade workers would have been greeted with greater alarm than the disappearance of the Missing Women. This is not because the sex trade workers were considered "second class" citizens, but because the nature of their lives is much more unpredictable and risky than more conventional lifestyles. Sex trade workers normally have little day to day accountability to employers, nuclear families, schools and the like, and are constantly exposed to risk of death by disease, drug overdose or at the hands of any one of the numerous violent men who seek to pick up sex trade workers on any given day. While there was a significant misconception prevalent in the VPD as to the transience of "survival" sex trade workers beyond a lack of day to day accountability for their whereabouts, it is also the case that the Missing Women were often reported missing long after last being seen, which lent credence to the theory that they were transient and that long absences were not unexpected by those who knew them.

A review of the track record of VPD responses to offences against sex trade workers shows that the VPD commits extraordinary resources to the

investigation of known serious offences against sex trade workers, and has had remarkable results in the most challenging circumstances.

Some of the allegations of bias were likely fuelled by administrative delays and difficulties faced by families and friends when reporting sex trade workers as missing. It also appears that the conduct of one civilian VPD staff member, who was working in the Missing Persons Unit prior to the Missing Women investigation, poisoned relations with the families of some of the Missing Women. These factors compromised the investigation by creating a lack of trust in the VPD by some of the families of the Missing Women. This problem underscores the importance of certain skills necessary in the Missing Persons Unit (which was one of the subjects of a detailed audit of the Unit in late 2004). In addition, had there been a victim liaison in the MWRT – as required by the Major Case Management model – rather than Detective Constable Shenher trying to juggle this responsibility with many others, some of the damage done to the VPD’s relationship with some of the family members of the Missing Women could have been mitigated.

The lack of a formal, unequivocal warning that a serial killer had been operating was misguided, but was not the result of a lack of concern for sex trade workers. The VPD’s failure to issue a warning arose from the reluctance of the VPD to recognize and acknowledge that a serial killer was likely the cause of the disappearances. The possibility that a serial killer was at work was, however, widely appreciated by the sex trade workers themselves. In any event, while making a strong public warning may have been useful as a catalyst to improve the investigation, it would not have resulted in changes to the high-risk behaviours of the sex trade workers of the Downtown Eastside, which are driven by their addictions and marginalization.

It should also be noted that the VPD has made great strides in improving relationships with sex trade workers, as demonstrated by the positive relationships built with sex trade worker advocacy groups through VPD-initiated collaborative training to reduce violence against marginalized women.

THE IMPACT OF RESOURCE SHORTAGES ON THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

Due to a variety of internal and external factors, the VPD overall was chronically short of sworn officers and civilian support staff during the Missing Women investigation. In addition to its “routine” work, the VPD’s Major Crime Section was also dealing with an alarming series of violent home invasions against very elderly victims, and a series of armed robberies of Asian citizens in their residential garages. In addition, the homicide rate spiked over 50% from 1998 to 1999, with several extraordinary cases. Prior to and during the operation of the MWRT, considerable resources were committed to these other investigations. This made it difficult to properly resource the MWRT, and all the officers interviewed for this Review reflected on the difficulty each had coping with inadequate resources provided to the Missing Women investigation.

However, while inadequate resources contributed to the MWRT’s problems by causing managers to allocate resources to investigations only when absolutely necessary, they were not the root cause of its deficiencies. If VPD management had accepted the serial killer theory as being the most likely cause of the disappearances, it was within the VPD’s capacity to create a task force to investigate the Missing Women as homicide victims (notwithstanding that a multi-agency team was necessary to give the investigation a reasonable chance of success). Furthermore, if a task force was deemed necessary to conduct a serial killer investigation, more pressure could have been applied

to the RCMP and to the Attorney General to contribute resources.

THE NEED FOR A MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL INVESTIGATION

There was a clear need demonstrated in the Missing Women investigation for a multi-jurisdictional investigation. This likely would have occurred had the VPD and the RCMP accepted in the spring of 1999 that a serial killer was responsible for the Missing Women, and recognized that the victims would likely be found in rural locations, as occurred with the Agassiz/Mission murders. A JFO was essential to enable an unrestricted flow of information regarding cases and evidence in various Lower Mainland jurisdictions, which was a problem in the Missing Women investigation. In addition, the magnitude of the crimes placed a strain on any single agency to provide the resources necessary, as is evidenced by the scale that Project Evenhanded eventually reached.

In this case, as there was no triggering mechanism or overarching provincial framework/criteria for JFO formation in place, a JFO required the consent of both the VPD, which advocated for a JFO, and the RCMP, which initially resisted it.

There is much in the policing literature pointing to problems in serial offender investigations being compromised because of police departments being “linkage blind” and having an unwillingness to share information and collaborate with other police departments. With respect to linkage blindness in the Missing Women investigation, the collection of evidence was not sufficiently systematic, there were ongoing difficulties in establishing and maintaining open lines of communication with the RCMP, and evidence gathered by officers in the VPD and the RCMP was sometimes not shared effectively, even within their respective organizations, let alone with each other.

But with respect to an unwillingness to collaborate with other police departments, that was certainly not the case with the VPD. In fact, the opposite was true. The MWRT consulted widely and Sergeant Field made repeated efforts to involve the RCMP in the Missing Women investigation. Unfortunately, she was unsuccessful for too long, despite her resolve and well-founded determination that a JFO with the RCMP was necessary for the investigation to succeed. The RCMP should have become involved in a JFO much earlier than it was, and Sergeant Field’s managers in the VPD should have done more to advance this agenda. The case had little chance of being solved without the RCMP’s involvement, due to the volume of potential evidence located in RCMP jurisdictions, and the likelihood that a serial killer would dispose of victims’ bodies in a rural location. Furthermore, the RCMP has a much greater capacity to marshal the extraordinary resources necessary for a serial murder investigation, as it demonstrated in February 2002.

More attention needs to be paid to the issues of integration and amalgamation/regionalization of resources if serial offender investigations are to be successful. Had there been a regional police force in the Lower Mainland at the time of the Missing Women investigation, many of the barriers created by jurisdictional issues (such as the VPD’s lack of control over the Coquitlam RCMP’s Pickton investigation) would have been moot. At the least, there needs to be a mechanism to rapidly create (and fund) multi-agency responses to urgent problems such as an active serial killer. Problems in the Missing Women investigation generally, and the Pickton investigation specifically, could have been mitigated had there been better systems in place.

In addition, there needs to be a regional approach to missing persons cases to (a) ensure jurisdictional issues do not create barriers to reporting missing persons, (b) to harmonize policies for the handling of reports, and (c) to provide that statistical analysis of the regional information can be conducted to

ensure that missing persons cases aren't considered in isolation, which can result in suspicious patterns being missed. Some of these problems have now been resolved as the RCMP and the BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police committed to create a provincial missing persons analysis capacity in 2004, and began its implementation in early 2005.

HOW THE VPD INVESTIGATION COULD HAVE BEEN IMPROVED

Pickton was not arrested earlier than he was primarily because of failures in the RCMP's Port Coquitlam investigation from the summer of 1998 through to early 2000, when it essentially ended. Notwithstanding the problems in the Coquitlam RCMP's investigation and the need for a multi-jurisdictional approach to the Missing Women investigation, the VPD investigation could have been improved in many respects. Although the end result may have been no different, that wasn't known at the time, and the VPD had a responsibility to properly manage the investigation.

The principles of major case management were not implemented in the MWRT investigation. There was an insufficient number of VPD members trained in major case management at the time, and a lack of management understanding of the principles. However, there were several trained members available for advice, and contemporaneous to the MWRT's work, there had been an internal analysis of another investigation – with challenges strikingly similar to the Missing Women investigation – which resulted in the implementation of proper major case management protocols. Unfortunately, the way in which the Missing Women case was defined by VPD management, i.e., as a primarily missing persons case, rather than a serial murder investigation, constrained the VPD's appreciation of the MWRT as a case for which major case management should have been employed, as did VPD management's

lack of knowledge of the significant problems in the investigation.

Had proper major case management protocols been implemented, the effectiveness of the investigation could have been improved in several areas. A better command structure was necessary, with a "command triangle" composed of a full-time, on-site team commander, an experienced primary investigator, and a file coordinator. In addition, the capacity to focus on suspects and initiate potentially effective investigative strategies was limited by a lack of investigators.

The team commander needed to have control over personnel issues, such as significant problems created by Detective Constables Cruz and James, whose conduct compromised the investigation and demoralized the other investigators. Had they been focused on team objectives rather than their own, they may very well have contributed to a more successful investigation into Pickton in the summer of 1999 and into the spring of 2000, as evidenced by the considerable effort they put into gathering evidence against McCartney. The assignment of a full-time team commander with the appropriate authority could have mitigated the problems caused by the assignment of Detective Constables Cruz and James to the MWRT.

Detective Inspector Rossmo needed to be better integrated into the investigation. Although he was not an experienced "traditional" violent crime investigator, through his academic studies into predatory criminals and his subsequent geographic profiling work on numerous serial offender cases, he had exposure to serial killer cases that was unique in the VPD. He also had analytical abilities that could have contributed greatly to the investigation. For a variety of reasons, VPD management failed to exploit Detective Inspector Rossmo's talents when they were needed the most.

Inspector Biddlecombe did not trust the media and did not see it as an investigative tool. The media strategy for the Missing Women investigation was inadequate, focusing too much on finding “missing” women, and not enough on solving a murder case. A well-thought out media strategy could have been used to “drive the offender to ground,” to leverage more resources, to generate activity by the offender that might have provided leads, or to generate information from particular populations, such as those who live in the Downtown Eastside. Contrary to usual practice in the VPD, the media strategy was being driven – or at least influenced – by managers who either didn’t believe in the serial killer theory, or felt that publicly acknowledging a serial killer would only create more problems, or both. The media strategy should have flowed from an investigative strategy, rather than a public relations strategy, but the lack of clarity as to the purpose of the investigation made a focused media strategy difficult.

In retrospect, it is clear that there was considerable information held by sex trade workers and others. It will never be known whether an effective, targeted media strategy (particularly in conjunction with “on the ground” resources) might have been helpful in developing information that would have advanced the Pickton investigation in the summer of 1999.

In April 1999, the Police Board approved a reward in the Missing Women case, against the recommendations of the VPD. In doing so, the Police Board strayed into operational policing, which is outside of its role. While the decision to approve the reward may very well have been a good one, it was not the Board’s decision to make; Police Boards should not insert themselves into operational decision-making.

When the MWRT began in May 1999, it appeared that women had stopped going missing the previous January. But by early 2001, when the JFO began to review the VPD investigation, women had started to

go missing again. The VPD should have considered proactive strategies until the JFO was sufficiently resourced to take on this responsibility.

The MWRT was also plagued with problems related to the management and analysis of information. This problem of “information overload,” and the inevitable inability to process, analyze, and prioritize data, contributed to frustration and delays in the investigation. The VPD Investigation Division did not have available properly trained analysts to perform functions crucial to managing large amounts of data in a case where the offender was unknown and there were many potential suspects. Even with an effective analysis of the information, there was an organizational climate in the VPD that seemed to have discouraged Detective Constable Shenher and even Sergeant Field from forcefully expressing their professional views to management. For a variety of reasons, the culture within the VPD at that time was not conducive to candid discussions and brainstorming outside of the investigative team.

Despite these problems, the difficulties with information management and analysis did not contribute to a failure to identify a suspect in the Missing Women case, i.e., that information about Pickton was “missed” because of problems with the analytical software (although information was missed because of the conduct of two MWRT investigators), or that Pickton wasn’t rated as highly as he should have been as a suspect due to the problems with SIUSS (as he was the MWRT’s top suspect throughout the VPD investigation). However, this in no way lessens the importance of taking steps to ensure that investigators have the benefits of an effective electronic case management system and staff trained in its effective operation.

In 1995, Justice Archie Campbell conducted an inquiry into the Paul Bernardo investigation and produced a comprehensive report that provided a “blueprint” for serial predator investigations. A

key issue in his report was the use of major case management software, and he recommended standardization by government. The Ontario government took concerted and aggressive action to approve this recommendation, amongst others, but the BC government took no action, other than to encourage all police agencies in BC to contribute to the Violent Criminal Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS).

In 2001, the VPD implemented a new electronic records management system, “PRIME”, which the BC Solicitor General subsequently championed as a provincial standard. PRIME will improve information sharing between participating police agencies, but it was not originally designed for major case management. Hopefully, a software module that is under development in response to police input may provide a suitable system when used in conjunction with available analytical software. In the meantime, there are multiple electronic major case management systems in use in BC. Standardization is necessary to prevent problems in future multi-jurisdictional investigations.

Despite the weaknesses in the MWRT investigation, most of the members of the MWRT performed in what could fairly be described as a heroic manner in the face of extremely challenging circumstances. This was particularly true of Detective Constable Shenher, whose work was extraordinary. Detective Constable Mark Chernoff and Detective Ron Lepine demonstrated great skill and dedication in their work with informant Thomas. Detective Constable Alex Clarke was assigned a futile task in reviewing government records, but persevered without complaint, and would later do other important work for the JFO. Constable Dickson used his extensive knowledge of the Downtown Eastside to assist the investigation.

Sergeant Field also performed admirably, particularly with respect to advancing the case for a JFO, despite being overwhelmed and often unsupported. In

being assigned the MWRT on top of full-time duties as a Homicide Squad sergeant, she was, in effect, destined to fail. If she could have done anything better in the circumstances, it may have been to more forcefully articulate in writing to her superiors what was necessary for the investigation to be improved. But that is with the luxury of hindsight, and the record demonstrates that it likely would have made no difference, because of the lack of willingness of her managers to be more aggressive, both internally and with the RCMP, about the need for a better-resourced and more dynamic investigation.

The weaknesses in the MWRT investigation are attributable to both systemic issues and the lack of sufficient management attention to the case. At the middle manager level, frequent absences due to illness by one manager and a staff sergeant (his immediate subordinate) combined with short-term manager assignments following the original manager’s retirement, were contributing factors to a lack of proper attention to the investigation. The lack of management’s knowledge of basic facts of the investigation was troubling, and demonstrated poor management controls, although a lack of resources contributed to this problem as well.

There was also a lack of clarity around the purpose of the MWRT. The investigators understood it to be a “review team,” while one manager felt it was a proper task force in everything but name, and that it was called a “review team” only to avoid embarrassing the Police Board, ostensibly because the Board had decided a task force wasn’t needed.

At the Executive level in 1999 and 2000, an unhealthy dynamic contributed to a lack of sufficient communication around the MWRT investigation, and it was allowed to deteriorate. The fact that no new women were known to be going missing made this deterioration easier to justify. The Deputy Chief Constable who was ultimately responsible

for the Missing Women investigation was not sufficiently engaged, and took little action to ensure the investigation proceeded appropriately; however, he and Chief Constable Blythe subsequently showed leadership in ensuring that the VPD participated in the JFO, despite a lack of additional funding from the City.

THE PICKTON INVESTIGATION PRIOR TO THE FEBRUARY 2002 SEARCH WARRANTS

When the Pickton case “broke” in February 2002, there was an intense media response that resulted in widespread condemnation of the VPD for allegedly failing to follow up on information about Pickton. The RCMP was characterized as having “rescued” the investigation, and of finding the information to solve the case during a review of VPD files. This was patently false. Despite many unfounded allegations made against the VPD, the RCMP chose not to issue a statement clarifying that the VPD had shared all information about Pickton, and that the RCMP had been in charge of the investigation into the Pickton information from the beginning. The lack of response by the RCMP was not in keeping with the finest traditions of that organization.

The information from all the informants was that Pickton had killed one or more women on his property in Port Coquitlam. Where the victims worked or lived was irrelevant; the location of the crime determines jurisdiction, and there was no evidence to suggest the victims were taken to Pickton’s property against their will. The Coquitlam RCMP clearly had, and accepted, jurisdictional responsibility for the Pickton investigation. This fact was never in dispute.

The investigation of Pickton prior to February 2002 was inadequate and a failure of major case

management. The amount of information pointing to Pickton was such that the investigation had to continue to either eliminate Pickton as a suspect, or gather evidence against him. There was, however, a lack of effective analysis of the information pointing at Pickton, and this prevented a full appreciation of its credibility. The investigators had (a) evidence of Pickton’s violent attack on [Anderson](#); (b) the informant information from [Hiscox](#), [Thomas](#), [Stevens](#) and [Wood](#); (c) [Ellingsen](#)’s denial to police that she’d described Pickton committing a murder to anyone, despite several informants independently and without collusion providing that information; (d) Pickton’s interactions with sex trade workers in New Westminster; (e) Pickton’s ability to dispose of bodies, and the informant information regarding Pickton’s statements to that effect; and (f) Pickton’s admission to having handcuffs, refusal to take a polygraph, and evasive answer as to the likelihood of victim DNA being found on his property. Taken together, the investigators clearly had sufficient information to justify an aggressive investigation into Pickton.

Instead, the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit investigators’ conclusion that [Thomas](#)’s information was not credible, combined with the transfer of Corporal Connor, effectively derailed the investigation and it languished. Corporal Connor’s replacement, Constable [York](#), did not have Corporal Connor’s experience or influence within the RCMP, and she was unable to convince her superiors to apply adequate resources to the investigation, despite her clear understanding of what needed to be done.

The January 2000 interview of Pickton conducted by Constables [York](#) and [Fox](#) was poorly conducted. Pickton was allowed to have a friend present, the interview wasn’t properly planned or executed, and

an evasive answer and his consent to search his property were not followed up. The failure of the RCMP to consult with the VPD or even advise that the interview was taking place is inexplicable.

After the interview there was very little investigation of Pickton by the Coquitlam RCMP, which Constable York attributed to a lack of resources and a failure by the RCMP to give the investigation the appropriate priority.

There were many potential investigative avenues that could have been pursued had the resources been applied, including, but certainly not limited to: continuing to use Thomas as an informant, and possibly using him as an agent; making efforts to follow up on Pickton's offer and conduct a "consent" search to find evidence or develop grounds to obtain a search warrant; continuing to pursue co-operation from Ellingsen, who eventually did become a cooperating witness against Pickton; seeking information from other potential witnesses that could have assisted the investigation; conducting a second interview/interrogation of Pickton using a highly-skilled police interrogator; revisiting the potential for charges to be laid in the Anderson incident; and, arresting Pickton and employing a sophisticated interview and interrogation strategy using a cellmate, preceded and/or followed by a well-planned interrogation.

Pickton should not have been excluded as a suspect in the Missing Women investigation just because he was not linked to the murders of Pipe, Younker and Olajide. It was an error to assume that only one serial killer could have operated in a geographical area as large as the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley, over the span of time involved.

An obvious question is, why didn't the JFO target Pickton? There was considerable information

available pointing to him, but it appears that despite the JFO's expertise, their understanding of the investigation of Pickton that had taken place was limited, which highlights the crucial need for mechanisms to ensure information is properly analyzed and effectively shared.

The Pickton investigation was extraordinary because, like the Missing Women case generally, it concerned an allegation of murder where there was no body or other concrete evidence to confirm a murder had actually occurred. Were there a body, no doubt the information would have been treated differently. But personality conflicts or opinions about credibility without supporting evidence should never have derailed a murder investigation. Decisions must be made based on careful analysis of the information, and in consideration of the nature of the investigation: the more serious the allegations and the greater the risk to lives, the greater the care that must be taken in making decisions about how those allegations will be investigated. The opinion of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit investigators that the informant information was not credible was an opinion only. Neither that opinion nor the lack of resources in the Coquitlam RCMP detachment should have been sufficient to derail an investigation when the allegations were so serious. The information available was so compelling that it demanded a continued aggressive investigation.

Those in positions of authority in the Coquitlam RCMP and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit must bear primary responsibility for the failure to effectively manage this investigation. The Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit didn't believe in the veracity of the informant information and declined to assist, thereby derailing the investigation. The Coquitlam RCMP's investigation into Pickton was inadequate. The Coquitlam RCMP maintained control over the file, but did not treat it with the seriousness it demanded; after the summer of

1999, the only substantive work on the file was the inadequate interview of Pickton in January of 2000. Furthermore, after the summer of 1999, the RCMP did not seek assistance from the VPD, which had a vested interest in the success of the investigation. There was a lack of effective high-level communication between the RCMP and the VPD regarding the management of the Pickton investigation.

Had the Coquitlam RCMP investigation into Pickton been successful, the future inadequacies of the VPD Missing Women investigation would have been moot because the case could have been solved within months of the MWRT beginning its work in the spring of 1999.

Notwithstanding that responsibility for the investigation clearly lay with the Coquitlam RCMP, management-level pressure from the VPD could have, and should have, been applied to re-invigorate the RCMP's investigation, rather than acquiescing to the RCMP's position that they were continuing the investigation, when clearly they were not giving it a high priority. Although resources were tight, it was never disputed that given compelling information of a murder, the VPD could have, and would have, applied more resources to the Missing Women investigation.

There was sufficient information in late summer of 1999 to justify implementing a "coordinated investigative team" to manage the Pickton investigation as a multi-jurisdictional case, pursuant to major case management principles. A properly managed coordinated investigation team – run by an experienced major case manager – would have helped ensure that all appropriate investigative strategies were pursued in Coquitlam. Further, there was much that could have been done in Vancouver to advance the investigation. The entire MWRT could have been re-focused onto seeking information about Pickton (with Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff continuing to handle Thomas as well). It

had already been demonstrated in April 2000 that information about Pickton could be obtained to link him to the Downtown Eastside.

Sergeant Field made many efforts not only to bring the RCMP into the investigation, but also to have the RCMP look again at Pickton as a suspect after the 1999 investigation was derailed. Her managers, for the most part, did not become engaged and provide her the high-level support she needed.

A thorough analysis of the evidence pointing to Pickton was needed. Had this analysis been available and taken at a high level to the RCMP, to pressure it to aggressively pursue the investigation with an offer of continued assistance, the RCMP may have applied more resources to the Pickton investigation. Unfortunately, because of a variety of circumstances, there was a rapid turnover of managers in the Major Crime Section. Due to their own lack of inquiry, none of them were sufficiently knowledgeable about the Missing Women investigation generally, and the Pickton investigation specifically. This was also true at the Executive level.

The impact of the failed 1999 investigation into Pickton was enormous in many ways, including having a severe emotional impact on the investigators involved – particularly Sergeant Geramy Field, Detective Constable Lori Shenher, and Detective Constable Mark Chernoff.

The impact on the investigators and the VPD pales, however, in comparison to the tragedy that could potentially have been averted: after August 1999, 13 more sex trade workers went missing, and DNA and other evidence connects eleven of these 13 women to the Pickton property.

CONCLUSION

The VPD's initial response to reports of women going missing from the Downtown Eastside – the assignment of Detective Constable Shenher to the case – was reasonable, but the VPD was slow to recognize that a serial killer was likely at work. Even when it was acknowledged that a serial killer could be the cause of the Missing Women, the acknowledgement was made with some reluctance and the resulting “review team” was under-resourced and inadequately managed in light of the magnitude of the investigation they faced. Notwithstanding the challenges, the work of several individual officers in the MWRT was extraordinary.

The degree of difficulty involved in the Missing Women investigation cannot be overstated; there is no more challenging investigation than a serial murder case, even for the most well-resourced and well-managed investigation. The JFO had considerable resources and skill, yet its investigative strategy did not lead it to Pickton, whose undoing was a search for a firearm unrelated to the JFO's investigation. In the Missing Women case, there were no bodies, witnesses, or forensic evidence, and the lifestyle of the Missing Women created enormous investigative challenges. This Review has found the VPD's investigation could have been greatly improved, but the failings must be considered in the context of the incredible investigative challenges, as well as systemic barriers.

Ironically, even had the VPD's MWRT been a model for investigative excellence, it would likely have made no difference in the absence of a proper investigation of Pickton by the RCMP in Coquitlam. The VPD passed on all information in its possession about Pickton and assisted the RCMP-led investigation in every way it could. That investigation failed because it was mismanaged by the RCMP. The VPD's mistake in the Pickton investigation was to not demand more forcefully, and at a more senior level, that the RCMP do more.

Steps must be taken to eliminate or minimize the barriers that derailed the original Pickton investigation. What is needed is better analysis to provide “triggers” for a major investigation; better communication between RCMP detachments, RCMP “Headquarters,” and municipal departments; and better mechanisms to more quickly create Joint Forces Operations run by properly trained major case managers. Some of these issues have been addressed to some extent recently, such as an RCMP initiative to ensure there is a pool of high-level major case managers available in British Columbia, the creation of a provincial missing persons analysis unit, and the integration of some homicide units. However, more work is needed to develop specific initiatives to address other systemic barriers identified in this Review.

The Missing Women investigation eventually became a Joint Forces Operation investigation that has been described as a model of excellence in a number of respects, including inter-agency cooperation. However, additional steps to improve policing in BC must be taken to ensure that cases of serial murder in British Columbia are identified as such at an early date and are responded to with investigative and operational strategies equal to the task.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

TO THE VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

This Review makes eleven recommendations to the VPD, including:

- that the VPD ensure adequate major case management training is provided;
- that the Inspectors selected to be in charge of the Major Crime Section have the necessary experience;
- that the Executive be fully briefed on major cases;
- that the major case management model is followed for task force investigations;
- that the VPD ensure replacement officers in a major case investigation team are fully briefed on the investigation; and
- that the current efforts by the VPD to forge improved relationships with the sex trade workers of the Downtown Eastside continue to be strongly supported by VPD management.

REGARDING THE CITY OF VANCOUVER

- The VPD should encourage the City of Vancouver to continue to support the resource needs of the VPD so that no major investigation is compromised by a lack of sufficient staff and expertise.

REGARDING THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND THE B.C. ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

The VPD should encourage the Provincial Government and the B.C. Association of Chiefs of Police to:

- create a protocol or framework be created for the rapid formation of multi-jurisdictional major case investigations, including mechanisms to seek assistance, and for extraordinary funding for such investigations;
- conduct an examination of the benefits of a regional police force in the Lower Mainland;
- develop provincial standards for the management of major cases in BC, and that support be provided for the RCMP's major case management accreditation process, which should include municipal police departments;
- strike a Provincial committee of key stakeholders to study and make recommendations regarding a single uniform computerized case management system by police agencies throughout British Columbia for major cases; and
- continue to support the new provincial analysis unit to examine missing persons cases and to provide further attention to eliminating barriers to making missing persons reports.

EPILOGUE

This review was substantially completed by 2005; much has happened since then.

On December 9, 2007 Robert Pickton was convicted of second degree murder in the deaths of Sereena Abotsway, Adrea Joesbury, Mona Wilson, Georgina Papin, Brenda Wolfe, and Marnie Frey. He was sentenced to life in prison with no hope for parole for 25 years. The Supreme Court of Canada upheld these convictions. As a result, charges were stayed related to the 20 additional murders of Andrea Borhaven, Heather Bottomley, Heather Chinnock, Wendy Crawford, Sarah Devries, Tiffany Drew, Cara Ellis, Cynthia Feliks, Jennifer Furminger, Inga Hall, Helen Hallmark, Tanya Holyk, Sherry Irving, Angela Jardine, Patricia Johnson, Debra Jones, Kerry Koski, Jacqueline McDonell, Diana Melnick, and Dianne Rock. In addition, DNA from six other Missing Women – Sharon Abraham, Yvonne Boen, Nancy Clark, Dawn Crey, Stephanie Lane, and Jacqueline Murdock – was allegedly found on the Pickton property, but there was insufficient evidence for Crown to approve charges. By any measure, the deaths of these Missing Women was a heart-wrenching tragedy, and one which has many lessons.

Significant improvements have been made in the VPD and in policing in BC since the Missing Women investigation. All of the VPD-relevant recommendations flowing from the Review have been implemented. Supervisors and managers of investigative squads are required to have an appropriate level of investigative experience and receive major case management training. The Inspectors in charge of the three VPD sections that focus on violent crime are all former major crime investigators and supervisors, and all have major case management training. Both the Superintendent

and Deputy Chief who oversee major investigations are experienced investigators and investigative supervisors. Since the Missing Women investigation, six VPD officers have been provincially accredited as Major Case Management Team Commanders. The current Executive has implemented a system in which it is briefed daily on current cases, and is proactive in ensuring it is fully informed and engaged so that it can fulfill its leadership responsibilities. All major case and task force investigations are guided by major case management protocols, including staffing matters and media strategies.

In terms of VPD staffing levels, since the Missing Women investigation, the VPD has received extraordinary support from the City of Vancouver and Vancouver City Council in increasing both sworn and civilian staffing. Sworn staffing has been effectively increased by 243 positions since 2003, while civilian staffing has increased by well over 100 positions over the same time period. Many of the civilian positions are crime analysts, which were severely lacking during the Missing Women investigation.

The VPD has also continued to work at improving relationships with sex trade workers and other marginalized persons via advocacy groups, and has assigned a police officer who is well-respected in the Downtown Eastside, Constable Linda Malcolm, as a full-time sex trade worker liaison.

There have been many improvements in the ability of police in the Lower Mainland to respond to multi-jurisdictional crime, as evidenced by the creation of RCMP-led integrated units such as the Integrated Gang Task Force. To their credit, the Provincial Government has significantly increased funding for such integrated units, expanding the overall policing capacity in the Lower Mainland and elsewhere. In

addition, the Province has funded and implemented province-wide the Police Records Information Management Environment (PRIME) System that the VPD introduced in 2001, so that all police agencies are able to efficiently share information. In addition, major case management training has continued and its principles have become the accepted standard for the conduct of major investigations in B.C.

As noted, a provincial missing persons analysis unit has now been in place since 2005, although more work is needed to ensure it addresses the current gaps in missing persons investigations, particularly when there are multi-jurisdictional issues, and also with respect to barriers to reporting, particularly for marginalized persons.

There are, however, still some outstanding challenges that played a role in the failures in the Missing Women investigation. For example, there is still no provincial standard for electronic case management software to support major investigations and different agencies are using different applications. The VPD continues to advocate for such a system, as its lack prevents seamless multi-jurisdictional investigations, delays the transfer of information, and requires that investigators who move to a multi-jurisdictional unit from a different agency have to adapt to new systems. There should also be more attention paid to provincial standards for training. Some progress in this regard was made in 2008, but there is more work to do.

In addition, the lack of a regional police force in the Lower Mainland means that there are competing priorities, and decisions on regional issues are delayed while consensus is sought. While the level of cooperation is usually good among police leaders in the province, this situation would be enhanced with a better structure that would support police decision-making on a regional basis, rather than

the fragmented system that exists now, and which played a key negative role in the Missing Women investigation. There are times when decision-making on major multi-jurisdictional policing issues must rest with a clear governance and executive authority, supported by a unified and accountable management team. In major multi-jurisdictional cases, decisions must not be diluted or avoided because of a lack of an appropriate structure to support such decision making. While a “Joint Management Team” approach has been adopted in BC to support some integrated units, this approach does not set out a legal or practical basis for strong, rapid, and accountable decision-making that incorporates the issues of the major stakeholders. This problem should be examined by the Ministry of Solicitor General.

FOREWORD & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I authored this report, I was the Deputy Chief Constable commanding the Vancouver Police Department's Investigation Division. During the Missing Women investigation, I was, for much of its duration, assigned as a sergeant in several positions in the Investigation Division, immediately following an assignment as a detective in the Sexual Offence Squad. But although I worked in the same Division as the officers responsible for the Missing Women investigation, I did not have any direct involvement with this case, other than participating in one brainstorming session prior to the creation of the Missing Women Review Team in May 1999. In April 2000, I was promoted to Inspector and left the Investigation Division, not returning until 2003 as the Deputy Chief Constable.

Notwithstanding my lack of involvement in the Missing Women investigation, I have worked with or have been professionally acquainted with most of the VPD police officers who were involved in the investigation, and acknowledge that the natural outcome of this contact sometimes led me to form opinions, both positive and negative, about their professional abilities. However, in this Review, I have strived to the best of my ability to set aside any preconceptions and to provide a neutral analysis of the information available. This occasionally required that I criticize members of my own police force, as well as the RCMP; this was difficult, but necessary to fulfill my mandate.

To accomplish that mandate required help from others, and I want to sincerely thank the many people who have assisted me in a variety of ways in my work reviewing the Missing Women investigation.

First, I thank Chief Constable Jamie H. Graham for entrusting me with what I consider to be the most important assignment of my career, and his support throughout; this support has continued with the appointment of Chief Constable Jim Chu.

My thanks also go to all those I interviewed (some on multiple occasions), without whose cooperation and frankness the whole story of the Missing Women investigation couldn't be told.

A number of other individuals assisted me with various important tasks that made my work much easier and/or enhanced the Review. They are: Rianna Bileck; Dawn Boblin, Beth Crowther, Curt Griffiths, Ryan Prox, Laurence Rankin, Bob Rich, Darcy Sarra, Aimee Szymczak, Sharm Thiagarajah, and Heather Wilson. While each made a contribution to this Review, any errors are mine and mine alone.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife and daughters; much of the time needed to complete this Review belonged to them.

DOUG LEPARD
DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE

TERMS OF REFERENCE & PURPOSE OF REPORT

On October 2, 2002, Chief Constable Graham assigned the author, then-Inspector Doug LePard, to lead a fact finding review of the Vancouver Police Department's Missing Women investigation to determine what happened and why ("the Review").² Given the scope of the work that was required and the importance of ensuring that if there were mistakes in the investigation they not be repeated, the Chief Constable appointed a senior officer for the task and requested that as the factual record was created, the conduct of the VPD's investigation be assessed from a policing perspective so that problems could be identified and solutions recommended and implemented in a timely way.

This Review includes a detailed chronology that describes the initial investigation into the Missing Women by the VPD in 1998, and the events leading up to that investigation. It also describes the transition from a "missing persons" investigation to an investigation focused on the likelihood that a killer or killers were responsible for the Missing Women. The chronology describes the events leading up to the eventual creation of a joint RCMP – VPD Task Force to take over the investigation. Finally, the chronology describes the circumstances of the execution of search warrants at the Port Coquitlam pig farm of Robert Pickton.

This internal review is not to be confused with a Police Act investigation into specific allegations made pursuant to the Police Act complaint procedure. While there is, in fact, a "third party" Police Act complaint outstanding (as of this writing) but

currently "on hold" pending the disposition of the Pickton matter, this review was not intended to be a Police Act investigation.

Key questions to be answered in the "Analysis" portion of this Review include: identifying when there was sufficient evidence to conclude the Missing Women had likely been murdered; identifying when the VPD came to this conclusion – or should have; and determining whether appropriate steps were taken by the VPD in response to this most serious of situations. This Review provides analysis regarding the VPD's lack of commitment to the serial killer theory; its alleged bias against sex trade workers; the impact of resource difficulties in the VPD on the investigation; the need for a multi-jurisdictional investigation from the outset; how the VPD investigation could have been improved; and why the Pickton investigation by the RCMP between 1998 and 2001 failed.

While it is always tempting to blame individuals when things go wrong, mistakes will always be made, particularly in extraordinary investigations that create overwhelming challenges; that humans make errors does not inexorably lead to a conclusion of incompetence or negligence.

However, because humans are fallible, there must be systems in place that minimize the impact of individual failings. And it must be emphasized that, despite mistakes being made and failures in leadership, there was no shortage of skill and dedication applied to the investigation of the Missing Women. In fact, the level of dedication by the

2 The author has a background in criminal investigations. At the time he was selected to conduct this Review, he had previously worked as constable, a detective and a detective-sergeant (supervisor) in several squads in the Investigation Division, was trained in major case management (and had run the "Home Invasion Task Force" based on MCM principles), had instructed extensively in various aspects of investigative skills, and had considerable experience conducting analytical reviews of various police issues, including criminal investigations. In 2003, he was promoted to Deputy Chief commanding the Investigation Division.

investigators under very difficult circumstances was in many cases exceptional. So while individual errors are addressed where they are key to understanding what went wrong, it is systemic issues that are the focus of this Review, such as resources, training, jurisdictional barriers, and the management systems in place that affect the response of the police department to the challenges of major investigations. It is important to learn from the past so that we are able to do better in the future; lives may depend on it.

METHODOLOGY

There were two primary sources of material utilized for this review. First, on April 3rd, 2002, then-Deputy Chief Constable John Unger, commanding the Investigation Division, directed that all information held within the VPD relevant to the Missing Women's investigation be collected and stored for future reference.³ His clear direction was that every possible source of information should be canvassed, and one staff member, sometimes augmented with a second, was assigned on a full time basis to undertake this task. The variety of sources of material was extremely broad, ranging from individual investigators' notes, to extensive administrative or management records, to records held by the Police Board, as well as multiple electronic sources of data from various VPD servers and databases, including E-mail.

To this end, staff made personal contact with every member known to have been involved in the investigation – including retired members – to collect any information in their possession. In addition, in October 2002, a letter from Chief Constable Graham was sent to every single VPD employee directing that they provide to assigned staff any information of any type they might have relating to the Missing Women investigation.

The result of these efforts was that 36 large binders of documents were collected, containing an estimated 13,000 pages and more than 1,700 individual documents.⁴ Much of the documentation was administrative in nature, and was highly illuminating in describing the course of the various stages of the investigation, management decisions made, resources applied, and other issues of interest. Many key investigative documents were examined, but it would have been impracticable to review all the investigative information (such as the investigative file for every one of the over 1,300 tips received, and the over 500 tips assigned for follow-up) due to the sheer volume of material. Notwithstanding this limitation, all known material relating to information received about Robert Pickton – which is important to this review – was obtained and reviewed, including the entire Coquitlam RCMP file on the Pickton investigation.

In addition, electronic copies of the extensive investigative files into each of the 44 Missing Women reported to the VPD were provided by Project Evenhanded staff, who had taken possession of all the VPD files when the JFO began. (Assistant Commissioner Gary Bass of the RCMP was very helpful in ensuring complete access to RCMP documents not already in the possession of the VPD and his assistance was greatly appreciated.) These investigative files added approximately 6,000 pages of documents to be considered in the review.

The second primary source of information was in-person interviews with over 20 key VPD employees (or former employees) involved in the investigation,

3 Binder 5, Tab 27.

4 Each document was recorded in a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet "fields" include: date; author; to; from; subject; a summary of the document's contents; binder; tab; and document source. Normal spreadsheet features, particularly the ability to sort by primary and secondary fields (e.g., by date and author), allow for rapid location of documents for future reference. Whenever a document is referred to for this report, the document is footnoted by the binder and tab numbers for future reference.

ranging from line level investigators, to Deputy Chief Constables and Chief Constables. For example, every investigator, supervisor and manager of the Missing Women investigation was contacted for an interview, as well as the two VPD Deputy Chief Constables in charge of the VPD Investigation Division during the Missing Women investigation. In addition, the two successive Chief Constables in place during the investigation were contacted, among other staff that had key involvement (e.g., the media liaison officers). Of the individuals identified as having key involvement, all agreed to be interviewed for this review.

As well, Inspector Don Adam, the RCMP Officer in Charge of the RCMP/VPD Joint Force Operation was interviewed, and an extensive interview was conducted of retired RCMP investigator York, who was the lead investigator in the Pickton investigation from August 1999 to August 2001. All interviews were conducted by Deputy Chief Constable LePard, and ranged in duration from several hours to a full day, with several subjects interviewed on multiple occasions. (In addition, many minor interviews or follow-up interviews were conducted by phone and email.)

Every significant event or decision made known from the documentary material and the interviews was described in the chronology, to ensure a complete and unbiased record was created.

It is important to note that this review did not extend to interviewing the majority of RCMP members involved in the Missing Women investigation, as this was beyond the scope of the Review. Therefore, any information in this Review (such as statements by VPD members) that appears critical of the RCMP should be considered in context; i.e., the RCMP members involved have not had an opportunity to respond to any criticisms that may have been made.

It should also be noted that while interviewing RCMP members was not within the scope of this review, Assistant Commissioner Gary Bass and Inspector Don Adam (the Team Commander of Project Evenhanded) were both generous with their time and were very responsive to requests for information that assisted in this review. The same was true of Jim McKnight, who is a primary investigator for Project Evenhanded. (He was a member of the VPD until he retired in November 2003, but now is an employee of the RCMP and is continuing in his role in Evenhanded.)

In most cases, the interview subjects were frank and open, and responsive to all questions; their cooperation was greatly appreciated. In addition, the MWRT members in many cases self-identified what they perceived to be personal errors during the investigation, although the willingness to accept responsibility for errors or omissions was less evident at the management level. In any case, these interviews were extremely helpful and, coupled with the collected documentation, painted a detailed picture of the Missing Women investigation.

Other sources of information collected and consulted for this review included an extensive archive of media articles; “major case management” literature, to provide a “best practices” context; academic sources; City of Vancouver and VPD reports; and miscellaneous other documents, as referenced.

KEY VPD STAFF DEPLOYMENT TIMELINE

NAME	START	FINISH
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CHIEF CONSTABLE		
Bruce Chambers	August 1, 1997	June 28, 1999
Terry Blythe	June 28, 1999	August 1, 2002
Jamie Graham	August 1, 2002	Present

DEPUTY CHIEF – INVESTIGATIONS		
Brian McGuinness	January 1, 1999	March 31, 2000
John Unger	April 1, 2000	December 31, 2002

INSPECTOR – MAJOR CRIME SECTION		
Fred Biddlecombe	January 1, 1998	October 1, 1999
Matthews	October 1, 1999	April 1, 2000
Gord Spencer	April 1, 2000	February 1, 2001
Al Boyd	February 1, 2001	November 1, 2001
Chris Beach	November 18, 2001	Present

STAFF SERGEANT - MAJOR CRIME SECTION		
Brock Giles	August 1, 1997	January 31, 2000

SERGEANT I/C MISSING PERSONS*		
Geramy Field	June 1, 1998	May 1, 2001

MISSING PERSONS CLERK		
Parker	1979	November 2001

MISSING WOMEN REVIEW TEAM		
Lori Shenher	July 1, 1998	December 1, 2000
Gray (Clerk)	May 1, 1999	September 1, 2000
Dave Dickson	May 25, 1999	June 1, 2000
Ron Lepine	May 25, 1999	November 1, 1999
Mark Chernoff	May 25, 1999	November 1, 1999
Alex Clarke	June 1, 1999	June 1, 2000
Cruz	May 1, 1999	June 1, 2000
James	May 1, 1999	June 1, 2000

INSPECTOR I/C DISTRICT 2		
Chris Beach	January 1, 1999	November 17, 2001

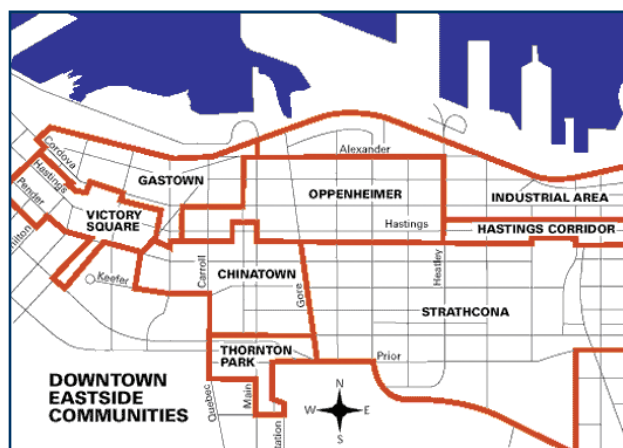
* Sgt. Field was also in charge of a Homicide Squad, and was the Sergeant in charge of the MWRT throughout its existence.

INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Eastside of Vancouver is centred around the intersection of Main and Hastings. It is generally considered to extend west to Cambie Street, east to approximately Clark Drive, north to the Waterfront, and south to Prior Street, (although different agencies may have slightly different interpretations of the boundaries). Included in the Downtown Eastside are several diverse neighbourhoods, including the historic tourist area of Gastown, and Chinatown. The Downtown Eastside has long been the “end of the line” for the most marginalized people in the Lower Mainland: alcoholics, drug addicts, the mentally ill (who are often plagued with the additional burden of drug addiction), and sex trade workers. The Downtown Eastside is frequently described by the media and in a variety of reports as the “poorest postal code in Canada.”⁵

The sex trade in the Downtown Eastside is often colloquially referred to as “low track,” as distinguished from the “high track” further west into the city. The women who work “low track” typically have serious addictions, are poor, and are frequent victims of attacks by violent “Johns” who take advantage of their extremely vulnerable circumstances.

The relationship between sex trade workers, the police and the Criminal Justice System is complicated. Drug use and aspects of prostitution are criminally sanctioned activities. In addition, sex trade workers are occasionally suspects in other, sometimes violent, criminal incidents. For example, Statistics Canada reported that between 1991 and 1995, 18 prostitutes were implicated in the deaths of 10 clients, 1 pimp, and 5 others.⁶ At the same



time, sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside are frequent victims of violent attacks. They are particularly vulnerable to attacks from predatory customers, but also from pimps, boyfriends, or in drug-related incidents.⁷ The murder risk for sex trade workers is approximately 60 to 120 times that of the general female population.⁸ According to some research, sex trade workers are the most likely victims of a serial killer. Further, the most highly addicted and desperate sex trade workers are more likely than other sex trade workers to be the victims of a serial killer.⁹ The lives of sex trade workers are difficult, to say the least, and are often tragically short, as a result of the effects of drugs, diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and violence.

In 1997, there began a sharp increase in the number of sex trade workers being reported missing from the Downtown Eastside. From 1978 to 1996, inclusive, there was an average of one woman every two years reported to the VPD to be missing from the Downtown Eastside who wasn't eventually found.

5 For example, see: DeNeen Brown, “On Willy’s Pig Farm, Sifting for Clues” in the on-line version of the Washington Post, September 5, 2004.

6 Doreen Duchesne (1997). *Street Prostitution in Canada*. Juristat Vol. 17, no. 2, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, pp. 8-9.

7 Ibid.

8 John Lowman & L. Fraser (1995). *Violence against persons who prostitute: The experience in British Columbia*. Ottawa: Department of Justice.

9 Jonathan Dudek (2001). *When Silenced Voices Speak: An Exploratory Study of Prostitute Homicide*, Doctoral dissertation, MCP Hahnemann University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, p. 389.

In 1997, however, this number jumped to five, and spiked dramatically to 11 in 1998.¹⁰

In response to the increase in women being reported missing, in July 1998, Detective Constable Lori Shenher was added to the Vancouver Police Department's Missing Person's Unit, increasing its strength from one to two investigators. Her assignment was, simply, to find the Missing Women. As there was no direct evidence that the Missing Women had met with foul play, the premise of the initial investigation was that each of the Missing Women had disappeared from the Downtown Eastside for different reasons. It was expected that each would eventually be found alive, or to have died of an overdose or some other cause.

There was some basis for this belief: sex trade workers who had disappeared in Vancouver in the past had, in the vast majority of cases, been located by the VPD, whether alive or dead of natural causes, overdose, or as the victims of foul play. Where foul play had occurred, the Vancouver Police Department had had great success in solving many of these cases: from 1992 to 1998 there were ten known murders of sex trade workers in Vancouver, and eight of them were solved with charges laid.¹¹

In contrast, in a February 1997 Statistics Canada report, it was noted that of 63 sex trade workers known to have been murdered in Canada over a 5-year period, 54% remained unsolved.¹² Provincially, by 2000 the ViCLAS (Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System) indicated there were 52 unsolved prostitute murders in BC, and 31 unsolved

female "hitchhiker" murders. Comparative figures from Alberta showed only nine and four unsolved murders in the same two categories.¹³

In 1997, a list of 71 women believed murdered or missing from the Downtown Eastside was compiled, and when a police officer was assigned to look for them, he was able to account for 69 of the 71 women on the list. (Of the 71, 34 had died of non-criminal reasons; 15 had been murdered – 8 of the 10 murders in Vancouver had been solved, with the 5 in outside jurisdictions remaining unsolved; 19 women on the list had relocated from Vancouver; and 2 were listed as missing persons with the VPD.)¹⁴

As a result of the VPD's historical success in locating missing women from the Downtown Eastside, there was considerable skepticism in the VPD about theories of a serial killer at work in the early days of the Missing Women investigation. That skepticism, however, would eventually change among investigators, although at the management level, it continued.

Extraordinary effort went into investigating the missing women from the Downtown Eastside, in the context of a missing persons investigation. However, at some point, it became clear that the possibility of a serial killer being responsible for the missing women was the most likely explanation for so many women going missing without a trace. An investigative unit, the "Missing Women Review Team" (MWRT) was created and did have a focus on suspects for a time, but faced many challenges.

We know now, of course, that DNA or remains of 29 of the Missing Women (and three unidentified women) were found at the Port Coquitlam pig farm

10 Binder 4, Tab 14.

11 Binder 15, Tab 1; Binder 21, Tab 34; Binder 2, Tab 6.

12 Doreen Duchesne (1997). *Street Prostitution in Canada*. Juristat Vol. 17, no. 2, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, p. 8.

13 Binder 15, Tab 9 and Binder 18, Tab 24.

14 Binder 9, Tab 37.

of Robert “Willy” Pickton, and that he has been charged with the murders of 27 Missing Women.¹⁵ A serial killer was indeed at work, and his victims were many of the women missing from the Downtown Eastside.

It must be recognized at the outset that the investigation into the Missing Women was extremely challenging for a number of reasons. First, while it is now known many of the women were murdered, during the investigation there were no bodies. As a result, at the outset it was not clear whether the investigation was a murder investigation or a missing persons investigation. Bodies also provide a large amount of forensic evidence that is a foundation for investigative strategies. Here there were no bodies, no “dump sites,” no witnesses, and no forensic evidence of any kind. Second, many of the women were not reported missing for months and even years since they had last been seen. Determining exactly where and when they went missing was often impossible.

Compounding these challenges, the number of serious sexual predators in our communities at any given time is frightening.¹⁶ Traditional methods of narrowing down the list of suspects in a murder, such as establishing timelines of activity and investigating alibis for a particular date or location, were of no use in this case due to the considerable time that had typically elapsed between the last known sighting of the victims, and when they were reported missing. In addition, because sex trade workers have multiple

contacts with strangers on a daily basis – and these “clients” were the most likely suspects – the traditional investigative strategy of starting the investigation by focusing on individuals known to the victim was of little utility.

Finally, the multi-jurisdictional aspect of the investigation presented further challenges. The Crown’s theory on Pickton is that he “lured or procured the attendance of sex trade workers to his home...in Port Coquitlam” and killed them there.¹⁷ The Pickton farm, where it is believed many of the Missing Women from the Downtown Eastside were actually killed, is located in the jurisdiction of the Port Coquitlam RCMP. The Pickton investigation suffered as a result of the jurisdictional divide, due to a lack of continuity between the VPD and RCMP investigations, and serious mistakes that were made during the course of the RCMP’s investigation.

There is also a question as to whether an investigation into a serial killer can be the responsibility of any single police department, considering the typically multi-jurisdictional aspect of the crime, the need to efficiently integrate information from many police agencies, and the level of resourcing required.

Understanding the challenges faced by the VPD investigators is critically important to balancing the bias of hindsight in a review of this nature. These challenges were compounded by a number of organizational and operational issues that functioned to hinder the effective investigation of the Missing Women between 1998 and 2002. These challenges are examined as well in the following discussion.

15 On May 25th, 2005, the Crown filed a Direct Indictment charging Pickton with 27 counts of 1st degree murder related to: the original 15 counts laid prior to the preliminary hearing, the evidence led at the preliminary hearing regarding 7 additional counts, and five additional cases.

16 Sergeant Matt Logan of the RCMP’s Behavioural Sciences Unit is a PhD psychologist with expertise in high risk offenders. His unit’s 2004 data indicates there are over 1,200 high risk offenders in B.C., the majority in Greater Vancouver, and that over 400 are “extremely” high risk.

17 Submission of Crown Counsel Petrie at Pickton’s Preliminary Hearing, July 21, 2003.

PART I

THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

PART I THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

FEBRUARY 1997 – FEBRUARY 2002

Part I of this Review will chronologically detail the course of the Vancouver Police Department's investigation into the Missing Women, including all aspects of the investigation into Robert Pickton prior to February 2002. The chronology begins with events leading to the recognition of the disappearances of the Missing Women and the assignment of an extra detective in the VPD Missing Persons Unit in 1998 to focus on the Missing Women case. The Chronology then details the investigation leading up to the creation of a "Missing Women's Review Team" (MWRT, also known as "Project Amelia") by the VPD in 1999. The MWRT's investigation is described, leading up to the eventual creation of a Joint Force Operation between the VPD and the RCMP (Project Evenhanded). The JFO's investigation is summarized, and then the chronology concludes with the execution of search warrants on the property of Robert Pickton in February 2002.

(In Part II, a detailed analysis is provided of the Missing Women investigation.)

FEBRUARY 1997

A LIST OF 71 ALLEGEDLY MURDERED AND MISSING WOMEN IS CREATED

On February 7th, 1997, Ms. Karen Isaac of the "First Nations Summit" wrote to Sgt. Bob Cooper of the VPD Major Crime Section with a list of 48 women the Summit described as "homicide victims believed to be of First Nations/Aboriginal ancestry."

The Summit asked for information about these cases.¹⁸ Sgt. Cooper subsequently forwarded the correspondence to Sergeant Honeybourn of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit.¹⁹

On February 13th, 1997, Chief Joe Mathias, Grand Chief Edward John, and Mr. Robert Louie, also representing the First Nations Summit, wrote to then-Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh. They requested his intervention regarding what they characterized as the inadequate investigation of "the brutal murders of fifty-five Aboriginal women in the Vancouver area over the last ten years."²⁰ Enclosed was a list similar to the one sent by Ms. Isaac to Sergeant Cooper, but with seven more names than Ms. Isaac's list.

The Attorney General responded with information about the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, and that he was aware the unit had a copy of the list, was corresponding with the Summit, and had assigned an officer to "look into this matter." Regarding inadequate investigations, the Attorney General urged the Summit to provide any relevant information to Sgt. Honeybourn.²¹

The list of names provided by the Summit, coupled with other sources of information, was increased to 71 by police.

18 Binder 9, Tab 39.

19 Binder 9, Tab 38.

20 Binder 9, Tab 40.

21 Binder 9, Tab 40.

MARCH-JULY 1997

CONSTABLE DICKSON INVESTIGATES THE LIST OF 71 ALLEGEDLY MURDERED AND MISSING WOMEN

In March of 1997, Constable Dave Dickson, a constable highly respected in the Downtown Eastside for his work with the community, was loaned to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit because of his familiarity with the Downtown Eastside. He was assigned to determine the fate of the 71 women on the list.

Using a variety of investigative resources, Constable Dickson spent several weeks attempting to determine the whereabouts of these women. His concluding report set out the results of his investigation.

Although Constable Dickson’s report originally states that all but one of the 71 women had been accounted for, it later states, “Two names are reported to Vancouver as missing and have not been seen for a year and a half. Foul play is suspected. Dorothy Spence is one, and the other is Mary Lidguerre.” (Lidguerre’s bones were found on Mount Seymour in August of 1996, but she was not identified until 1997, through dental records. Her murder remains unsolved. Spence has never been found.)

On March 20th, 1997, Sgt. Honeybourn of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit wrote to Ms. Isaac with a summary of the results of Constable Dickson’s investigation: ²²

Total	71	Named individuals
	34	Persons deceased by causes other than murder
	15	Homicides, 10 occurred in Vancouver and 5 in outside jurisdictions. Of the 10 in Vancouver, only 2 remain unsolved. The 5 in outside jurisdictions remain unsolved.
	19	Persons appear to have re-located
	2	Persons are listed as missing persons to Vancouver Police.

TANYA HOLYK AND STEPHANIE LANE REPORTED MISSING

Although Constable Dickson was able to account for almost all the women on his list, there were other women not on the list that had gone missing from the Downtown Eastside. On January 23rd, 1997, Tanya Holyk was reported missing, having last been seen October 29th, 1996. ²³ Stephanie Lane was reported missing March 11th, 1997, having been last seen January 10th, 1997.

22 Binder 9, Tab 37.

23 A table in the “Analysis” section of this report lists the women described as reported missing in this chronology and the outcome, e.g., later linked to the Pickton property.

JULY 1997 – APRIL 1998

MORE WOMEN GO MISSING FROM THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

In June of 1997, sex trade worker Janet Gail Henry went missing from the Downtown Eastside. She was last seen on June 25th, 1997 and reported missing to the VPD on June 28th, 1997. She left behind a 12-year-old daughter and a sister, Sandra Gagnon, who said she talked daily to her sister on the phone. Constable Dave Dickson, back working in the Neighbourhood Safety Office, told the *Vancouver Sun* that he was trying to find her, and that he hoped she hadn't met with foul play.²⁴

Olivia William was the next to be reported missing, on July 4th, 1997. Ms. William hadn't been seen since December 6th, 1996.

On January 29th, 1998, Kerri Koski was reported missing to the VPD, but hadn't been seen since January 7th of the previous year. Next to be reported missing was Inga Hall, who was reported missing on March 3rd, 1998, not having been seen for a week.

Sherry Irving was reported missing to the Pemberton RCMP and the Tribal Police on March 21st, 1998, having been last seen in April 1997. Her disappearance was not reported to the VPD.

In March 1998, Ada Prevost was also reported missing, having last been seen in September 1997. (She was found in — in 1999.)

On April 2nd, 1998, Constable Dickson wrote a memo to Sergeant Ken Frail about activities in the Downtown Eastside Safety Office and raised concerns about two missing women, Janet Henry and Ada Prevost.²⁵

On April 14th, 1998, Sarah de Vries went missing from the corner of Princess and Hastings in the Downtown Eastside. Despite having two children who lived with their grandmother in Ontario and a caring sister in Vancouver, she uncharacteristically never made contact with them again. Her sister, Maggie de Vries, was "95 per cent certain" that Sarah had been murdered because she believed there was no other explanation for Sarah losing contact.²⁶

Wayne Leng, a client and friend of Sarah's, became a vocal advocate for a reward for information about the Missing Women, and started a website dedicated to Sarah, and then to the rest of the Missing Women.²⁷

On April 30th, 1998, Cindy Beck was reported missing to the VPD. She hadn't been seen for over 20 years, since September 1977.

When listed this way, the developing pattern of missing women is obvious and terribly alarming, particularly in hindsight, when their ultimate fate is known. However, it must be appreciated that at the time, the Missing Persons Unit of the VPD, to whom many of these disappearances were reported, was handling over 3,000 reported missing persons cases each year.²⁸

24 Lindsay Kines, "Family fears worst as woman vanishes in east Vancouver," in the *Vancouver Sun*, July 24, 1997, p. B3.

25 Binder 8, Tab 6.

26 Lindsay Kines, "Police target big increase in missing women cases: Investigators will look into each incident to determine if there are any similarities," in the *Vancouver Sun*, July 3, 1998, p. B1.

27 www.missingpeople.net

28 For example, in 1998, there were 3,199 missing persons reported to the VPD.

In 1998, the VPD's Missing Persons Unit – a unit in the Major Crime Section – was comprised of one detective and a clerk. Reports of missing persons were made through the 9-1-1 system to the VPD Communications Centre. Information was taken over the phone, and a uniformed police officer would be dispatched to conduct the initial investigation if there was any information requiring immediate follow-up. Otherwise, the information was taken by phone and forwarded to the Missing Persons Unit. When a uniformed officer was dispatched to investigate but the person was not located, those files would also be forwarded to the Missing Persons Unit for follow-up investigation. Most of the thousands of missing persons reports every year were of juvenile runaways, and very few missing persons, regardless of whether they were a juvenile or adult, remained missing for long.

In this context, it is more understandable that a pattern of missing sex trade workers from the Downtown Eastside was not identified earlier. However, as is discussed later, the lack of a system in the Missing Persons Unit to bring-forward files of persons who had not been found within a few weeks caused the pattern of missing sex trade workers to go unrecognized for longer than it might have.

Community groups, however, were cognisant of the pattern of Missing Women fairly early on, and raised the alarm that the cases needed investigating. In addition, according to Inspector Fred Biddlecombe, who was in charge of the Major Crime Section, the Missing Persons Unit clerk, [Parker](#), brought to his attention that there seemed to be an increase in women missing from the Downtown Eastside compared to the previous year:

In March or April of '98, [Parker](#) brought to my attention that she had noticed an increase in the number of missing women for the first 3 or 4

months of '98 compared to previous years. She said there were 5 or 6 missing which appeared to be higher compared to previous years. I asked her to do a comparison for the same time frame in previous years, because she was only looking at the entire year for previous years. I asked her to pull all the files with the M.O. of sex trade workers from the Downtown Eastside and they were assigned to her and the Missing Persons Unit investigator to look at whether we had a problem, to start looking at this.²⁹

JULY 1998

In the decade prior to 1997, few women meeting the profile of an addicted sex trade worker had been reported missing from the Downtown Eastside and not eventually found: one from 1986, one from 1992, three from 1995, and another one in 1996. But by July of 1998, the VPD had recognized that at least 10 women had been reported missing in only two years, and the VPD publicly stated they were concerned, but that there was no indication of a serial killer. The possibility that some of the women had been killed in disputes over drugs, for example, was not discounted. The Vancouver Police Department committed to putting more resources into investigating the Missing Women cases.

THE INVESTIGATION OF THE MISSING WOMEN BEGINS

In July of 1998, Detective Constable Lori Shenher was assigned to the Missing Persons Unit to actively investigate the escalating number of reports of missing women from the Downtown Eastside. Her direct supervisor was Sergeant Geramy Field, whose

29 Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are from interviews conducted by the author.

primary responsibility was the supervision of a squad of homicide detectives, but who also had administrative responsibility for the Missing Persons Unit.

The first of the following two organizational charts shows the structure of the VPD in July 1998. The second shows how the Missing Persons Unit – part of the Major Crime Section – fit into the “Operational Support Division” in the VPD. (This Division has since been renamed the “Investigation Division,” as it was prior to 1998).

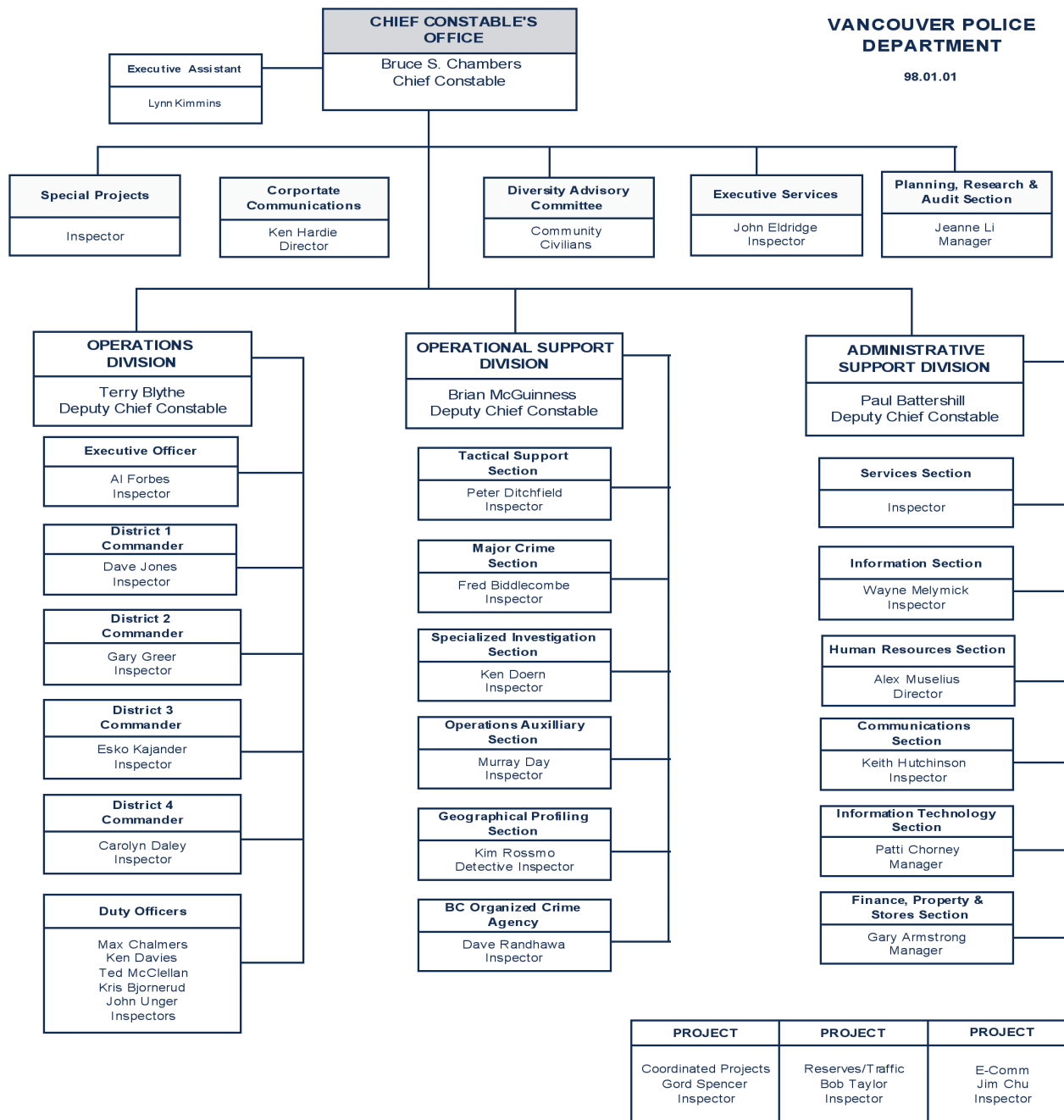
When Detective Constable Shenher was added to the Missing Persons Unit, she was the second investigator, supplementing Detective Al Howlett.

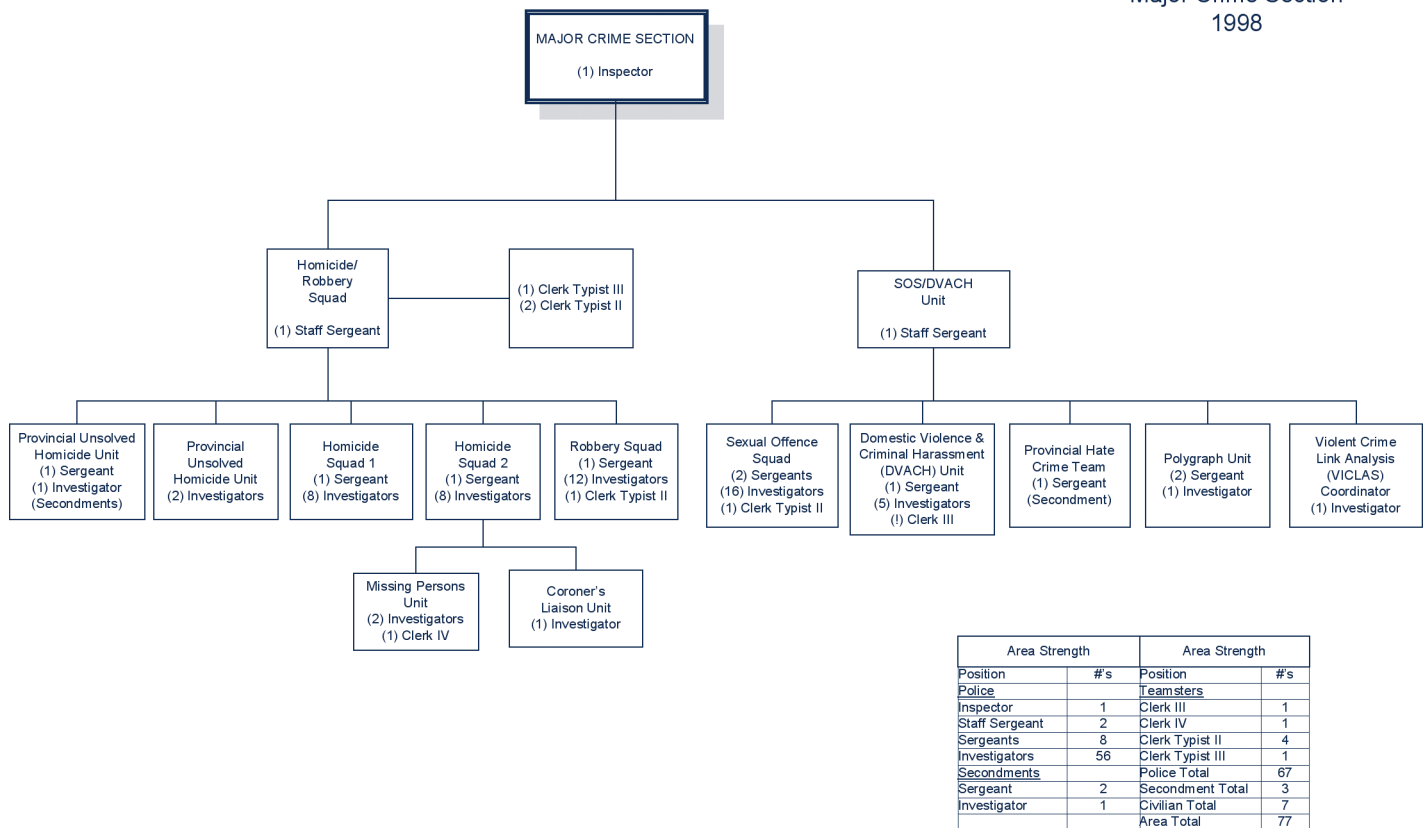
At about the time of Detective Constable Shenher’s assignment to Missing Persons, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that the VPD was “concerned about the number of missing women who were involved in drugs and the sex trade and put more resources into finding them.”³⁰ At this time, there had been 16 women reported missing in the previous decade, 10 of them in the previous two years. Media spokesperson Constable Anne Drennan was quoted in the same article as saying, “the missing persons section has been told to give these particular 16 files the highest of priorities,” and also stated there was no indication of a serial killer preying on the women.

However, the belief that some of the Missing Women had been murdered, possibly by a serial killer, was gaining momentum. Wayne Leng, a client and friend of Sarah de Vries,³¹ had set up a 1-800 tip line for information about the Missing Women. Mr. Leng had received a pager message that he replayed for

30 Lindsay Kines, “Police target big increase in missing women cases: Investigators will look into each incident to determine if there are any similarities,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, July 3, 1998, p. B1.

31 Maggie de Vries describes Leng’s relationship to Sarah in her book, “Missing Sarah.”





the media. The caller claimed to know that Sarah had been murdered and said that more women would be killed. Although this message was later demonstrated to be a hoax, it is an example of the increasing perception that the Missing Women were more than just “missing,” and had met with foul play. Detective Constable Shenher recalled thinking there was the potential for the VPD investigation to become a serial murder investigation because of the spike in the numbers.

THE FIRST PICKTON TIP IS RECEIVED

On July 27th, 1998, shortly after Detective Constable Shenher was assigned to the Missing Women investigation, Crime Stoppers received a tip from a

male caller (later identified as William Hiscox).³² He described a man he knew as “Willie” and stated that Willie was a “sicko” who picked up prostitutes from Burnaby, New Westminster and Vancouver. He also stated that a recent visitor to Willy’s trailer observed at least ten purses and women’s identification in the trailer. The tipster also reported that “Willy” had made comments to other people that he can “easily dispose of bodies by putting them through a grinder which he uses to prepare food to feed his hogs.” This information was consistent with information that Wayne Leng received in a phone call the same day. Mr. Leng had noted on his call display the phone number of the caller.³³

32 Binder 29, Tab 7.

33 Binder 2, Tab 63.

AUGUST 1998

SHEILA EGAN REPORTED MISSING TO NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE

On August 5th, 1998, Sheila Egan was reported missing to the New Westminster Police Service. Detective Constable Shenher also became aware of this case in August of 1998.

THE SECOND PICKTON TIP IS RECEIVED

On August 6th, 1998, the Crime Stoppers tipster called again and stated that the full name of the suspect was Willie Pickton, that he had killed Sarah (de Vries), that he had a farm in Port Coquitlam, and that “he might be responsible for all the missing girls.”³⁴

THE MISSING WOMEN “WORKING GROUP”

In approximately the same time period, August 1998, Inspector Gary Greer, who was then in charge of the police district that includes the Downtown Eastside, and Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo, who was in charge of the Geographic Profiling Unit, created a “Working Group” to respond to community concerns about the Missing Women. The Working Group was intended to be a multi-disciplinary group of police officers to review historical Missing Women cases to determine if a serial killer was at work. It was intended that in the Working Group there would be officers from the Missing Persons Unit and the Sexual Offence and Homicide Squads, as well as Inspector Greer and Detective Inspector Rossmo. Their plan was to review 40 unsolved missing women cases dating back to 1971.

Detective Inspector Rossmo recalled how the Working Group began:

Around the end of the summer in 1998 I got a phone call from Doug McKay-Dunn who was the 2 i/c in D2 and he said they had a problem they thought I could assist on. I met with Gary Greer and Doug soon after.³⁵ There were concerns from the community that had been given to Dave Dickson and he brought it to Gary Greer. There were allegations from the community of a serial killer, and they wanted to know what I thought this information meant and what should be done with it.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER MEETS WITH CORPORAL CONNOR

On August 18th, 1998, Detective Constable Shenher met with Corporal Connor of the Port Coquitlam RCMP to discuss the Pickton tips, since the Pickton property was located in Port Coquitlam, the jurisdiction of the RCMP. Corporal Connor informed Detective Constable Shenher of a 1997 RCMP investigation that Corporal Connor had conducted into an incident involving Pickton and a woman named [Anderson](#).

Detective Constable Shenher learned that on March 23rd, 1997, Robert “Willie” Pickton picked up sex trade worker [Anderson](#) in the Downtown Eastside. He brought her to his trailer in Port Coquitlam where an incident of extreme violence occurred. The Report to Crown Counsel describes how, after consensual sex, Pickton suddenly attacked [Anderson](#) and managed to get a handcuff on one wrist. She fought back ferociously and managed to slash his throat with a knife she picked up off a table in Pickton’s residence. As she tried to escape, Pickton attacked her again, managed to get the knife away from her,

34 Binder 29, Tab 7.

35 Detective Inspector Rossmo’s notes indicate this meeting occurred on August 25th, 1998.

and viciously stabbed her multiple times before weakening from blood loss. Anderson ran from the trailer and was rescued by passersby. They took her into their car, then flagged down police who in turn called for an ambulance. Anderson's wounds were life-threatening and she came close to dying. Charges were laid but subsequently stayed, for reasons not confirmed for this review, but apparently related to her perceived lack of credibility or reliability due to her drug use.

At that time, the Anderson incident was the only entry for Pickton on the RCMP's PIRS (Police Information Retrieval System) database. Corporal Connor recorded in his notes that "as Pickton is a resident of this jurisdiction this Detachment will place him on CPIC – OBS [observation] category [in] an attempt to identify his travels, vehicles and associates etc." ³⁶ Corporal Connor also contacted Ms. Terry Stewart, an intelligence analyst at the former Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit (CLEU) to request any information that could be determined "with respect to Pickton, his property, and any known CLEU investigations." (On August 26th, 1998, Corporal Connor received an intelligence package from Ms. Stewart regarding Pickton's business enterprises, vehicles, trailers, etc.)

INTERVIEW OF WAYNE LENG/HISCOX'S TAPED CONVERSATION WITH WAYNE LENG

On August 18th, 1998, from 5 p.m. to 6:15 p.m., Detective Constable Shenher interviewed Wayne Leng at the VPD's 312 Main Street offices regarding Sarah de Vries. ³⁷ Leng told her that Sarah had been "pulling rips more often" towards the time she went

missing, and there was a possibility she may have gotten in trouble with a Vietnamese drug dealer. They also discussed the tip received by police from "Bill," and that Leng had spoken to the same person and taped the call (see below). They also discussed other possible suspects.

Detective Constable Shenher concluded her notes by stating that "impression of Leng is he is on the level and genuinely concerned for [Sarah's] welfare. Seems to realistically believe [she] is not going to be found alive, but holds out some hope."

On August 19th, 1998, Detective Constable Shenher received an audiocassette from Wayne Leng on which he had recorded his conversation with an anonymous caller (later identified as Hiscox). In the call, the then-anonymous male stated that Pickton had a 25-acre farm and that there were women's purses, clothing and ID in his trailer on the property. The tipster also said that Pickton had tried to get someone to pick up Anderson off the street in Vancouver and take her to his farm so he could "finish her off." ³⁸ That day, Detective Constable Shenher phoned the number of the caller but did not make contact.

PICKTON ENTERED ON CPIC; PROVINCIAL UNSOLVED HOMICIDE UNIT ADVISED OF PICKTON

Also on August 19th, 1998, Corporal Connor had Pickton entered on CPIC under the "observation" category for being dangerous to prostitutes, and advised Sergeant Blizzard of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit of this information.

³⁶ Binder 29, Tab 9. (Corporal Connor prepared very detailed notes throughout his involvement in the Pickton investigation. This report refers extensively to those notes where applicable.)

³⁷ Binder 18, Tab 76.

³⁸ Binder 29, Tab 1.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER INTERVIEWS

ANDERSON

On August 21st, 1998, Shenher located and interviewed Anderson. She found her credible, and still very frightened of Pickton.³⁹ Detective Constable Shenher described being “struck with her statement – it was almost verbatim to her statement to the Mounties. She had a great memory for detail and it was obviously traumatic; she was reliving it.”

CONSTABLE DICKSON PROVIDES ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING MISSING WOMEN

On August 27th, 1998, Constable Dickson submitted to his Staff Sergeant, Doug McKay-Dunn, a list of 35 women who were still listed on CPIC as missing, having been reported missing between the years of 1975 to 1998. He also included in his report a list of unsolved homicides of women associated with the Downtown Eastside.⁴⁰ Dickson later related that when he was investigating the earlier list of 71 women thought to be murdered or missing:

...other names were coming up...of women I hadn't seen for a while and that's where I put together my own missing women's list. In 1998, I put this list forward to Gary Greer raising my concerns about these missing women. I wasn't aware at the time that Lori Shenher was working on the same problem. This was the first time that it became clear to me that there was a problem. There were always rumours going around of women that were missing. The women's centre would put out lists of names saying these women had been murdered and nothing had been done and that's been going on as long as I could remember, but we'd always find that they'd OD'd or gone somewhere else.

THE RESULTS OF DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER'S PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INTO THE MISSING WOMEN

On the same day, August 27th, 1998, Detective Constable Shenher submitted to Sergeant Field an overview of her investigation to that date.⁴¹ In it she described liaising with members of the Native community, but pointed out that the Missing Women were of varied races. She advised that the common thread between the Missing Women was that they were, or had been, sex trade workers and were drug addicts. She advised that she was re-interviewing family members and persons of interest in the files and examining the Missing Women's patterns to determine how many were actually missing, as opposed to having left the area to “go to detox, jail, or to pursue work opportunities.”

However, Detective Constable Shenher advised that none of the cases she was investigating “seemed to fall into these categories and the victims have gone missing under suspicious circumstances.” She pointed out that a large percentage of the women had children either living under the care of the ministry or with extended family and they had not lost contact with these children or with family for more than very brief periods of time until they went missing.

Detective Constable Shenher advised she was attempting to determine whether any of the Missing Women had anyone in their lives with a serious motive to harm them, pointing out that because of their lifestyles, they had regular contact with people capable of violence. She concluded that there was no evidence of a serious threat of harm from someone in their lives in the vast majority of cases.

Detective Constable Shenher also reported that she was exploring the possibility that some of the women owed drug debts, and that their disappearances may

39 Binder 18, Tab 71.

40 Binder 27, Tab 24.

41 Binder 15, tab 58.

have been related to the collection of these debts. She was, therefore, investigating their histories in terms of who the women had obtained their drugs from, and whether the women had a history of ripping off drug dealers.

Detective Constable Shenher advised she was also following up on several tips generated by the publicity in the Sarah de Vries case, which had generated leads on two persons of interest. Further, she was investigating information received from the Sexual Offence Squad and the Vice Unit on persons with a history of violence against sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside.

Detective Constable Shenher concluded her report by stating she was not yet in a position to say whether she believed one person was responsible for the Missing Women, but that she did “believe we’re going to find these cases are related and should be treated as such.”

SEPTEMBER 1998

DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE MCGUINNESS UPDATES DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE BLYTHE

On September 1st, 1998, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness (Operational Support Division) wrote a memo to Deputy Chief Constable Blythe (Operations Division) advising that Detective Constable Shenher was making excellent progress on the Missing Women investigation. He stated she would be an excellent resource for the “Task Force” (actually called a “working group”) being chaired by then-Inspector Greer (later promoted to Deputy Chief Constable) and Detective Inspector Rossmo and that all sections in his Division would cooperate.⁴²

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER ATTEMPTS TO MAKE CONTACT WITH HISCOX

On September 2nd, 1998, Detective Constable Shenher learned that the telephone number Hiscox had called Wayne Leng from on July 27th was a Surrey men’s shelter where Hiscox had been staying. Staff agreed to page Detective Constable Shenher when Hiscox returned.

Hiscox did page Detective Constable Shenher later that night and they had a long conversation. (Detective Constable Shenher kept detailed notes of this conversation and her other dealings with Hiscox.⁴³)

Hiscox repeated that Pickton had told him that “if they ever want to dispose of a body to come to him because he can do it by putting it through a grinder and feeding it to his pigs on his property in Port Coquitlam.” Hiscox was familiar with the [Anderson](#) incident. Hiscox repeated the information about the women’s ID and other belongings in his place, and said the information came from a woman friend, “Quinn” (later identified as [Quinn](#)), who felt Pickton may be responsible for the current missing prostitutes as well as several in the late 1970s. Detective Constable Shenher advised Hiscox she wanted to speak to [Quinn](#) and that she would give him a few days to think about how he would want her to approach her.

MARNIE FREY REPORTED MISSING

On September 4th, 1998, Marnie Frey was reported missing to the VPD, having last been seen on August 29th, 1997.

42 Binder 9, Tab 3.

43 Binder 29, Tab 8

THE MISSING WOMEN “WORKING GROUP”

On September 4th, 1998, Detective Inspector Rossmo submitted a memorandum to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness with an updated “strategic blueprint” for the Working Group to look at the issue of the Missing Women.⁴⁴ He noted that the group had had its initial meeting that day, and was planning to have another meeting on September 22nd. He also advised that a press conference to announce the formation and mandate of the Working Group was planned for September 30th.

Detective Inspector Rossmo set out in the memorandum that the objective of the Working Group was to determine if a serial murderer was preying upon sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside. The proposal called for the development of a list of potential victims, conducting of linkage analysis, investigation of any identified murder series, and “safety and crime prevention initiatives.” Detective Inspector Rossmo recalled his thinking at the time:

I studied serial murders as part of my doctoral research and at this point in time, I'd been involved in about 20 serial murder investigations, involved in that I was consulted on the cases. This gave me a good overview of what works well, what doesn't, ideas that were helpful for the investigation. There's a couple of classic mistakes made over and over: one is denying it to the community, the other is “linkage blindness” or lack of information sharing within the agency and between agencies. A very good example is the Bernardo case where he was a serial rapist in Toronto, then Toronto wasn't in the GRT. I thought the best approach was a 2-step approach. The first step would involve an assessment of the situation, and the second would involve an appropriate investigation if indicated. The purpose of the first part to be done through a working group was to see

if what the community was suggesting was really a problem, was there fire with the smoke. Gary and Doug and I thought there was enough smoke that this needed to be looked at very seriously.

I'd spent a lot of time in Skid Road and Dave Dickson had spent a ton of time there and we felt this wasn't something typical or normal. However, having said that, you sometimes get people making allegations that aren't founded. We had a guy named — who kept accusing DEYAS members of being serial killers. So just because someone makes an allegation doesn't mean there's something there. But we thought this was unusual. Dickson had done some preliminary research, and there were a lot of people there, so that was the purpose of the assessment. I thought there needed to be representation from Homicide, Missing Persons, Sex Crimes, because many serial murderers have backgrounds in other crimes, like sex crimes. We needed ViCLAS because they have the capacity to link unidentified human remains with suspicious missings, the DISC program, Vice, Patrol Northeast, and also the RCMP, because if people are going missing and are being murdered, there's a good chance the bodies will be found in a rural area. And there was particular interest because some bodies had been found in a remote area out in the valley.

The first person I phoned after we discussed this was Inspector Biddlecombe, who was in charge of the Major Crime Section. He was away, so I spoke to the Acting Inspector, Geramy Field, and she was friendly, cooperative, and she said she'd be there. I prepared what I called a Strategic Blueprint. Another thing I did was prepare a draft press release for approval. The rationale was that the media were already talking about this, because the community was. Two, I've never seen a police agency get in trouble for saying they thought they had a serial

44 Binder 10, Tab 52.

killer when they didn't, but I've seen lots of agencies get in trouble for saying they didn't when they did. I thought it would protect the department, because it takes the wind out of critics' sails. If the police deny it, it's an attack point. Third, the research is pretty clear that most serial murders are solved by some piece of information that came from the public.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER MAKES CONTACT WITH HISCOX; PICKTON INVESTIGATION CONTINUES

Meanwhile, on September 4th, 1998, Detective Constable Shenher left a message for Hiscox at a new number he had provided, wanting to arrange to meet Hiscox and "Quinn."

On September 5th, 1998 at 9 p.m., Hiscox paged Detective Constable Shenher at home and she returned his call. He agreed to come for a meeting at the Vancouver Police station at 312 Main Street on September 8th at 10:00 a.m. However, on September 8th, 1998, Hiscox phoned and said he couldn't make it that morning but would come in later that afternoon. Hiscox didn't show up in the afternoon, either, but another meeting was arranged for September 16th.

On September 8th, 1998, Corporal Connor noted that the [Anderson](#) incident was the only record of Pickton appearing in the ViCLAS (Violent Crime Linkage Analysis) database.

On September 9th, 1998, Detective Constable Shenher called Corporal Connor and advised him of the information about Pickton seeking to "finish off" [Anderson](#).

INSPECTOR BIDDLECOMBE'S CONCERNS ABOUT THE MISSING WOMEN "WORKING GROUP"

On September 14th, 1998, Inspector Biddlecombe wrote a memorandum to Inspector Greer expressing his concerns about the Working Group, particularly about a press release planned for September 30th, which he described as "inaccurate and quite inflammatory."⁴⁵ Inspector Biddlecombe provided a detailed summary of the efforts that had gone into investigating murders of sex trade workers since 1985. He pointed out that neither he nor Staff Sergeant Giles had been consulted about the proposed press release, and also advised that he was not prepared to allow access to sensitive investigative files except through Sergeant Field.

Constable Anne Drennan, the VPD's media liaison officer at the time, recalled that Detective Inspector Rossmo had brought the proposed press release to her:

Kim showed me a document that he had put together. It was about a meeting they'd had that he had suggested there was a serial killer and he wanted to talk to me about a media release saying there was a serial killer and there was dissension in the working group and that not everyone was in agreement. He said he hoped they would come to consensus and he wanted me to be ready in case they did. At the same time, Fred was saying "no serial killer."

45 Binder 1, Tab 79.

The proposed press release that concerned Inspector Biddlecombe (and also Detective Constable Shenher, who thought it was premature pending further investigation) was never issued to the media. (The media would eventually obtain a copy when Detective Inspector Rossmo sued the VPD.) The full text is set out below:⁴⁶

Date: 98-09-03

Formation of Downtown Eastside Missing Persons Working Group

Over the last few years there has been a disturbing number of sex trade workers from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside who have been found murdered or reported missing. Community concerns and our own preliminary analysis has led the Vancouver Police Department [to] forming the Downtown Eastside Missing Persons Working Group. The objective of this Group is to determine if a serial murderer is preying upon people in the Downtown Eastside and, if so, what murders and disappearances are linked together.

A three-part strategic blueprint for the Group has been developed that involves first compiling an comprehensive list of possible victims, then linking cases together, and finally making investigative recommendations. Reports from as far back as 1970 will be examined in this effort. The Working Group will be chaired by Inspector Gary Greer, District 2, and Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo, Geographic Profiling Section. We will also be seeking involvement from the RCMP as many of the cases appear to be inter-jurisdictional in nature.

MISSING WOMEN "WORKING GROUP" MEETS

On September 16th, 1998, a meeting of the Missing Women Working Group was held.⁴⁷ Present were Inspector Biddlecombe, Constable Dickson, Detective Inspector Rossmo, Inspector Greer, and Detective Constable Shenher.

Apparently, the meeting did not go well. Inspector Biddlecombe was concerned about the proposed press release, and his belief that an Operations member had leaked information about the investigation to the media. There were personality conflicts at play. Detective Constable Shenher later recalled:

...there was a lack of direction. Everyone at the table had a willingness to figure it out, but no one was in charge, there were egos at the table. Fred was basically chairing, it was very informal. It wasn't particularly productive. There was no assignment of tasks or responsibilities. I think Fred was thinking let's have the meeting so we can say we did. I think he was feeling the pressure and didn't want to be led by what they were going to do. I think it was handled poorly and could have been more cooperative. Gary and Kim were passionate about it and were emotional, and Fred got his back up. I don't think they thought about how they could make it work. I really feel that if we'd had D2 on side helping, it would have really helped. I tried to get D2 members on side to raise the profile of the investigation, but that never really happened. In looking back, I would have done some things differently, gone higher, got a presentation to D2 members to get them on side. But Fred didn't like Kim and didn't want to do anything that would further Kim's agenda. He didn't want to create more strain on his own section. I had 7 years on and

46 Binder 27, Tab 47

47 There is some confusion over the dates the "Working Group" met, with some notes suggesting the second meeting was on September 24th, not the 16th, although it is clear that after September 4th there was only one meeting.

wouldn't say shit if I was standing in it. I thought that's the way things were done. It was a missed opportunity, it was unfortunate.

Sergeant Field was less critical, recalling that:

...Kim was presenting an action plan he had drawn up. Everyone was on board but we didn't even know what kind of problem it was. We accepted that there was a problem, everyone was committed, but we needed to find out what the scope of the problem was. But it was so early on that the thought was to give Lori Shenher and Al Howlett an opportunity to do some investigating and find out what the scope of it was.

I remember a meeting with Chambers and Brian and Fred and Brock [later]. I was impressed the Chief was there. I think that was after Kim wasn't involved anymore. I understood after the fact that Kim wasn't going to be part of our meetings anymore. Fred wanted to keep the information tight, and I think it wasn't about Kim, it was because he was concerned about leaking of information, and thought Dickson had leaked something. I knew from Kim for sure that Fred didn't want Kim involved. I trusted Kim at that point and I'd taken his profiling course which was quite good.

Detective Inspector Rossmo recalled the meeting as follows:

We had really good representation. Fred Biddlecombe came to the meeting...The meeting immediately got derailed by Biddlecombe. I didn't even know he was coming. The best way I can describe it was a temper tantrum. My interpretation was that it was partly a turf thing. I think he didn't believe there was a serial killer. I think he was not prepared to listen to anything that I had to say. And I think that goes back to that in his mind, I was just

a constable. He's certainly not going to take any advice from me. That meeting was the last time he ever spoke to me face to face, even though we were at another meeting together, he didn't actually talk to me. He apparently also had some issues with Dickson. He said that his people were not going to partake in this, which is why we didn't have any more meetings, because without MCS representing homicide, sex offences, missing persons, there was really no purpose. He was angry at me. He brought up the press release or the media or something. I think he accused the group of releasing stuff to the media. I said this would be difficult and we don't have any information to release, and any information was in the hands of Missing Persons. Then it kind of got onto Dickson for releasing stuff to the media. I think Doug McKay-Dunn helped clarify this point with him, like you're blaming the wrong people. Fred said in the meeting that he was going to assign a missing persons detective, or that he had done this, that he was ahead of us. The meeting went in a total different direction than what we thought. It was a little embarrassing because we had people from other agencies there. What I thought would be a working, brainstorming thing became a turf thing...

Inspector Biddlecombe later recalled his recollection of the meeting and the concerns he had with the Working Group.

I remember chastising the group that people were leaking information to the media and it was totally unacceptable. I remember speaking vehemently about the need for confidentiality. I was opposed to Kim Rossmo going public with his press release. I do recall speaking harshly. I recall Kim's [strategic blueprint] report and I responded but I don't recall what my issues were. I was extremely concerned, although I trust policemen, that officers like to talk and I didn't want there to be leaks. I was opposed to

this work group being given carte blanche access to our homicide files. There could be names of sources, background of family members that I thought should stay in house. They could access that information from Geramy Field.

At some point after that, Gary and I agreed that MCS should be running it and supervising it and it was agreed it would remain with MCS. We didn't get into the specifics of Rossmo's report and the things he listed, but I assumed it would go to Geramy and she would use it as guidance working with Lori. After that, everything was moved to Geramy and Lori.

Regarding the press release, I don't specifically recall this document. Reading it now, my concern is that it would set off all kinds of bells with the media. They'd be crawling up our backside wanting to know what's going on and it would cause all kinds of problems.

Regarding not responding to Kim's report about determining if the missing women might be murder victims, I don't recall, I might not have put my mind to that; I'm not an analyst, we had no bodies, we know that we didn't have linkages between the murders we had. I didn't think they were related but I don't know if that was just an oversight or I thought we were already working on it or what.

Deputy Chief Constable Greer recalled that he and Inspector Biddlecombe had "locked horns" at the meeting, and that Inspector Biddlecombe had an extremely negative view of Constable Dickson. Deputy Chief Constable Greer elaborated that Inspector Biddlecombe thought Constable Dickson was "playing games with his supporters in the

Downtown Eastside," that there had been a previous list that had been "bogus" and this was a similar list, and that he didn't have the resources to invest in it. Deputy Chief Constable Greer confirmed Inspector Biddlecombe's statement that it was agreed MCS would have responsibility for the file, not the "working group."

On September 18th, 1998, the *Vancouver Sun* published a story on the Working Group.⁴⁸ Inspector Greer was quoted as saying the team was "a working group" trying to get a handle on the numbers, and Inspector Biddlecombe was quoted as saying he wasn't ruling out the possibility of a serial killer, but that there was no evidence of one.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER INTERVIEWS HISCOX

On September 16th, 1998, the tipster, Hiscox, again failed to attend an interview with Detective Constable Shenher. However, on September 18th, Hiscox left a message for Detective Constable Shenher apologizing for not making the September 16th meeting, and advising he was in Surrey Memorial Hospital. He provided more information from Quinn, e.g., that Pickton still wanted to find (Anderson) and that he had women's purses, jewelry, "bloody clothing in bags like he keeps them for trophies" and syringes in his trailer.

That same day, Detective Constable Shenher went to ——— at 9:30 a.m. and found Hiscox ———, where he was being treated for depression. Hiscox said he believed Pickton to be a killer, and that he couldn't live with himself if he didn't tell police what he knew. Detective Constable Shenher confirmed Hiscox was the Crime Stoppers tipster, and the person who

48 Lindsay Kines, "Missing women cases probed: Vancouver police will review 40 unsolved cases dating from 1971, but they doubt a serial killer was involved in any disappearances," in the *Vancouver Sun*, September 18, 1998, p. B1.

had phoned Wayne Leng. She interviewed Hiscox extensively to obtain further details of what he knew, which came as hearsay from Quinn. Detective Constable Shenher made efforts in her interview to determine Hiscox's motivation and became satisfied that he was credible. Hiscox told her that Quinn would not cooperate with police because she "doesn't give a crap," and was "borderline psycho" herself. Detective Constable Shenher and Hiscox agreed that he would call her in a few days when he believed he would be released. However, Detective Constable Shenher noted that Hiscox was not "great about this," with days often passing between calls.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER BRIEFS CORPORAL CONNOR ON THE HISCOX INFORMATION

On September 22nd, 1998, Detective Constable Shenher called Corporal Connor and advised him of the information from her interview of Hiscox. Corporal Connor noted that the name "Quinn" (which Hiscox had been using for Quinn) was the same as a name he found in Pickton's address book, with a Surrey address and phone number associated to Quinn. Connor recorded in his notes detailed information about the interview by Detective Constable Shenher of Hiscox. With respect to the information about the bloody clothing that Quinn reportedly saw, Corporal Connor wondered if this might be clothing that was returned to Pickton after the Anderson incident. He also wondered if the syringes could have remained from the Anderson incident, so that day Corporal Connor went to speak to Anderson in North Vancouver. Corporal Connor warned Anderson that police had received information that Pickton wanted to "finish her off." Anderson advised Corporal Connor

that syringes on the floor in Pickton's trailer could have fallen out of her fanny pack when she was there.

CORPORAL CONNOR PURSUES HISCOX INFORMATION

Later that day, Corporal Connor spoke with Constable Paradis, one of the original officers to attend Pickton's trailer during the investigation of the Anderson incident. Constable Paradis did not recall seizing a fanny pack but did recall seeing syringes on the floor. Regarding bloody clothes, Constable Paradis advised they may have been from the stabbing incident, but that he didn't believe any of the items seized had been returned to Pickton.

Corporal Connor then spoke to —, a civilian RCMP employee familiar with the Picktons, ——. Ms. — described Quinn as "a heavily tattooed biker, who fixes her Harley Davidson in her front room," who was "wild" and was known to buy meat from Pickton. — described Quinn as a "very hard case" who would not reveal what she knew to authorities, and would tell Pickton of any approach from the police.

HELEN HALLMARK REPORTED MISSING

On September 23rd, 1998, Helen Hallmark was reported missing to the VPD, having last been seen on October 1st, 1997.

CORPORAL CONNOR REQUESTS RCMP SURVEILLANCE TEAM FOR PICKTON

On September 24th, 1998, Corporal Connor confirmed that no bloody clothing had been returned to Pickton, and therefore concluded that Hiscox's "statement of the bloody female clothing as 'trophies' has to be taken at face value."

The same day, Corporal Connor contacted Staff Sergeant Jack Dop of the RCMP's 'Special "O" Section' (covert operations and surveillance) and advised him of the information to date and the need to acquire further intelligence on Pickton. Staff Sergeant Dop agreed to assist with a surveillance team to be deployed on Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 4 p.m. until Pickton went to bed. Corporal Connor then advised Detective Constable Shenher of the status of the case "for their [the VPD's] information."

THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION LOSES ITS NOMINAL SUPERVISOR

At the beginning of the Missing Women investigation, Sergeant Field had only minimal involvement. While Missing Persons was her administrative responsibility, her duties as a Homicide Squad Sergeant occupied most of her time.

Beginning September 24th, 1998, Sergeant Field was assigned to work on a multi-jurisdictional task force investigating a homicide case, at the offices of the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit. She was thus no longer able to provide any direction to Detective Constable Shenher regarding the Missing Women investigation. (Sergeant Field did not return to the VPD until March 8th, 1999.⁴⁹) Sergeant Al Boyd, the

other Homicide Squad sergeant, took responsibility for supervision of the Missing Persons Unit while Sergeant Field was on assignment.

OCTOBER 1998

As a result of Corporal Connor's request of September 24th, 1998, the RCMP's 'Special "O"' surveillance unit conducted surveillance of Pickton on October 9th and 10th, 1998, but made no observations of interest.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER AGAIN MEETS WITH HISCOX – CORPORAL CONNOR BRIEFED

On October 13th, 1998, Detective Constable Shenher tracked Hiscox down in a ——— Treatment Centre. She advised him that Coquitlam RCMP were aware of Quinn and wanted to contact her, but that she advised them it wasn't a good idea. She noted that "the RCMP gave me the impression they would talk to her with or without me" and Hiscox's agreement. She asked Hiscox if she could bring Corporal Connor to meet with him and Hiscox said he would trust Detective Constable Shenher to do what was best. Detective Constable Shenher advised Hiscox that having Hiscox meet with the RCMP would be better than having the RCMP go directly to Quinn.

Detective Constable Shenher then contacted Corporal Connor and it was agreed that he would meet with Hiscox on October 15th.

49 Binder 15, Tab 50.

On October 14th, 1998, Corporal Connor and Detective Shenher met and she provided Corporal Connor with a copy of her contact log with Hiscox.

CORPORAL CONNOR CONDUCTS COMPREHENSIVE DEBRIEF OF HISCOX – INVESTIGATIVE STRATEGY DISCUSSED WITH DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER

On October 15th, 1998, Detective Constable Shenher and Corporal Connor picked up Hiscox at the treatment centre and had a discussion with him in their vehicle. Corporal Connor had Hiscox go through his information in detail, as recorded in Detective Constable Shenher's notes: ⁵⁰

Connor had source go through the course of events from the beginning and this information was completely consistent with the info source has been providing me with – no variation at all in any of the details of his contact with Pickton, and the details of his friend Quinn... who has been in Pickton's trailer and seen women's ID, bloody clothing, and has been told by Pickton that if she ever needed to dispose of a body, to come to him because he could put it through his Piggery and grind it up.

Source did go further into Quinn's biker contacts than he had with me because Connor was much more familiar with the players than I was. Source spoke of Quinn's relationship with — and that she has his ashes and some tapes the media is interested in her home. Source said Quinn has had her car bombed and has asked source to do a drive-by for her in the past, but source said he is not very violent and more of a drug man. Source said Pickton can get guns and dynamite for Quinn and in turn Quinn gets Pickton things such as the syringes mentioned to me before.

Source said Quinn has seen these things while cleaning Pickton's trailer for him and source did not know for certain, but did not believe Pickton knew Quinn had seen the ID, and bloody clothing in bags. Source said Quinn put two and two together – the ID, the bloody clothing, the offer to dispose of bodies and the recent publicity on Missing Prostitutes and Pickton's attack on "Anderson" and told source she thought it very possible Pickton could be a serial killer. Source feels he has a duty to tell what he knows and his conscience would not allow him to stay silent.

Source also told us Quinn had mentioned seeing a purse belonging to a native female in the trailer approx two years ago. The only native female we have as missing from the downtown eastside is Janet Henry, VPD #97-158127, last seen July '97 and frequented the same area as the victim "Anderson" in the file and they are similar looking in terms of both had short dark hair and both are small in stature. There has been no trace of Henry and no sightings of her and her welfare cheques have gone uncollected since June '97.

Source also reiterated how Pickton has recently asked Quinn to obtain clean and used syringes, for some unknown reason. She mentioned "Anderson" and how Pickton has asked friends to pick her up from the downtown eastside and get her out to the farm (Pickton's) so he can "finish her off" and that he had also asked friends to pick her up months ago prior to their court date so he could "finish her off" and Quinn and source had thought that once the trial was over, he wouldn't be interested in her anymore, but he has mentioned her recently.

50 Binder 29, Tab 8.

We discussed how best to approach Quinn and that no matter how that is done, if she truly doesn't talk to many people, she will know where the information came from. Source stressed Quinn is very anti-police and will not likely even open the door to us – her biker roots and the code she lives by won't be making her very approachable. Source is very confident that anyone he would bring to meet Quinn would be immediately accepted by her because of her trust in source.

We discussed having the source introduce a u/c and how we'd prefer to avoid that and avoid making source an agent, but he is willing to do this. We also suggested if we go to Quinn with what we've heard she would not be able to tell Pickton because his first question would likely be what is she doing talking about his situation to anyone and her loyalty to him would be an issue for him and their friendship and she would have more to lose by telling Pickton than not. Source feels we will have a very difficult time getting Quinn to speak to us.

Left it that we will make some decisions from our end on how to approach Quinn and in the meantime, source can think about it as well. We've told him we will have to contact Quinn one way or another and his identity will be known sooner or later and source seems okay with this – he feels that's the price he will have to pay to do the right thing.

JACQUELINE MURDOCK REPORTED MISSING

On October 30th, 1998, Jacqueline Murdock was reported missing to the VPD and to the Prince George RCMP. She had last been seen August 14th, 1997.

NOVEMBER 1998 – JANUARY 1999

CORPORAL CONNOR REQUESTS AERIAL SURVEILLANCE OF PICKTON PROPERTY

On November 3rd, 1998, Corporal Connor forwarded a memo to the RCMP's Air Services Division seeking assistance to take aerial photos and FLIR (Forward Looking Infra-Red) examination of the Pickton property. Corporal Connor also learned that in 1990 there had been a request from then-Corporal Don Adam to check the Pickton residence for a vehicle associated with a Surrey sexual assault. Corporal Connor contacted Don Adam, by now a sergeant in the Langley General Investigation Section, to determine the particulars of the incident. Sergeant Adam couldn't recall the investigation but agreed to check his notes; he later did so but couldn't find any reference to the Surrey incident.

VPD OFFERS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ADVANCE THE PICKTON INVESTIGATION

On November 4th, 1998, Corporal Connor recorded in his notes that Detective Constable Shenher called him to advise that she had spoken to Staff Sergeant Brock Giles (then the "second in command" or "2 i/c" of the Major Crime Section) about providing resources to the RCMP's investigation of Pickton.⁵¹ She advised Corporal Connor that the VPD was "more than willing to provide monies to advance the investigation" in the areas of:

1. UCO (undercover operation)
2. Witness protection of sorts with respect to their source
3. Aircraft to undertake FLIR and Land Photography

51 Staff Sergeant Giles had no recollection of speaking to Detective Constable Shenher about this issue, but advised it was consistent with what he would have done.

4. Staff Sergeant Giles suggested that possibly a joint submission by our offices to the Unsolved Homicide Unit would be in order.⁵²

Corporal Connor called Shenher back and left a message suggesting that she and Staff Sergeant Giles meet with Sergeant Pollock (Corporal Connor's supervisor) and Corporal Connor to discuss the proposal. Corporal Connor noted that:

Option 3 is necessary to advance this investigation. Option 4 is necessary although Corporal Connor has been keeping Sergeant Blizzard of the Unsolved Homicide Task Force apprised ...with the exception of our actions dated 98-10-14 (the surveillance by "O"). With respect to options 1 and 2, they may be premature, however, given the information to date and the nature of it this may be the right time to begin discussions in this matter.

CONSTABLE DICKSON AGAIN RAISES CONCERN ABOUT MISSING WOMEN IN THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

On November 5th, 1998, Constable Dickson wrote a memo to his managers in District 2, Staff Sergeant McKay-Dunn and Inspector Gary Greer, expressing his concern about "the growing number of women missing from the Downtown Eastside." He provided a list of 28 women he believed were missing, and stated he felt strongly that a large percentage of them had met foul play, noting that when sex trade workers went missing, they generally reappeared in a week or two. He explained that the majority of the women were on social assistance and had stopped picking up their cheques, there had been no family

contact, street friends and associates had not seen them, and they were among the most vulnerable group that exists.⁵³

Constable Dickson suggested the bodies of murdered prostitutes that had been found dumped in and outside Vancouver were "directly related" to his list of missing women. He further advised that he was unaware of any task force looking at the problem of the Missing Women (although he knew Detective Constable Shenher was assigned to the case) and requested that Inspector Greer pursue this issue. (Detective Constable Shenher perceived this report as an effort by Constable Dickson to bring more resources to bear on the case.)

THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION CONTINUES

Throughout the fall of 1998, Detective Constable Shenher was working extensively on source information related to Pickton, and investigative strategies that flowed from that information, but was also continuing to pursue a variety of unrelated investigative strategies regarding the Missing Women. She later recalled:

The first 10 months...it was essentially reviewing files, developing a victim profile, I felt like we had to get quicker at recognizing that a missing person file was part of this group, and properly investigated. So I reviewed files, and investigated new ones, tried to find them, and tried to see if the new ones met the profile. We interviewed as many people as we could in their lives, looked for areas they had been victimized in the past, to ID potential suspects. We interviewed family, went through welfare records to nail down dates when they went missing. The vast

52 Binder 29, Tab 9, p. 11.

53 Binder 8, Tab 11.

majority we had no dates, places, times they'd gone missing. We couldn't say they'd gone missing from Vancouver. Only two were actually last seen in Vancouver for sure, the rest, the window they'd gone missing in was so large that they could have been anywhere.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER LEARNS OF THE "VALLEY MURDERS"

In December of 1998, Detective Constable Shenher learned of several murder cases she and other investigators came to believe were related to the Missing Women. The circumstances of those cases were that in 1995, three sex trade workers known to work the Downtown Eastside – Tracy Olajide, Tammy Lee Pipe, and Victoria Younker – were found murdered. Olajide and Pipe's bodies were found dumped in a forested area near Agassiz in August 1995, and Younker's body was found a few weeks later in the woods 30 kilometers from Mission.⁵⁴ None of the women had been reported missing. In July and August of 1995, two other Downtown Eastside sex trade workers were also reported missing – Mary Lidguerre and Dorothy Anne Spence, respectively – and it was feared they had fallen victim to the same suspect who killed Pipe, Olajide and Younker. The RCMP subsequently announced they had a prime suspect in the Agassiz cases and that he was in custody as a result of convictions for the rapes and attempted murders of two women in the early 1980s.⁵⁵ The remains of Lidguerre were eventually found in August of 1996 on Mount Seymour in North Vancouver, but were not identified until 1997, through dental records.

HISCOX AGAIN MAKES CONTACT WITH DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER

On December 11th, 1998, Hiscox called Detective Constable Shenher and advised her he was out of rehab, clean and sober. He said he hadn't seen Quinn since before he went into rehab, but that he still wanted to help and would get back in touch if police wanted him to. Detective Constable Shenher asked Hiscox to keep in touch with her, and advised him that she would contact Corporal Connor to determine where to go from there.

It appears that Hiscox ended up back in rehab after December 11th, 1998. Detective Constable Shenher recalled that "from that point on, I sort of lost touch with Hiscox; he was in a 12-step program and staying away from these people. I didn't feel confident enough in him to direct him to do anything."

ANGELA JARDINE AND MICHELLE GURNEY REPORTED MISSING TO THE VPD

On December 6th, 1998, Angela Jardine was reported missing to the VPD. She was last seen on November 12th, 1998. Michelle Gurney was reported missing on December 21st, having last been seen on December 11th, 1998.

54 Salim Jiwa, "Fifth body linked to serial killer," in the *Province*, April 17, 1997, p. A19.

55 Neal Hall, "Serial killer suspected in prostitute slayings," in the *Vancouver Sun*, November 4, 1995, p. A19.

JANUARY 1999

MARCELLA CREISON REPORTED MISSING TO THE VPD

Marcella Creison was reported missing on January 11th, 1999. She had last been seen on December 27th, 1998.

FEBRUARY 1999

PUBLIC PRESENTATION ON THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

On February 9th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher gave a presentation on her work to date on the Missing Women investigation at the Carnegie Centre in the Downtown Eastside.⁵⁶ Her presentation included the following information:

- that two detectives were assigned full time to Missing Persons, assisted by the VPD Sexual Offence and Vice Squads, the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, and other police agencies;
- the challenges of the investigation (no crime scenes, sex trade workers' daily contact with dangerous people);
- that of the 3,199 missing persons reports in 1998, fewer than 20 remained missing, then a summary of the numbers of missing sex trade workers from 1978 to 1998;
- the profile of the Missing Women;
- what the investigation had revealed so far, and that "I believe the majority of these women have met with violence – but not just from one source."

- that "there has been some very positive information come to light which we are investigating and can't comment on because it would jeopardize our work" and "we will be talking to sex trade workers on the street and showing them some photos in the next few weeks"
- Detective Constable Shenher's presentation concluded with suggestions on how sex trade workers could help the police in the investigation.⁵⁷

The District Commander, Inspector Beach, was present at the meeting. Detective Inspector Rossmo was also present and copied down the number of missing women as presented by Shenher. He subsequently e-mailed Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness advising him the numbers showed a dramatic increase in 1997 and 1998, and that the community was very concerned. He also e-mailed Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness expressing concern that he had been promised a list of the women missing from the Downtown Eastside in September of the previous year, but had not received it, nor had the District 2 Inspector or the Working Group. He stated the first hard numbers he had been made aware of were provided in Shenher's presentation.⁵⁸

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR ROSSMO PROVIDES HIS FIRST ANALYSIS

On February 10th, 1999, Detective Inspector Rossmo again e-mailed Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness advising he had now "confirmed the numbers" with Detective Constable Shenher. He provided a graph of

⁵⁶ Binder 3, Tab 93.

⁵⁷ Detective Constable Shenher later confirmed that the written material for her presentation accurately reflects what she actually presented.

⁵⁸ Binder 3, Tab 92

missing persons from the Downtown Eastside “that fall into the category of concern” from 1978 to 1998. This graph indicates that very few women had been reported missing that had not later been located or accounted for, but that the numbers suddenly spiked from an average of about 1 every two years between 1978 and 1996, to nine in 1997 and 11 in 1998.⁵⁹

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER ATTEMPTS TO CONTACT HISCOX

On February 10th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher left a message for Hiscox at the rehab centre but he did not call back. She learned that same day that Hiscox had recently been charged with the “Assault Causing Bodily Harm” of his — and had been ordered in mid-January to undergo a 30-day psychiatric assessment.

PICKTON INVESTIGATORS ATTEMPT TO INVOLVE PROVINCIAL UNSOLVED HOMICIDE UNIT; PROPOSAL TO CANVAS SEX TRADE WORKERS WITH PICKTON’S PHOTO

Also on February 10th, Corporal Connor and two RCMP constables met with Detective Constable Shenher, Detective Howlett, Sergeant Al Boyd (VPD Homicide), and Sergeant Honeybourn of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit “to determine if any further information had come to light and the viability of continuing the investigation.” Corporal Connor noted that the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit stated that “the information is interesting but the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit would not be in a position to assist until there is no doubt this

individual was involved in a specific homicide or group of homicides.” Corporal Connor noted that it would be important to show that Pickton was known to be in the Downtown Eastside picking up sex trade workers but that there was no police record of this occurring (despite a VPD database dedicated to collecting information about sex trade workers and “johns”).⁶⁰

Corporal Connor suggested that investigators show Pickton’s photo around the Downtown Eastside to the sex trade workers. His notes show that “it was agreed that the Coquitlam members in attendance and Vancouver supplemented by their Vice staff would go out on two nights February 19/20 to canvas the East End.”

DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE MCGUINNESS REQUESTS INFORMATION ON NATURE OF MISSING WOMEN PROBLEM

On February 13th, 1999, in response to Detective Inspector Rossmo’s e-mail of February 9th, 1999, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness forwarded the e-mail to Inspector Biddlecombe, Staff Sergeants [Matthews](#) and [Giles](#), and Detective Constable Shenher. He directed that they be familiar with the information “before our meeting of February 24th”, and asked, “What kind of problem do we have? We need to discuss the implications of this increase in missing females in the Downtown Eastside. Do we have a problem that we are not addressing?”⁶¹

60 In 1998, two Vancouver Police Department constables developed a proposal for the “Deter and Identify Sex Trade Consumers” (DISC) Unit. The Unit focuses on youth at risk of falling into prostitution, as well as pimps, and “Johns”. One of the core functions of the unit is to maintain a database of individuals participating in sex trade activities, and this database is used as an investigative resource by investigators from the VPD and other police agencies.

61 Binder 3, Tab 90.

59 Binder 3, Tab 90

Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness later recalled:

I don't recall the specifics of the February 24th, 1999 meeting, but generally we had one side saying we have no bodies, no evidence of a homicide... then we've got Kim and Lori saying the other side. I would imagine that nothing came out that meeting, it was status quo. These people in MCS were under incredible pressure to deal with all the murders and everything that they had smoking guns on. I think they were saying, we don't have a murder or body that we can go with.

Detective Constable Shenher was apparently not invited to this meeting. Even if she had been, she advised that as a relatively junior constable, she was not comfortable speaking to Deputy Chief McGuinness, and that Inspector Biddlecombe "hardly acknowledged" her, so she didn't discuss the case with him. As a result, although she discussed her suspicions with her supervisors, she didn't discuss them with higher-ranking officers, relying on her supervisors to pass on information.

Detective Inspector Rossmo recalled the meeting clearly:

...when I provided the first graph in February '99, there was a meeting in Brian's office. Fred was there, Brian, Geramy and myself. Fred almost convinced Brian to shut everything down. Fred's response to my graph was that we've had years to find these people that went missing in the 80s, give us 5 years and we'll find the women that went missing in the 90s, a lag situation, which makes a certain amount of sense. He thought the time from going missing to being found was so great that we couldn't say we had a cluster, because it was too recent. There is a logic to that. I felt that he'd almost convinced Brian that we'd done what

we could. I said it might be true and might not be, that we should get some data and analyze it. Fred didn't even speak to me. Brian was always good, supportive, willing to try things. I never saw any obstruction from Brian. So I got data from Ottawa, and it allowed me to calculate how long a missing person would stay missing: the decay rate or half life if you will. The data showed that people don't stay missing for very long, after 2 weeks 90% of people are found, after 22 weeks, 99%. So then I could apply that data to the date the women went missing, to calculate the probability that we would find the women in the future. So if a woman had been missing for 22 weeks, there was only a 1% chance they would be found. I aggregated the data, and predicted that we would only find 2 more, which left 26, which was way too many. In conclusion, Fred's idea that given enough time, the women would be found, was not borne out by the data. That was the last dealings I had with Biddlecombe on this matter, May of '99. I may have been at a meeting he was at, but I had no interactions with him.

Inspector Biddlecombe's recollection of the meeting was consistent with Detective Inspector Rossmo's:

I thought that we needed to do more work to see whether in '96 the spike would have been higher but for the fact that in '97 we found some of the women, i.e., those numbers would change as women ended up being found in following years. So when the spikes got bigger in the late '90s, we needed to know whether they would be found later on and we agreed there needed to be more analysis.

MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION BEGINS TO BECOME MORE SUSPECT-BASED

By this point in the investigation, Detective Constable Shenher had worked on information related to Pickton, but was also focusing on other suspects she thought were capable of being responsible for the Missing Women.

For example, on February 12th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher and Detective Howlett submitted a detailed project proposal to the VPD Strike Force (a covert surveillance and arrest unit) regarding suspect “R.”⁶² R was identified as being associated with the suspects in a murder of a sex trade worker in Richmond in 1997. He was also the resident of a house on — in Vancouver where a sex trade worker had allegedly been forcibly confined and assaulted by a male, who had since been charged by the RCMP. The purpose of the surveillance was to gather intelligence as to “R”’s activities and associates, in the hopes it might assist in the investigation of what was now 30 missing women, according to Shenher’s report.⁶³ Detective Constable Shenher later recalled that the Strike Force conducted surveillance for a week on suspect “R” but no useful observations were made.

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE SEX TRADE WORKERS CANVASSED WITH PICKTON’S PHOTO – NONE IDENTIFIES PICKTON

On February 17th, 1999, Corporal Connor noted that because of a higher priority file involving bank robberies, Coquitlam members would not be able to help show Pickton’s photograph to sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside, and he phoned Detective Constable Shenher to advise her of this.

Detective Constable Shenher completed the canvas using VPD members, including Constable Dave Dickson, interviewing approximately 80 Downtown Eastside sex trade workers, and then another 50 at a subsequent meeting at the Women’s Information Safe House in the Downtown Eastside (W.I.S.H.). None of the sex trade workers admitted to knowing Pickton.

Sex trade workers often provide information about “bad dates” (i.e., violent customers) to police directly or indirectly. The theory in showing the pictures to sex trade workers at W.I.S.H. was that Pickton might be identified as a “bad date.” However, as it later became known, Pickton was seen as a “good date,” and it would have been dangerous for any sex trade worker to provide information to the police about him, as Constable Dickson later explained:

Not one of them picked his picture, but probably because he was an excellent money and drugs source. I spoke to one of the girls, — —, and she didn’t pick him, and I found out she’d been there hundreds of times. She’d call him, she’d go out and he’d give her all the drugs she wanted and money, no sex...Another girl, — —, who I’ve known since she was a kid, was very upset that we’d accused Pickton of anything, because “he would never do anything.” When you’ve got a girl who’s got a regular source of money for their addiction, they’ll never give him up and will pound any girl who gave information about someone who’s a source [of drugs and/or money].⁶⁴

62 “R” was not charged with any offence.

63 Binder 18, Tab 7.

64 With the benefit of hindsight, the strategy of showing Pickton’s picture would have had a better chance of success if sex trade workers had been approached individually, where they were less likely to be concerned about being seen as a “rat.” This chronology later describes how the presentation of Pickton’s photograph to individual sex trade workers was effective in April 2000.

CHIEF CONSTABLE CHAMBERS BRIEFED ON THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

On February 18th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher submitted a report to Chief Constable Chambers.⁶⁵ The report summarized what the Missing Women investigation was and what had been accomplished to date. The report noted:

- there were six “street involved” women missing from 1978 to 1992, and 21 between 1995 and February of 1999;
- there were no apparent links between victims other than their profile, i.e., sex trade workers with substance abuse problems who frequent the Downtown Eastside;
- many times there was no accurate information about where they went missing from or when;
- none had picked up social assistance money under their known names since going missing;
- none had had contact with their families since going missing, despite the fact that most had regular contact prior to going missing;
- none were in custody; and
- none had taken personal belongings with them.

In terms of the investigative steps that had been accomplished, Detective Constable Shenher advised that:

- all the cases had been entered on CPIC/NCIC;
- ViCLAS books had been completed for each case;
- dental charts had been requested for all the women, with 95% obtained and entered on CPIC/NCIC;
- information about cases of violence toward street-involved women had been shared with other police agencies;
- family and friends/associates of the missing women had been interviewed, often more than once; and

- several “parties of interest” had been flagged on CPIC for “observation.”

JACQUELENE MCDONELL REPORTED MISSING

On February 22nd, 1999, Jaqueline McDonell was reported missing to the VPD, having last been seen January 6th, 1999.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER TRIES AGAIN TO CONTACT HISCOX

On February 25th, Detective Constable Shenher left a message for Hiscox with his father in —, but there was no call back.

MARCH 1999

VPD RESPONDS TO MEDIA SPECULATION OF A SERIAL KILLER

On March 3rd, 1999, media spokesperson Constable Anne Drennan was quoted in a *Globe and Mail* article regarding the Missing Women’s investigation. In response to a suggestion by a sex trade worker advocate that a serial killer was at work, Drennan responded that “there is a cause for real concern... [but] there is not a single piece of evidence to suggest a serial killer.” The report also noted:

As much as the term ‘serial killer’ grabs headlines and inspires fear, the truth is that there are numerous predators attacking sex trade workers on a regular basis. A review of The Vancouver Sun files shows at least 25 different men charged with killing

65 Binder 15, Tab 56.

prostitutes in BC over the last 17 years. In the past month alone, Vancouver city police arrested two men suspected in a series of sexual assaults against women in the sex trade.⁶⁶

On the same day, an article from Canadian Press in Saskatoon quoted Sandra Gagnon, sister of Missing Woman Janet Henry, as saying, “police have been more sympathetic than effective. I talk to them all the time. They just don’t really have any answers, but they’re doing their best.”⁶⁷

SERGEANT FIELD RETURNS TO THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

On March 8th, 1999, Sergeant Field returned to the VPD from her assignment at CLEU.⁶⁸ She recalled the state of the investigation when she returned:

Lori had done a fair amount of work. A website was set up, and Pickton was a person of interest. She’d done a lot of work trying to get a grasp of what the problem was by CPIC-ing other departments for example...There was a lot of pressure being generated from the public [for a reward]...Before I went off to CLEU in September of 1998, I had a real open mind [about the possibility of a serial killer]... When I came back in March 1999, I got a copy of the report Lori had done for the Chief Constable in February. By that time...there were 21 Missing

Women from 1995 to 1999. The 11 in 1998 was significant; by ’99 you’d expect that more of those would be found. So by now we believe there is a killer.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER TRIES AGAIN TO CONTACT HISCOX

On March 10th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher made contact with Hiscox’s mother who had seen him about a week previously. The next day, Detective Constable Shenher obtained a new address for Hiscox from a government source, but there was no phone number listed, so Detective Constable Shenher wrote Hiscox a letter asking him to call her.

PICKTON ACTIVE ON NEW WESTMINSTER “STROLL” AND SUSPECTED IN VIOLENT ATTACK ON SEX TRADE WORKER

On March 22nd, 1999, Corporal Connor received information from the New Westminister Police Service that Pickton had been checked on the sex trade worker “stroll” on 12th Street in the company of a female friend. Detective Constable Shenher received this information as well.

On March 27th, a sex trade worker in New Westminister was violently attacked and strangled, but was able to escape. The New Westminister police’s prime suspect was Pickton but the victim subsequently failed to identify him.

66 Lindsay Kines and David Hogben, “20 outstanding files: A group of prostitutes is convinced a serial killer is responsible for disappearances in Vancouver, but the police disagree,” National Post Online, March 3, 1999. (Binder 3, Tab 85.)

67 Binder 3, Tab 86.

68 Binder 15, Tab 50.

MISSING WOMAN ADA PREVOST LOCATED ALIVE

In March 1999, Detective Constable Shenher confirmed that Ada Prevost, who had been reported missing in March 1998 and who hadn't been seen since September 1997, was alive. Detective Constable Shenher had located her in a — in —. A story by *Vancouver Sun* reporter Lindsay Kines described Prevost being reunited with her family, and concluded by noting 19 other women had gone missing in the previous four years. He also reported that family members and advocates had been calling for a police task force to investigate the possibility a serial killer was responsible for the disappearances.⁶⁹

FRIENDS AND RELATIVES OF MISSING WOMEN CALL FOR TASK FORCE AND REWARD

On March 30th, 1999, Maggie de Vries, Sarah de Vries' sister, wrote to Mayor Owen as the Chair of the Police Board and asked that the police publicly acknowledge the possibility that the Missing Women had been murdered, and form a task force to investigate the matter. She compared the response to the Missing Women case to the Mayor's comments regarding a rash of "garage robberies" in the west-side of Vancouver (in which affluent Asians were being targeted for robbery as they entered their garages), resulting in a substantial reward being offered.⁷⁰ The Police Board received other similar letters from people connected to the Missing Women as well as politicians applying pressure for a task force and/or a reward.⁷¹

On March 31st, 1999, a *Province* story described the frustration of Wayne Leng regarding his feeling that there should be a \$100,000 reward for information about the Missing Women. The story quoted Leng as suggesting that rewards were offered to "protect the wealthy" in the home invasion and garage robbery investigations that were occurring at the same time as the Missing Women investigation.⁷²

Internally, the VPD debated the effectiveness of a reward in this instance. Rewards were known to generate large numbers of tips of little or no value to an investigation, each of which had to be investigated nonetheless. A decision was reached to recommend against a reward.

APRIL 1999

LINDA COOMBES REPORTED MISSING – LATER IDENTIFIED AS AN OVERDOSE VICTIM

On April 4th, 1999, sex trade worker Linda Jean Coombes was reported missing, after being out of contact with her mother for many years. Her mother was then living in —. Linda Coombes had attained a degree in microbiology, but shortly thereafter suffered from the onset of schizophrenia. She eventually became a heroin-addicted sex trade worker in the Downtown Eastside, and the last known record of her in Vancouver was a medical admission in 1994.⁷³

(On September 17th, 1999, as a result of extensive follow-up investigation and DNA analysis, the investigators concluded that an unidentified female who died in 1994 was, in fact, Linda Coombes.

69 Lindsay Kines, "Reappearance of missing woman stuns relative," in the *Vancouver Sun*, March 9, 1999, p. B1.

70 Binder 21, Tab 37.

71 Binder 21, Tab 50, Binder 10, Tab 61, Binder 21, Tab 51.

72 Frank Luba, "Why no reward? asks hooker's pal: He says cash offer might lead police to 21 missing," in the *Vancouver Province*, March 31, 1999, p. A16.

73 Binder 18, Tab 36.

Sergeant Field notified Linda Coombe's mother by phone in Ottawa that day.)

KAREN ANNE SMITH REPORTED MISSING AND LATER DETERMINED TO HAVE DIED

Also on April 4th, 1999, Karen Anne Smith, another sex trade worker from the Downtown Eastside, was reported missing by her mother, who had not seen her since June 15th, 1992. (After extensive investigation, and with the assistance of other police agencies and the Alberta Ministry of Social Services, the soon-to-be formed MWRT determined Smith had died in hospital in February of 1999 from health problems resulting from drug abuse. Detective Constable Clarke concluded the investigation into Smith on September 22nd, 1999, and with Sergeant Field, notified Smith's mother, — that same day.⁷⁴)

REQUEST FOR REWARD GATHERS MOMENTUM

On April 6th, 1999, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh agreed in an interview that the Provincial Government would put up a reward to help solve the disappearance of 21 women from the Downtown Eastside if the VPD asked for it.⁷⁵ In the same article, Mayor Owen was reported to be reluctant to authorize a reward "when police have not come up with any evidence that the missing women have in fact been murdered – or that their disappearances are linked." The article also noted that the Province and police had put up \$100,000 rewards for information about a series of home invasions against the elderly – one of which left a woman dead – and to solve a series of armed robberies against people in their garages.

HISCOX CONTACTS DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER

On April 6th, 1999, Hiscox phoned Detective Constable Shenher. He advised he had no phone, was still seeing "those people", and was willing to meet Detective Constable Shenher at his home.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IS BRIEFED ON THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

By April 9th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher had submitted a report on the Missing Women investigation through Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness to then-Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh.⁷⁶ The report described the Missing Women investigation and stated that each of the 28 known disappearances "has been investigated in the very same manner as we would approach a murder – minus a body and forensic evidence, witnesses, a crime scene, a crime time and information that a murder has, in fact, taken place." In addition to the statistical and victim profile information included in the report submitted to Chief Constable Chambers on February 18th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher's report summarized the considerable investigative efforts that had been made. These efforts were described as:

- interviewing of family, partners and friends to identify as many "persons of interest" as possible;
- contacting financial assistance agencies across the country and flagging of files;
- sending missing person posters to psychiatric hospitals in the U.S. and Canada, as well as Canadian welfare intake offices and other facilities;

74 Binder 1, Tab 69.

75 Chad Skelton, "Dosanjh awaits police request for reward on missing women," in the *Vancouver Sun*, April 6, 1999, p. B1.

76 Binder 15, Tab 1.

- checking with border crossings from BC to the U.S.;
- alerting other police departments in Canada of the investigation and directing them to the Missing Women/VPD website;
- examining known drug contacts in an attempt to find a link; and
- checking bank records.

Detective Constable Shenher noted that from a suspect standpoint, there were very few leads. She advised they regularly contacted the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, the serious crime sections of the RCMP and other agencies across the country in the Lower Mainland looking for links between the Missing Women and known homicides. She also advised they had compiled files on numerous men who have “shown the capacity for serious violence against women,” but that a challenge was that the women were often in contact with men police had no knowledge of.

Detective Constable Shenher responded directly to criticisms that police were expending less effort because of the profile of the women:

These cases are not being investigated any less strenuously because they involve women, nor are they taken less seriously because they are poor... the fact they are lacking address books, known schedules, reliable routines and homes for us to search for clues does make this more difficult, but in no way does it mean we value them less or consider them throwaways. I truly believe we have done and are doing everything we can to find them in light of the information and evidence available to us.

Regarding the possibility of a serial killer, Detective Constable Shenher stated there was no evidence of

a person or persons preying on these women, but advised this did not mean it wasn’t considered as a possibility. She advised that “we cannot investigate a murder without a body, witnesses, time of crime, scene of crime, or suspect and we have none of these things.” However, she noted that the possibility the cases were linked was growing stronger as time passed.

On April 9th, 1999, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness advised Chief Constable Chambers, and Deputy Chiefs Blythe and Battershill that Detective Constable Shenher’s memo would be provided to the Attorney General that day, and asked for any comments “where you think we could be doing something further.” Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness noted that investigators were concerned that if a reward were offered, it would need to be in relation to finding a missing person “as we do not have any evidence that a crime has been committed.” He advised that his Division did not support a reward, but if the Chief and other Deputy Chiefs did, “we will require staffing from your Divisions to do any follow ups on the tips received.” Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness also pointed out that a reward had never been paid out in the past.⁷⁷

Deputy Chief Constable Blythe (Commanding the Operations Division) prepared a handwritten response the same day.⁷⁸ He advised that he had discussed the issue with Inspector Chris Beach, the commander of District Two, and that they agreed that Constable Dave Dickson (the previously mentioned well-known Downtown Eastside officer with an extraordinary relationship with the community), would be provided to assist in the investigation. Deputy Chief Constable Blythe also raised concerns about a line in Detective Constable Shenher’s report in which she stated, “we cannot investigate a murder without a body, witnesses, time

⁷⁷ Binder 9, Tab 2.

⁷⁸ Binder 9, Tab 2.

of crime, scene of crime, or suspect and we have none of these things.” Deputy Chief Constable Blythe asked, “Are we safe saying such a thing? You can better answer this from an investigative point of view than I.” (The handwritten response was transcribed into an e-mail message that was sent to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness by a secretary on April 12th, 1999.⁷⁹) Detective Constable Shenher later clarified that she was only emphasizing that a murder case without a body was extremely challenging – not impossible – to investigate.

On April 9th, 1999, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness, Detective Constable Shenher, and Acting Inspector Boyd met with Superintendent Gary Bass from E Division Serious Crime, Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh, Deputy Attorney General Steven Stackhouse, several other cabinet ministers and their aides. (Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness recalled that Chief Constable Chambers and Staff Sergeant Henderson from the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit attended as well, but Detective Constable Shenher advised he was mistaken and that they were not present. Former Chief Constable Chambers had no recollection of attending the meeting).

Detective Constable Shenher briefed the Attorney General and the others present on the Missing Women investigation, as per her report. Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness recalled the meeting:

Public pressure was growing. Then myself...Gary Bass in the RCMP...and Dosanjh the AG, met in the AG’s office on Hornby Street. The purpose of that meeting was to try to get the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit involved in the case. It was very shortly before the AG got involved in offering the increased reward. The RCMP didn’t want to get involved because they said it wasn’t historical, and there was no evidence of a homicide. Everyone was

looking saying this would be intensive, and no one had the resources. The AG didn’t want to throw any money in except for the reward. At that time I think there were 31 women on the list. All that came out of that meeting was the AG came up with \$70,000 for the reward. The RCMP said if we got anything hard, or if they wanted us to review the file, they would. But that’s all that came out of that. I think it was the AG that called the meeting. We said we wanted the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, but they said “show us a body, you don’t have a homicide.” I’m sure they saw it as Vancouver trying to dump it on them and that they were missing from Vancouver, not the RCMP [jurisdictions].

Detective Constable Shenher recalled that:

It was one of those meetings where no one really said anything; they were all deferring to Bass and Dosanjh and McGuinness. I felt like it was a weight off my shoulders that someone else out of the organization knew there was a problem, like the Attorney General and Superintendent Bass.”

CONSTABLE DICKSON IS ASSIGNED TO THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

Also on April 9th, 1999, Inspector Chris Beach, then the commander for District 2, wrote a memo to his second-in-command, Staff Sergeant Doug MacKay-Dunn, directing that the services of Constable Dave Dickson be offered to the Major Crimes Section for the purposes of the Missing Women investigation.⁸⁰ (This offer was subsequently accepted by Sergeant Field in a memo to Inspector Beach on April 20th, 1999.⁸¹)

79 Binder 9, Tab 5.

80 Binder 9, Tab 6.

81 Binder 2, Tab 5.

MAYOR RESISTS CALLS FOR A REWARD

Mayor Owen was interviewed about the pressure for a reward, and he was initially resistant to the idea:

“There’s no evidence that a serial killer is at work,” Owen told APBnews.com in a telephone interview. “No bodies have been found. They [the police] have a procedure for homicides and missing people, and they are following it. I don’t think it is appropriate for a big award for a location service.” He scoffed at claims by relatives of the missing women that the prostitutes had close ties to their families and wouldn’t just vanish from the streets. “That’s what they say,” Owen said.⁸²

PRESSURE CONTINUES FOR A TASK FORCE

On April 12th, 1999, the *Vancouver Sun* published a lengthy Op/Ed piece by Maggie de Vries about the Missing Women investigation.⁸³ In her article, de Vries wrote:

I have been satisfied with the work that Lori Shenher and Al Howlett, the two detectives assigned to these cases, have done. Detective Shenher has maintained regular contact with my mother and with me. She has taken what we have to say seriously, allowing our knowledge of Sarah to inform her investigation. She has interviewed everyone she could.

She has compared the situation in Vancouver with the situation in other Canadian cities to determine that no more than one or two prostitutes have been reported missing anywhere else. She is compiling

data to determine that nowhere near these numbers of prostitutes went missing from Vancouver before 1997. She is dedicated and creative.

Ms. de Vries went on to say that Detective Constable Shenher and her partner had done everything they could, had no more leads, and needed information. She described the reality of lives like her sister’s, pointing out that she and others were rooted in Vancouver and the Downtown Eastside. She said “police spokespeople say over and over again that no evidence indicates that a crime has been committed,” but that it was “time to take further steps: to acknowledge a possible pattern, to set up a task force, to offer a reward and to offer police protection to anyone who might be afraid to come forward with information.”

Sometime around the time of this article in April 1999, Detective Constable Shenher and the VPD’s Vice Squad sergeant, Don Smith, appeared with Maggie de Vries on the CKNW’s “David Berner Show.” (Sergeant Smith was invited by the Berner Show to provide a Vice Squad perspective, not because Vice had a significant role in the Missing Women investigation. Detective Constable Shenher later advised that she did consult with Vice, but because they spent little time on “low track” prostitution, they were unable to provide much useful information.) When Berner asked Detective Constable Shenher what she thought had happened to the Missing Women, she said:

I don’t see this as having a positive outcome...when you have families that are in contact with their loved ones the way Sandy and Dot were, the way Maggie

82 Robert Anthony Phillips, “Mayor: No Reward in Missing Hookers Case. Says There’s No Evidence 20 Women Were Killed or Abducted,” APBnews.com, April 9, 1999.

83 Maggie de Vries, “The desperate quest for our missing sisters and daughters: Despite dedicated detectives, predators believe that women in the poorest part of our city are fair game,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, April 12, 1999, p. A11.

was...and all of a sudden that contact stops...And as Maggie said, you're not talking about women who can jump on a plane and you're not talking about women that are going to be recruited, if you will, to work in different areas. Many of these women were very sick either through their addictions or through HIV, some had AIDS. They were at points in their lives where they really needed the support systems that they had built here...they're not only imprisoned by their poverty and their social situation; they're imprisoned by their addictions, they're imprisoned by illness. That makes it highly unlikely that they would just up and go...my gut feeling is that some of them have met with foul play.⁸⁴

CORPORAL CONNOR ARRANGES MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL MEETING RE: PICKTON

On April 13th, 1999, Corporal Connor returned to work from leave and learned of the New Westminster attack on March 27th. As a result, he sent out a CPIC message to Surrey and Burnaby RCMP, the New Westminster Police (NWPS), the VPD, and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit inviting them to a meeting to be held on April 21st in the offices of the New Westminster Police Service to discuss Pickton. The CPIC message summarized the [Anderson](#) case, the tips to the VPD, and the information regarding Pickton frequenting the “stroll” in New Westminster and being a suspect in the non-fatal rape and strangling of a sex trade worker in that jurisdiction.⁸⁵

MAYOR AND POLICE BOARD BROUGHT INTO MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

On April 16th, 1999, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness e-mailed Deputy Chief Constable Blythe, Sergeants Al Boyd and Geramy Field from Homicide, Detective Constable Lori Shenher and Detective Al Howlett from Missing Persons, Staff Sergeant Brock Giles from Major Crimes⁸⁶, and Chief Constable Chambers (via his assistant) advising that a meeting to discuss the Missing Women case would be held on April 21st, 1999.⁸⁷

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER MEETS WITH HISCOX AGAIN

On April 19th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher went with Detective Howlett to Hiscox's home and learned that Hiscox was in the Surrey Pre-Trial Centre, having had his bail revoked. At this time, Hiscox said he had no new information about Pickton or [Quinn](#), and that he hadn't seen [Quinn](#) in a while, but had spoken to her on the phone a few weeks previously.

CORPORAL CONNOR HOSTS MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL MEETING REGARDING PICKTON

On April 21st, 1999, Corporal Connor and Constable Greig from the Coquitlam RCMP met in the offices of the New Westminster Police Service

84 de Vries, Maggie. *Missing Sarah*, Penguin Canada, Toronto, Ontario, 2004, p. 217.

85 Binder 30, Tab 34.

86 Although Staff Sergeant Giles was being copied on messages and reports, he actually had limited contact with the investigation, being focused on Robbery/Assault Squad issues. In addition, —————
—————was away on sick leave for very significant periods from the time the investigation began until he went on sick leave leading to retirement in January 2000. It is clear that the various Major Crime Section Inspectors were dealing directly with the Missing Women investigation.

87 Binder 3, Tab 81.

with members from the VPD, Burnaby and Surrey RCMP detachments, the NWPS, and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit.

It was agreed at the meeting that:

- like the VPD had done, members from each jurisdiction would show Pickton's picture to their sex trade workers to determine if they had had contact with him, or any offences had occurred;
- surveillance of Pickton should be conducted to establish contacts with sex trade workers and to attempt to obtain discarded DNA that could be compared with DNA from the New Westminster case and any other similar offences; and
- an approach should be made to Pickton's niece, Tammy Humeny, to gather information.

SERGEANT FIELD DIRECTED TO PREPARE UPDATE REPORT FOR POLICE BOARD

On April 21st, 1999, Sergeant Field met with Deputy Chief Constable Blythe, Chief Constable Chambers, Mr. Ken Hardy (Chief Constable Chamber's communications advisor), Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness, and Staff Sergeant Giles.⁸⁸ The result was a direction that Sergeant Field prepare a report for the Police Board on the Missing Women investigation, which she completed the next day.

MAYOR OWEN CHANGES MIND ON REWARD; POLICE BOARD BRIEFED ON INVESTIGATION

On April 26th, 1999, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that Mayor Owen, responding to 'an outpouring of "great concern" from the public,' was going to recommend that the Police Board approve a \$100,000 reward to help solve the disappearance of 21 women from the Downtown Eastside.⁸⁹

On April 28th, 1999, the Vancouver Police Board held a meeting and discussed a report from Sergeant Field dated April 22nd, 1999 on the progress of the Missing Women investigation.⁹⁰ Key information provided to the Police Board included:

- Detective Constable Shenher had been added to the Missing Persons Unit in June 1998 specifically to investigate the Missing Women cases;
- A summary of a previous investigation of murdered sex trade workers in 1991 that found that 26 murders were the work of a number of offenders, rather than a single offender;
- That in a homicide case, the initial step is the discovery of a body and the subsequent examination of the crime scene, and that all other investigation emanates from this starting point;
- That in the Missing Women case, there were no crime scenes, but that substantial amounts of investigative time and energy were being applied;
- Current investigative strategies (as summarized earlier in the report to the Attorney General);

88 Binder 15, Tab 50.

89 Lindsay Kines, "'Missing Women' reward supported: Vancouver's mayor will ask the city's police board to approve a \$100,000 reward to solve a perplexing case," in the *Vancouver Sun*, April 26, 1999, p. A3.

90 Binder 2, Tab 6.

- That while a reward might be helpful where a known crime has been committed, in the Missing Women case, it would be impossible to filter tips by comparing them to known “hold back” information since there wasn’t any. The result would be that investigation of false tips would waste valuable investigative time. The report also pointed out that despite extensive media coverage, not a single tip had been received (although, in fact, two tips about Pickton had been received in 1998).

In terms of planned strategies, the report to the Police Board noted that:

- The Geographic Profiling Section may conduct an epidemiological analysis, but that no other major police agency kept statistics similar to the VPD, or even investigates missing persons, other than entering them on CPIC;
- Investigators would continue to liaise with the RCMP Criminal Behavioural Analysis Section and target sexual predators;
- An intense media strategy would be developed to keep the faces of the Missing Women publicized; and
- Other investigative strategies were being developed but could not be discussed.

Sergeant Field’s report also noted that:

[Of the] 10 homicides of women since 1992 believed to be prostitutes in Vancouver, charges have been laid in 8 cases...I comment on these investigations to illustrate the importance and success we place on these types of homicides. They are far from being a ‘low priority’ for which we are often criticized.

Sarah de Vries’ sister, Maggie de Vries, also attended the April 28th meeting of the Police Board. The minutes of the meeting indicate Ms. de Vries complimented the investigators for being “dedicated and creative,” but she recommended the creation of a task force and also urged the Board to offer a \$100,000 reward.⁹¹

Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness recommended against the reward, reiterating Sergeant Field’s concerns that there was no evidence against which to filter tips, and that this might result in investigative time being spent unwisely. However, in an extraordinary move, the Board resolved to seek a reward. (Police Boards are bound not to stray into making operational decisions, an issue that is discussed in the Analysis part of this Review.)

The *Vancouver Sun* published a story the next day reporting that at the April 28th meeting, the Police Board turned down a request for a task force, saying “there are 20 members of the homicide unit available to help the missing persons unit if [a] major lead develops.”⁹² Maggie de Vries attributed this comment to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness.⁹³ Detective Constable Shenher was also present at this meeting, and later also recalled that it was Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness who made this remark.

(Detective Constable Shenher also later confirmed, as claimed by Maggie de Vries in her book, that Detective Constable Shenher had unofficially encouraged family members of the Missing Women to advocate for a reward. Detective Constable Shenher didn’t think it would result in any useful

91 Binder 21, Tab 34.

92 Lindsay Kines, “‘Missing Women’ reward supported: Vancouver’s mayor will ask the city’s police board to approve a \$100,000 reward to solve a perplexing case,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, April 26, 1999, p. A3

93 Vries, Maggie. *Missing Sarah*, Penguin Canada, Toronto, Ontario, 2004, p. 229.

tips, but thought the reward would be “symbolic” and might result in more resources being brought to bear on the case.)

HISCOX AGAIN MAKES CONTACT WITH DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER

On April 28th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher received a voice mail message from Hiscox advising that he was going to be released that Friday and would be living in Port Coquitlam. He also left a phone number of a friend who would forward any messages to Hiscox.

THE MISSING WOMEN WEBSITE

On April 29th, 1999, Sergeant Field noted that she had become concerned that “information control is becoming difficult,” and advised that misinformation was being distributed through a website, possibly set up by Wayne Leng, Sarah de Vries’ friend.⁹⁴

MAY 1999

CORPORAL CONNOR CONTINUES WORK ON PICKTON INVESTIGATION; FRUITLESS SURVEILLANCE DISCONTINUED PENDING FURTHER INFORMATION

On May 3rd, 1999, Corporal Connor noted that aerial photographs of Pickton’s property had been obtained to establish any possible burial sites.

On May 7th, 1999, Corporal Connor noted that an RCMP Special “O” Unit had been conducting surveillance of Pickton since April 30th, as time permitted, but nothing of value had been observed. Special “O” agreed to continue surveillance to the end of that week and then would conduct surveillance as time permitted in the future. Special “O” further advised they would attempt to collect any discarded material from Pickton that was suitable for DNA analysis. Corporal Connor noted that he advised Detective Constable Shenher of the status of the investigation.

On May 11th, 1999, Corporal Connor noted that the surveillance of Pickton revealed him going to and from work, but little else, so that unless further information developed, the surveillance would be discontinued.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER CONTINUES WITH OTHER AVENUES OF INVESTIGATION

Detective Constable Shenher continued to pursue a wide variety of other investigative strategies. For example, on May 11th, 1999, Detective Constables Shenher and Dickhout, as well as Sergeant Emerslund, Detective Howlett, two Conservation Officers, and forensic anthropologist Bob Stair visited a potential body dump site based on source information, but found nothing of value.⁹⁵

94 Binder 15, Tab 50.

95 Binder 10, Tab 38.

THE FIRST MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THE MISSING WOMEN

On May 12th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher attended a memorial service attended by hundreds at the First United Church at 320 E. Hastings. Inspector Beach, then still in charge of District 2, and Chief Constable Chambers also attended for a portion of the service. The service was followed by a march to the dedication of a memorial bench at Crab Park at the foot of Main Street.⁹⁶

The media reported that Mayor Owen walked in the march “amid banners and drummers.” He was quoted in a Canadian Press story reported in the *Vancouver Province* as saying it may take “a \$100,000 reward for each of the women to solve a mystery that has residents...fearing a serial killer.” He was further reported to say, “The families want this. The public wants it. Lawyers are lawyers. They sometimes move a little slowly, but I think this could be worked out.”⁹⁷

THE “ODD SQUAD” PROPOSAL FOR A MISSING WOMEN DOCUMENTARY FILM

On May 13th, 1999, Inspector Biddlecombe gave support for Constable Toby Hinton of the “Odd Squad” to create a documentary on the Missing Women.⁹⁸ The “Odd Squad” was (and is) a non-profit society whose members are all police officers who have walked the beat in the Downtown Eastside. Their mission was to provide anti-drug education to young people, and they were active in the inner city schools. The Odd Squad had achieved significant positive media exposure after a documentary they made with the National Film Board of Canada –

Through a Blue Lens – won a prestigious award. The Odd Squad did some work on a Missing Women documentary, but the project failed to come to fruition due to a lack of support from Chief Constable Chambers, with whom Constable Hinton had met to discuss his proposal.⁹⁹ Former Chief Constable Chambers disputed this, advising that he supported the proposal, but that it didn’t proceed because the Operations Division, where Constable Hinton worked, didn’t support it.

A PLAN FOR A SUSPECT BASED INVESTIGATION – MORE RESOURCES REQUESTED AND CONSULTATION INTERNALLY AND WITH RCMP CONTINUES

On May 13th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher submitted a report to Sergeant Field setting out an “action plan” for moving from an individual file focus to a suspect based one. Her report described a series of planned or ongoing strategies to further the investigation. These strategies included:

- developing suspect profiles and identifying high risk sex offenders in the community from various sources including the Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society’s (DEYAS) “bad date sheets”;
- developing timelines for the suspects and providing them to the Green River Task Force for comparison to their suspect database;
- placing all parties of interest into a database with analytical capabilities;
- identifying victims of unsolved homicides in the past 10 years fitting the Missing Women victim profile, to analyze for links to the Missing Women cases;

96 Binder 21, Tab 35.

97 Canadian Press, “Case requires much higher reward: Owen,” in the *Vancouver Province*, May 13th, 1999, p. A12.

98 Binder 9, Tabs 7 & 9

99 E-mail November 13, 2003 from Cst. Toby Hinton to Deputy Chief Constable LePard

- obtaining familial DNA from victims' parents to aid in identification;
- considering having one member maintain contact with victims' families;
- holding a brainstorming meeting to determine new ideas or directions
- developing a package to send to VPD and other Lower Mainland agencies describing the importance of reports of assaults on sex trade workers being reported to the investigators of the Missing Women;
- requesting increased checks of Johns in the Downtown Eastside and Mount Pleasant areas, and for that information to be forwarded to the investigators of the Missing Women;
- a public appeal for information; and
- geographic profiling, if and when applicable.

Detective Constable Shenher's report requested a cell phone, a police radio or portable radio for their vehicle (for safety reasons), and an analytical database with a staff person to enter data.¹⁰⁰

On May 14th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher submitted a report further setting out resource needs.¹⁰¹ She identified factors such as the approval in principle by the Police Board for a reward and the media attention to the case as increasing the strain on staff. She stated she was concerned that "without proper resources in place to handle this information and to properly investigate these tips, valuable intelligence could be lost or not dealt with in a timely manner." Detective Constable Shenher went on to say:

If we are to seriously undertake identification and investigation of potential suspects and known sex offenders, coordinate area searches, maintain contact with victims' families, investigate known homicides of women from the area who were

found in outlying jurisdictions, analyze data, and continue to investigate other missing persons cases in this office, we require the full time assistance of at least two more investigators. We also request an analytical data base, someone to assist us in its use, and a data entry clerk to enter this information from all these files.

Detective Constable Shenher also requested that she be relieved of the responsibility for performing the Coroner's Liaison function on Fridays, advising "I do not feel I can do this properly while coordinating this missing persons investigation." (Detective Constable Shenher, although assigned to Missing Persons, took over the duties of the Coroner's Liaison constable on Fridays, when the police officer assigned to that position did not work. This ensured there was five-days-a-week coverage.)

On May 18th, 1999, Sergeant Field wrote a covering memo for Detective Constable Shenher's "action plan" of May 13th, submitting both reports to Inspector Biddlecombe. Sergeant Field advised that the investigators had "exhausted all victim-based enquiries." She further advised that a statistical analysis was being conducted to determine the likelihood of the Missing Women being the victims of homicides.

In addition, Sergeant Field advised that a meeting was held the previous week with members from the Homicide, Sexual Offence, and Vice squads as well as the RCMP Criminal Profiling Section. Sergeant Field advised that the result of the meeting was that many in attendance believed that it was a strong possibility that one or more predators were responsible for the disappearance of many of the Missing Women. Sergeant Field concurred with Detective Constable Shenher's request for additional resources, suggested several possible options to

100 Binder 2, Tab 7.

101 Binder 3, Tab 72.

acquire staff, and warned that “delays in following up tips or investigating suspects could result in... additional disappearances.”¹⁰²

Also on May 18th, the *Vancouver Sun* ran a story about the use of Detective Inspector Rossmo’s expertise on the Missing Women case.¹⁰³ Detective Inspector Rossmo was quoted as saying, “We are trying to use whatever tools we can, bearing in mind that we don’t have a fundamental source of information – a crime scene.” The article reported that Detective Inspector Rossmo said he had been involved in the investigation of the Missing Women for several months and said it was now a high priority for his division. He was also reported to say that there was no conclusive evidence of a single predator, “but we have to consider that as a definite possibility.”

ANDREA BORHAVEN REPORTED MISSING

On May 18th, 1999, Andrea Borhaven was reported missing. She had not been seen since 1997.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER SEEKS UNSOLVED RCMP SEX TRADE WORKER HOMICIDE FILES

On May 18th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher wrote to the RCMP’s Staff Sergeant Doug Henderson of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit requesting copies of the files regarding the Whalen, Pipe, Olajide, Antone, Lidguerre, and Gordon homicides (all involving sex trade workers). In her letter, Detective Constable Shenher advised the Provincial

Unsolved Homicide Unit that Vancouver had 28 street-involved women missing, that the cases were possibly related, and that the homicide files may provide information suggesting links. She also advised that she had requested these files earlier, but “there seems to be some reluctance to provide them.”¹⁰⁴ (Detective Constable Shenher later recalled that once she had written this memo, with some assistance from Sergeant Field, Constable Paul McCarl of the RCMP soon after provided the files with all relevant investigative information.)

INSPECTOR BIDDLECOMBE SUPPORTS ADDITION OF RESOURCES FOR THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

On May 19th, 1999, Inspector Biddlecombe wrote a memo to Acting Deputy Chief Constable K. Doern supporting the requests from Detective Constable Shenher and Sergeant Field for two additional investigators, an “on loan” analyst, and equipment. He noted that “the issue of where staff resources should be allocated from needs to be more fully explored given staff shortages throughout our Department.”¹⁰⁵

SERGEANT FIELD HOSTS MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL BRAINSTORMING SESSION

On May 19th, 1999, a brainstorming session was held in the 4th floor boardroom at 312 Main Street regarding the Missing Women case, to canvas for investigative suggestions.¹⁰⁶ Sergeant Field hosted the meeting, and attendees included representation from various relevant areas of the VPD, including Detective Constable Shenher and Detective Howlett

102 Binder 3, Tab 70.

103 Ian Bailey, “Expert tackles case of missing women: The Vancouver detective’s technique uses a program to predict where a criminal is likely to live,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, May 18, 1999, p. B3.

104 Binder 1, Tab 26.

105 Binder 2, Tab 8.

106 Binder 15, Tab 50.

from Missing Persons, Constable Dickson, Detective Inspector Rossmo of the Geographic Profiling Section, as well as representatives from the Burnaby RCMP and Keith Davidson of the RCMP Criminal Profiling Unit.¹⁰⁷

THE “MISSING WOMEN REVIEW TEAM” IS CREATED

On May 20th, 1999, Inspector Biddlecombe sent an e-mail to Acting Deputy Chief Constable Doern regarding the need for additional staffing for the Missing Women investigation.¹⁰⁸ He advised that effective May 25th, additional staff would be assigned to a “mini task force,” comprising:

- Sergeant Field in charge of the investigation (and noting she would also be in charge of her homicide squad);
- Detective Constable Shenher, and Constable Dave Dickson as investigators;
- Detective Constable Carl Vinje to become a dual analyst for the Missing Women investigation as well as the Home Invasion Task Force;
- two investigators to be identified from Homicide; and
- Gray as clerical support.

Inspector Biddlecombe set out the mandate of the team as “reviewing/investigating the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of these 21 women.”

Inspector Biddlecombe advised the team would work out of a Homicide Squad project room. He also requested cars and other equipment, and that two officers with knowledge of the Downtown Eastside be provided from District 2 or Vice. That day, Sergeant Field identified the two Homicide

members as Detective Ron Lepine and Detective Constable Mark Chernoff. They became available to the investigation in June 1999. Detective Lepine was a very experienced investigator who had worked extensively with sex trade workers during an assignment to the Vice Squad, followed by a lengthy assignment as an investigator with the VPD’s Sexual Offence squad. Detective Constable Chernoff was a less senior investigator whose investigative experience was primarily in homicide, but he had also had several other investigative assignments.

On May 21st, 1999, Inspector Biddlecombe wrote a follow-up e-mail to Acting Deputy Chief Constable Doern with copies to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness, Sergeant Field, and Staff Sergeants Matthews and Giles. He noted that staff had become available in the Major Crime Section due to reductions in the Home Invasion Task Force and the Garage Robbery Task Force. He advised that “it has also become apparent to both myself and Staff Sergeant Giles that a number of investigative tasks need to be more thoroughly investigated.” He noted the assignment of Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff from Homicide; that Detective Constable Vinje (who was on loan from the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit to work in the Home Invasion Task Force) would be assisting the Missing Women investigation’s use of SIUSS, an analytical computer database, and that the investigation would also be supported by the VPD’s Geographic Profiling Section. Inspector Biddlecombe reiterated his request for two investigators from the Patrol Division, or from Vice, and also requested the support of the two constables assigned to the VPD’s “DISC” (Deter and Identify Sex Trade Consumers) program.

107 Binder 15, Tab 43.

108 Binder 3, Tab 69.

The same day, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness sent an e-mail to Inspector Biddlecombe advising he had spoken to Inspector Beach (in charge of District 2) who had approved assigning Constable Dickson full time to the Missing Women investigation. Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness also advised that if there was a need for a Vice investigator, Inspector Biddlecombe should advise him and he would speak to Acting Inspector Kemp (in charge of Vice).

Inspector Biddlecombe later recalled that while he initially described the investigative team as a “mini-task force,” he later named it as a “Missing Women Working Group.” (The “working group” label was used early in the investigation, but the team soon began referring to itself as the Missing Persons Review Team or Missing Women Review Team). Inspector Biddlecombe later explained why the team wasn’t called a task force:

...[Acting Deputy Chief] Doern brought up the fact that in late April at the Police Board meeting, the VPD Executive and the Board had made a public statement that a task force was not warranted, based on documents that had been provided to them by Lori and Geramy and that had gone to the AG. Brock Giles and I read them and were concerned about investigative tasks that needed to be done. Doern’s position was that we shouldn’t call it a task force and embarrass the Police Board or the Executive who said one wasn’t required. We kicked around names. It became the Missing Women Work Group... I felt it was a task force, a mini task force, in everything but name.

The creation of the MWRT was a significant event in that the investigation was no longer a missing persons investigation with a limited investigative

capacity. However, the MWRT was not a full-fledged homicide investigative team either. It was something in between – a policing unit that was investigating suspects but was also conducting a missing persons investigation. In May 1999, VPD management suspected it was faced with a significant problem, but for a variety of reasons, was not yet able to acknowledge the problem as a matter of serial crime.

From the investigators’ point of view, however, the MWRT was perceived as a homicide investigation, although one with limited resources and the challenge of a case where there were no bodies and no evidence apart from the unexplained disappearance of a large number of women with a similar profile.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER AND SERGEANT FIELD ON BILL GOOD SHOW

On May 21st, 1999, Sergeant Field and Detective Constable Shenher were guests of Peter Warren on the “Bill Good Show” on CKNW to talk about the Missing Women case. Detective Constable Shenher recalled that she was “a bit more forceful” than she had been in the past with her suspicions of foul play, saying that “I was coming to the conclusion that they had met with foul play.”

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR ROSSMO’S STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MISSING WOMEN

On May 25th, 1999, at the request of Detective Constable Shenher, Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo completed a statistical and epidemiological-style analysis of reports of missing women from the

Downtown Eastside from 1995 to May 1999. Using a variety of sources of data, he found that the number of women who had gone missing in the previous 30 months was significantly higher than what could be expected by chance. Further, he found it was statistically unlikely that any more than two of the Missing Women would be found. He reported that if the women had met with foul play, the fact that none of their bodies had been found made the separate killer theory unlikely. He stated that “the rarity of serial murder, even in high risk population groups, makes the separate, multiple predator option improbable.” Finally, he found that “the single serial murder (sic) hypothesis (which would include partner or team killers) was the most likely explanation for the majority of these incidents.” His report set out his findings in narrative format, supported by a series of graphs and charts.¹⁰⁹

In reference to Detective Inspector Rossmo’s report, Detective Constable Shenher recalled:

I was frequently asked how unusual the spike in numbers was...So when I got that report I thought good, this is something we can take to the bank, this isn’t the normal ebb and flow, this is the problem...I don’t remember anything changing a lot for me. I communicated regularly with Geramy regarding what our needs were and we were under-resourced. Fred didn’t ask me what I thought. But we were already forming the team shortly before his report, so it didn’t change. I felt vindicated by his report, a statistical report that backed up my own gut feeling, that backed up the results of what we were doing. I already felt like they were not going to show up.

On May 27th, 1999, Detective Inspector Rossmo submitted his analysis with a covering memo addressed to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness, Inspector Biddlecombe, and Inspector Beach. On

June 1st, 1999, Acting Deputy Chief Constable Doern wrote a note to Inspector Biddlecombe on the covering memo requesting that Inspector Biddlecombe and Sergeant Field “see me about this report and its impact, if any, on the Missing Women Investigation Work Group.” (Inspector Biddlecombe subsequently wrote a note on June 3rd to Sergeant Field instructing her to “please arrange to brief A/ Deputy Chief Constable as requested.”¹¹⁰)

There are no further records of this meeting and Sergeant Field had no recollection of briefing Acting Deputy Chief Doern:

I have no recollection of briefing Doern on the Rossmo report. But one of the things that jumped out at all of us would be that the dump site would be out of Vancouver. So out of that we got more in tune with getting on board with the RCMP. That’s when I started trying to get them more on board and Davidson wrote a report. We asked Davidson for a profile later of Pickton but never got it. We kept getting put on the back burner. But...Davidson and Filer were on board with us [wanting to get the RCMP involved].

Detective Constable Shenher later recalled, in reference to Detective Inspector Rossmo’s report:

After Kim’s report, Fred...hardly acknowledged me, so we didn’t discuss it. I felt like things I was saying were going into a vacuum. I didn’t know where information was going beyond Geramy and Al Boyd. In retrospect I would do it differently in my reporting. I was so busy, wearing so many hats, to try to champion this case I didn’t have the energy or time because I was so busy investigating it. From my end, there were no big conversations about strategy or where we were heading. I just tried to communicate to Geramy or Al about what I needed,

109 Binder 1, Tab 81.

110 Binder 2, Tab 88.

that the evidence was pointing toward a serial killer because it was pointing to nothing else. I don't think Geramy watered it down by any stretch, but that the information was hitting a bit of a wall and I don't know what happened. In hindsight, I would be pounding on doors with Kim's report saying "what's going on?!"

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER ATTEMPTS TO CONTACT HISCOX

On May 30th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher left a message for Hiscox to call her but it appears they didn't make contact again.

JUNE 1999

PICKTON SUSPECTED IN ANOTHER NEW WESTMINSTER INCIDENT

On June 1st, 1999, Constable Jennifer Fraser of the New Westminster Police Service conducted a street check of a known prostitute and showed her a photograph of Pickton. The sex trade worker immediately identified Pickton as a man who had tried to pick her up in New Westminster on May 29th, and that he had threatened to assault her if she refused. She described him as "having a creepy smile and that he wanted to devour her in an evil way." Constable Fraser communicated this information to Corporal Connor.

THE INVESTIGATION AND EXTERNAL CONSULTATION CONTINUES

In the VPD, Detective Constable Shenher, now with some additional staff, had become essentially the file coordinator and *de facto* team leader, in addition to having investigative responsibilities. The Missing Women Review Team ("MWRT") investigators named their file "Project Amelia."

On June 1st, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher assigned Detective Constable Dickhout, the VPD "Coroner's Liaison," to research Public Trustee, Coroner, and hospital records where there were deaths where the identity of the deceased had not been confirmed, or where there had been no next of kin. Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff were assigned to look for links with known but unsolved homicides in North Vancouver, Agassiz, Richmond and Pemberton.

On June 3rd, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher distributed a request to Patrol members for any information on prostitution-related assaults, violent "Johns," and so on to assist in the MWRT investigation.¹¹¹

On June 4th, 1999, the *Vancouver Sun* ran a story reporting that two homicide detectives had been assigned to the Missing Women investigation. The article described that police were consulting with other police agencies, including the Green River killer investigators, and police in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., who had investigated a serial murder case that began as missing sex trade workers. Sergeant Field was reported to have stressed that police had no evidence that a serial killer was at work in Vancouver.¹¹² She

111 Binder 18, Tab 19.

112 Lindsay Kines, "Homicide detectives join search: Vancouver city police are expanding their investigation into the disappearance of more than 20 women in the Downtown Eastside drug or sex trade although there is no evidence any were murdered," in the *Vancouver Sun*, June 4, 1999, p. B1.

later recalled the mindset at work:

There was a general feeling not to put fear in the community without any direct evidence, and that we didn't have anything of substance to give to the media, who would want to know what we had and what we were doing. We just had the numbers of women. We found no bodies, nothing to suggest anybody had been abducted. Nothing we could take to the community. We were probably more afraid of the media frenzy that would ensue, than the fear it would cause with sex trade workers.

QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTED TO SEX TRADE WORKERS AT W.I.S.H.

On June 8th, 1999, Detective Constables Shenher and Chernoff, Constable Dickson, Detective Inspector Rossmo, and Detective Sergeant Neil Traynor (an English police officer understudying with Detective Inspector Rossmo), attended a meeting at the First United Church in the Downtown Eastside where a sex trade worker advocacy group – “WISH” (Women’s Information Safe House) – held meetings. The investigators distributed a questionnaire to about 60 sex trade workers for the purpose of gathering information “about what may have happened to the missing sex trade workers from your community.”¹¹³ Forty questionnaires were completed.¹¹⁴

Detective Constable Shenher, in consultation with the Poughkeepsie (New York) Police Department, developed the questionnaire. That police department had conducted an investigation into numerous missing sex trade workers – who had been missing for extensive periods of time – and successfully charged a man with eight murders after finding the

victims dead in the suspect’s home.¹¹⁵ This was the only investigation similar to the Missing Women investigation the VPD investigators were aware of. The VPD investigators looked to Poughkeepsie for advice, but after reviewing the steps taken by the VPD, Poughkeepsie police could only suggest that more resources be added.

INTERFERENCE FROM PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS SEEKING REWARD

On June 9th, 1999, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that a private investigation firm, CPA Confidence Group Enterprises, was joining the hunt for the Missing Women, and had its eyes on the \$100,000 reward.

Officials with CPA said it would go ahead whether police welcomed its efforts or not: “We’d like to work with police but if they say no, it’s too bad.”¹¹⁶

REQUEST FOR FULL TIME SIUSS (INVESTIGATIVE DATABASE) ANALYST

On June 14th, 1999, Sergeant Field e-mailed Staff Sergeant Giles and Inspector Biddlecombe regarding the “absolutely essential” need for a full time police analyst to manage the MWRT’s analytical database, SIUSS. She pointed out that their data entry person, Gray (a civilian clerk), needed guidance regarding what information was relevant. Sergeant Field requested Detective Frank Owen as a full time analyst, since Detective Constable Carl Vinje, an experienced SIUSS analyst, was working full time in the Home Invasion Task Force.¹¹⁷ (Despite being named as a “dual” analyst for the MWRT and the HITF

113 Binder 4, Tab 10.

114 Binder 32, Tab 1.

115 Binder 15, Tab 50.

116 Canadian Press, “Downtown Eastside: Private eyes join search for missing women,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, June 9, 1999, p. B1.

117 Binder 3, Tab 63.

when the MWRT was formed, Detective Constable Vinje continued to work full time for the HITF and was able to provide only sporadic assistance to the MWRT.)

VPD INVESTIGATORS AND RCMP PROFILERS CONSULT WITH SPOKANE SERIAL KILLER INVESTIGATORS

On June 15th, 1999, the Missing Women investigators met with Spokane homicide investigators for two days to learn from their task force into prostitute murders. (This task force eventually charged Robert Yates, Jr. with multiple counts of murder.) The Spokane investigators felt the VPD members were going in the right direction and had no other suggestions “except for lots of manpower.”¹¹⁸ Sergeant Field reported that:

We met with them for two days, and they thought we’d done everything we could without adding 100 people to the investigation...We met with Spokane mostly because we wanted them to audit our investigation, not because of Yates, because we were pretty sure there wasn’t a link. They spent a couple of days with us and said we were doing it right, and doing the best we could with what we had and didn’t have any suggestions. They said we were actually ahead of them because we keep track of our hookers. Davidson and others from the RCMP were also there, Scott Filer...we tried to get as many people as we could there.

SIUSS ANALYST NOT AVAILABLE FULL TIME

On June 16th, 1999, Inspector Biddlecombe replied to Sergeant Field’s June 14th request of June 14th, advising that Detective Owen was not available as a permanent assignment, but was “available as part of your overtime costs.”

RCMP PROFILERS PROVIDE CASE ASSESSMENT OF THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

On June 16th, 1999, Staff Sergeant Keith Davidson, a criminal profiler with the Behavioural Science Group of the RCMP’s “E” Division Major Crime Section, completed and submitted to Sergeant Field a “Case Assessment” of the Missing Women investigation.¹¹⁹ His report covered the time period from 1995 to 1999 and provided a profile of then 21 missing women, a possible profile of the suspect, and recommended investigative strategies.

The report was prepared on the following assumptions:

- that all of the missing women were the victims of a single sexually motivated offender (possibly working in tandem with another offender);
- that all of the women were successfully transported out of the Downtown Eastside in a vehicle; and
- that all of the women’s bodies were disposed of with the express purpose of preventing discovery.

Investigative suggestions centred around:

- “continual contact” with Downtown Eastside sex trade workers for the purpose of identifying an offender meeting certain criteria;

118 Binder 15, Tab 50.

119 Binder 2, Tab 90.

- identifying other women who may have been victims of the same offender;
- identifying the locations of any video surveillance from locations where sex trade workers usually encounter customers, and retrieving the tapes should another sex trade worker go missing;
- prioritizing of possible suspects based on suggested criteria; and
- consultation with ViCLAS, missing person and homicide analysts to provide for linkage analysis of known cases; and a further analysis to determine if there was any method of associating the known murders to the missing women.

RESOURCES STILL A PROBLEM: ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATORS REQUESTED

On June 22nd, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher submitted a memo to Sergeant Field requesting six additional investigators. She pointed out that the current investigators had learned a great deal from the experience of the Spokane Task Force set up to investigate the murders of 20 prostitutes in that jurisdiction. She also advised that there were four new files and 140 pieces of information that required follow-up, and that investigators had also found a link between the Missing Women and prostitute homicides in outside jurisdictions

involving Downtown Eastside women. She advised that an individual who had figured prominently on the MWRT's suspect list was in custody (on another matter), and that Detectives Lepine and Chernoff were following up this issue, leaving her and Constable Dickson to follow up other leads. Detective Constable Shenher advised that her dual role as investigator and file coordinator was difficult, and that "everyone I have spoken to with experience in large case management has advised that it is imperative to have a file coordinator solely dedicated to that function." She advised that she was the logical choice, but that this wasn't possible without additional investigative assistance.

Detective Constable Shenher also advised that investigation of Coroner's Service, Public Trustee and Department of Vital Statistics records indicated that none of the Missing Women had "fallen through the cracks in relation to these agencies."¹²⁰

Also on June 22nd, 1999, Sergeant Field e-mailed Acting Deputy Chief Constable Doern in response to her concerns about the Missing Women reward poster that was being finalized. She wrote:

...we don't have enough people to do the job now even on [overtime], so with the influx of anticipated info we would be further overwhelmed. We would end up with an Abbotsford (Driver) like situation and take months to recover...¹²¹

120 Binder 2, Tab 13.

121 In 1996, Terry Driver killed one young woman and seriously injured another, then terrorized the community with further acts of violence, and taunting messages to the Abbotsford police that he was going to strike again. The VPD loaned a number of officers to the Abbotsford Police to assist with the investigation because of the overwhelming amount of information coming in. Driver was eventually identified, charged and convicted of multiple offences, including murder. In a note taped to a rock and thrown through a house window, he included press clippings about three women murdered in 1989, including a Vancouver sex trade worker, Linda Tatnai.

The same day, Acting Deputy Chief Constable Doern e-mailed Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness with copies to Inspector Biddlecombe and Sergeant Field stating that “MCS will have sufficient resources...to adequately handle the influx of calls that will likely occur once the poster is released on 99-7-15.” Acting Deputy Chief Constable Doern requested that if he was incorrect in his information, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness should be advised before 1400 hours on 99-06-23 before he attended the Police Board meeting that afternoon.¹²² (Sergeant Field had no recollection of this e-mail, but advised no action was taken to alleviate her concerns regarding staffing levels. As it turned out, however, Sergeant Field advised the number of tips received after the poster was released was very small.)

SERGEANT FIELD PROPOSES JOINT FORCES OPERATION WITH RCMP

On June 23rd, 1999, Sergeant Field met with various investigators involved in the Missing Women case, as well as Inspector Biddlecombe and Staff Sergeant Giles. There was discussion of an off-site Joint Forces Operation, and Sergeant Field noted that Inspector Biddlecombe would be speaking to Superintendent Bass of the RCMP.¹²³ (Sergeant Field later advised that no substantive assistance materialized from these discussions.)

MISSING WOMEN SEGMENT TAPED FOR PROFILE ON “AMERICA’S MOST WANTED”

Also on June 23rd, 1999, Acting Deputy Chief Constable Unger, Sergeant Field and Detective Constable Shenher taped a segment on the Missing Women for “America’s Most Wanted” with John Walsh. Sergeant Field noted that John Walsh

commented that “in all the missing persons cases he has dealt with he was never seen such an effort as this one. He was highly complimentary.”¹²⁴

INVESTIGATORS MEET WITH FAMILY MEMBERS OF MISSING WOMEN

On June 24th, 1999, the MWRT met with many family members of the Missing Women to discuss obtaining familial DNA, and to go over the investigative efforts to date. From the VPD, present were Sergeant Field, Detective Constables Shenher, Clarke and Dickhout, Constable Dickson, and Parker. Family members present included Sandra Gagnon (Henry); Kathleen Robert; Kirsten and Shawn McClelland; Shelly Hallmark; David Wilmot; Holly Stepaniuk (Koski); Patricia Coombes; Debby Perkins; Linda Gordon (Perkins); Julia, Shirley Ann and Chris Egan; Gloria Creison; Kevin Marcella (Creison); Geri Steward; Susanah Knight; Sandra Cheverie; Teila Stewart (Knight); Maggie de Vries; Lynn Frey; “Joyce” (Frey); and Marie Soet. Detective Constable Shenher noted that they had been unable to contact the Allenbach, Williams, Jansen, Gonzales, Melnick, Holyk, Murdock, Gurney, Hall, and Rail families. Relatives of Wattley, Smith, Borhaven, Williams, Lane, McDonnell, Jardine, Young, McDonnell, and Beck were contacted, but did not attend.

There were a number of questions from the family members as the result of CPA and their claims that they could find the Missing Women. Sergeant Field noted that the information provided by the MWRT members was well received by most of the families, but some were still antagonistic.¹²⁵

122 Binder 3, Tab 61.

123 Binder 2, Tab 18.

124 Binder 15, Tab 50.

125 Binder 15, Tab 50.

INSPECTOR BIDDLECOMBE ET AL MEET WITH CPA PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS

Also on June 24th, Inspector Biddlecombe, and Staff Sergeants Matthews and Giles met with representatives of CPA.¹²⁶ CPA had raised concerns by their arranging of a “media event” with families of the Missing Women. Inspector Biddlecombe had already determined that most of the families did not want CPA involved. In addition, the VPD had also received an anonymous letter from a CPA employee advising that CPA was hostile to the VPD and might seek to embarrass it, as well as a phone call from another private investigator advising that CPA’s tactics were suspect.

In the meeting with CPA officials, there was discussion of what services they could provide, and CPA advised that they could assist the Missing Women investigation with dog teams and a dive team. Inspector Biddlecombe requested that CPA provide references, which they promised to provide, but never did.

The decision was made to accept any information CPA provided, but not work with them collaboratively. Eventually, CPA “withdrew” from the case (not having conducted any investigation). In 2000, some information was received about unethical conduct/statements made by CPA regarding the Missing Women investigation, but other than that, they played no further role in the investigation.¹²⁷

JULY 1999

MORE INVESTIGATORS ADDED TO THE MWRT

On July 5th, 1999, Detective Constable Alex Clarke, an experienced police officer then on “light duties” due to a back injury, was officially added to the MWRT. (She had already attended some meetings of the MWRT prior to her assignment.) Her main focus initially was to work on the Missing Women Reward Poster, and then she moved on to other investigative tasks focused on finding “missing” women.

In addition, Detective Constable James was loaned from the District 2 “Drug Enforcement and Education Team,” and Detective Constable Cruz was loaned from the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit. Constables Cruz and James brought a suspect, McCartney, to the investigation, but were also expected to be able to conduct field investigations on other suspects and tips. (There was considerable controversy surrounding the selection of Constables James and Cruz to the MWRT, and they were soon to generate distress within the team. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 6 of the Analysis.)

Constable Dickson was originally assigned to the MWRT full time, but in fact was never available more than half-time. This reality was soon reflected in a memo from Inspector Beach formalizing that Constable Dickson would be shared “50/50” with the Downtown Eastside Neighborhood Safety Office. Inspector Beach pointed out that a petition and a demonstration was being planned in front of the 312 Main police station if Constable Dickson was not returned to his original assignment.¹²⁸

As Inspector Beach, who was at the time the District 2 Commander, explained later, the coordinator of the “Neighborhood Safety Office,” —, was not keen to have Constable Dickson reassigned:

126 Binder 15, Tab 27.

127 Binder 15, Tab 28.

128 Binder 3, Tab 62.

It was apparent to me...that [the Investigation Division] wants help from [the Operations Division]... My solution was to give Dickson to the effort because it would serve a number of things. I didn't have a lot of people and I had other neighbourhoods clamouring for resources. So because Dave was familiar with the area and sex trade workers in the area, knows them personally, knows who to talk to, he was the appropriate person to work with Geramy and her crew. But unless I'm careful about how this is done, I'm going to have ——— marching up Hastings to burn 312, and "what do I think I am doing to change his assignment." So that memo is carefully crafted to point out how important this work is, but that Dave remains with the [neighbourhood safety] office. Subsequently I met with ——— and her society to explain to them that this wouldn't last forever. Basically it was a political meeting to persuade them not to start a revolt. There was a belief in certain parts of the community that people were being killed and Dave was well positioned to help, so that's what I told them about why it was important.

Also on July 5th, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness wrote a report titled "Items of Concern" to Acting Chief Constable Blythe (who replaced the recently departed Chief Constable Chambers). He listed 14 issues of which he thought the new Acting Chief should be aware. Item 13 was titled "Major Investigations," but the Missing Women investigation was not mentioned.¹²⁹

JULIE YOUNG REPORTED MISSING

On July 6th, 1999, Julie Young was reported missing to the VPD. She had last been seen on October 9th, 1998.

A NEW INFORMANT SURFACES WITH INFORMATION ABOUT PICKTON

In mid-July of 1999, an informant (later identified as Thomas) claiming to have information about Vancouver's Missing Women contacted the Coquitlam RCMP and spoke to Corporal Jim Brown. Corporal Brown referred Thomas to Sergeant Field as Thomas apparently wasn't specific about the information being about a murder in Port Coquitlam. Sergeant Field received the information from Corporal Brown on July 16th, 1999. Coupled with the other information received previously, Thomas's new information was the catalyst for an intensive investigation into Pickton.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF CONDUCTS FIRST DEBRIEF OF THOMAS

On July 19th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff met the informant Thomas in Coquitlam for a preliminary debriefing. The information provided was sufficient to determine that the subject referred to by Thomas was Pickton, and that the source of the information was a friend or girlfriend of Pickton's. Thomas informed Detective Constable Chernoff that he believed Pickton had murdered a prostitute on his Port Coquitlam property between February and April of 1999, and that a female had been present but didn't take an active part in the homicide or disposal of the remains.

Thomas stated that Pickton and the woman had driven to the Downtown Eastside where they picked up a prostitute. He said drugs, alcohol, and money were used to entice the prostitute to return to Pickton's Port Coquitlam residence. Thomas believed that a Chevy S-10 extended cab pick-up truck with a

129 Binder 10, Tab 47.

blacked-out rear window was used to pick up the prostitute.

Thomas would not provide details as to the method of the murder or the disposal of the body during this debrief, but stated the murder was “gory.” He further indicated that the manner in which the body was disposed of would ensure that neither the body nor any related evidence would be recovered.

Thomas stated he had stayed at Pickton’s Port Coquitlam residence for about a week in April 1999, and that during his stay, he saw a pair of handcuffs and several rifles inside Pickton’s trailer.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF AND CORPORAL CONNOR DISCUSS PICKTON INFORMATION

On July 20th, 1999, at 4 p.m., Corporal Connor phoned Detective Constable Chernoff. Corporal Connor had been made aware of the fact that Detective Constable Chernoff had arranged a meeting with Thomas regarding the Pickton information.

Detective Constable Chernoff and Corporal Connor discussed the Anderson investigation and the Hiscox information. Detective Constable Chernoff briefed Corporal Connor on Thomas’s information, and Corporal Connor advised Detective Constable Chernoff that Pickton had been active in frequenting areas in New Westminster’s prostitution district. Corporal Connor also advised that Sergeant Colin Burrows of the New Westminster Police Homicide Unit had an interest in Pickton’s activities in New Westminster and should be contacted for additional information.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF SEEKS INFORMATION REGARDING NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE CHECK OF PICKTON

On July 22nd, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff spoke to Sergeant Burrows who advised him that patrol members had recently checked Pickton in New Westminster. Detective Constable Chernoff requested that Sergeant Burrows contact the members who dealt with Pickton to obtain reports of the circumstances of the check. Sergeant Burrows also advised that he had sent a file of information concerning Pickton to Corporal Connor in the Coquitlam RCMP, and that he would courier the same information to Detective Constable Chernoff.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF AND THOMAS ARRANGE FOR SECOND MEETING

On July 23rd, 1999, Thomas contacted Detective Constable Chernoff and they arranged to meet on July 26th.

On July 26th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff met with Thomas in Burnaby and was provided additional information, as follows.

Thomas stated that he knew Pickton as “Willie,” and that Pickton owned a demolition company that Thomas believed was called “P&B Demolition”. He advised that Pickton also sold dirt and soil from his large property, which is very close to the Carnoustie Golf Course. He described gravel trucks and a hopper at the back of the property used for the dirt and gravel business.

Thomas advised that Pickton had pigs on the property, and that Pickton would cut up pigs every night and used a large meat grinder to grind up their remains.

He said again that he spent a week on the property with Pickton in April of 1999. He said during his stay there he observed that Pickton truly enjoyed and “gets off” killing things.

He said Pickton lived in a trailer or mobile home that was situated at the back of the property, and described the location as being so remote that screams would not be heard. He said that 10 to 20 feet from Pickton’s trailer was a large barn/garage.

Thomas stated that, until recently, Pickton had lived with a woman by the name of “Lynn,” but that he had kicked her out approximately 3 or 4 weeks ago, and that she was “psycho” and capable of anything. Thomas said he had known Lynn for approximately 5 years, and that she had lived on the property with Pickton for the past year or so, staying in the trailer in April of 1999 when Thomas was also staying there. Lynn’s relationship with Pickton was described by Thomas as being strange; the two did not sleep together and were not boyfriend/girlfriend.

Thomas said Lynn’s ex-boyfriend was Stevens, and that Stevens was a friend of Thomas. Thomas provided Detective Constable Chernoff with a description of Lynn and other information about her.

Thomas advised that “Lynn” often confided in him and had told him the following information:

Lynn said Pickton’s throat was slashed by a prostitute that he had picked up in Vancouver a few years earlier, and that the prostitute had stolen from Pickton in the course of the incident. Lynn said Pickton had a hatred for prostitutes and that it was “pay-back time.”

Lynn advised that Pickton was no longer successful picking up prostitutes on his own because the girls didn’t trust him, and because of all the press about the missing women. As a result, he couldn’t convince prostitutes to come back to his place. “Lynn” therefore accompanied Pickton to the “East End” where they picked up a prostitute in Pickton’s Chevy S-10 pickup sometime in February or March 1999. They used cocaine and alcohol to entice the prostitute, and Lynn convinced the girl that Lynn was also a prostitute and that the two of them would “tag-team” Pickton at his place in Port Coquitlam.

Once back at his residence the prostitute was taken to Pickton’s bedroom in the trailer.

Lynn told Thomas she did not go into the room with Pickton or the prostitute. She said that Pickton became rough with the prostitute and was going to “do her up the ass”. The prostitute screamed and called Lynn to help her, but Lynn did not go into the room. A short while afterwards there was no more noise. Lynn said Pickton took the prostitute out of the bedroom in handcuffs, exited the trailer, and entered the barn. Lynn stayed in the trailer.

Thomas reported that Lynn told him she later walked into the barn where Pickton had hung the victim by the neck and was “skinning her like a pig.” The victim’s legs were being skinned. Lynn told Thomas that until then she hadn’t known that human fat was yellow, and that she threw up and had to leave the barn.

Lynn told Thomas that she did not know if the victim was dead at the time. Lynn felt that Pickton “got off on it.” She didn’t see the victim afterwards and assumed that she was put into the meat grinder.

Lynn also described a hollowed-out wall in the trailer where Pickton hid guns and “stuff”. She

said Pickton had offered to give her other females' identification if she wanted it, and said that he had obtained jewelry from other prostitutes, but that it had since been stolen from him.

Thomas provided a physical description of Pickton's trailer, and said that he made the following observations when he stayed there for a week in April 1999.

- A pair of handcuffs underneath Pickton's bed.
- Night vision equipment in the closet of the same bedroom.
- A semi-automatic rifle and clip.
- Two wigs shown to him by Pickton who retrieved them from the office desk drawer. One of the wigs was blond, and the other possibly red or brown. Pickton commented that he wore them when he went downtown.

Thomas described the barn as being large with a ceiling height of approximately thirty feet, and that the barn was used primarily for slaughtering pigs and other animals. Thomas advised that Pickton would hang a pig on a hook, slaughter, skin, and cut it up. All the blood and refuse from the pig would drop into a vat below. Pickton would then wash the area down with a hose and later pump it out to the back. Thomas advised that the area was quite filthy and had a foul odour.

Pickton told Thomas that if Thomas ever needed to dispose of a body it could be done "without a trace."

Thomas stated that sometime around the end of April 1999, Pickton and Lynn went out again to cruise for a prostitute to bring back to the trailer. They were driving the Chevy S-10 when they got pulled over by the police and questioned about cruising the stroll for prostitutes. Thomas did not know in which jurisdiction the incident occurred.

Thomas was told by Stevens that since Lynn had ceased living in Pickton's trailer, she had been threatening to disclose the murder of the prostitute in order to extort money from Pickton.

Thomas said he believed that Pickton was responsible for several of the missing prostitutes from the Downtown Eastside.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF BRIEFS SERGEANT FIELD; REQUESTS MEETING WITH INSPECTOR BIDDLECOMBE; CALLS DETECTIVE LEPINE

After debriefing Thomas on the evening of July 26th, Detective Constable Chernoff contacted Sergeant Field and advised her of the information he had received. He requested a meeting with her, Detective Lepine and Inspector Biddlecombe to discuss the information. Detective Constable Chernoff was about to go on holidays, and his partner, Detective Lepine, was presently on holidays at a summer home for the rest of July and August. Nevertheless, Detective Constable Chernoff called Detective Lepine and told him about the information: "I told him I thought we had to work on it...he said he was coming back to work." Detective Lepine (now retired) recalled:

In the summer of '99 I had most of the summer off because I was the senior guy. I was on holidays and got a call from Mark...He told me about the informant describing the body in the barn and I couldn't say no. I got on the ferry that night and worked on it until it came to an end.

THE MISSING WOMEN REWARD POSTER IS RELEASED

On July 27th, 1999, the VPD released its Missing Women reward poster, with photos of 31 women who had gone missing from the Downtown Eastside since 1978.

Months of work had gone into finalizing the wording on the poster with considerable correspondence between the VPD, City of Vancouver lawyers, and Ministry of Attorney General staff. The reward was unprecedented because no identifiable crime was involved, and there was concern that a reward could place “missing” but alive women at risk (e.g., from someone who might kill them and claim the reward for the location of the body). The *Vancouver Sun* reported that Attorney General Dosanjh and John Walsh, host of America’s Most Wanted, would be attending the press conference for the poster’s release. The article also noted that some of the women included on the poster had been reported to other police departments or RCMP detachments.¹³⁰ The next day, the *Vancouver Sun* published an extensive article about the press conference, quoting John Walsh at length:¹³¹

Calling it an “unprecedented” move, John Walsh said he had never heard of a \$100,000 reward being offered by public bodies in a case where there is no evidence of foul play. “I have been all over the United States and Canada in the last 11 years and I have never seen this type of cooperation and this type of action ever taken in the disappearance of

women”...Walsh...defended police at a packed media conference to release the reward poster...” So in light of the fact that there is no evidence of any foul play here, or criminality...I again say that this is really a unique effort.” Walsh commended police for tackling the issue head-on stating “something we all feel in our guts: That there may be something very wrong here. It’s very unusual for 31 people – no matter what they do, no matter what trade they’re in – to disappear like that.” Walsh, whose own son was abducted and murdered, has been critical of cities in the U.S. for not taking the kind of steps Vancouver police have on these cases.

Over 1,500 Missing Women reward posters were eventually distributed to all RCMP detachments in Canada, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, all Federal and Provincial correctional institutions, and a variety of other agencies.

130 Lindsay Kines, “Reward posters focus attention on case of 31 missing women: Investigators have included historic cases and those from other jurisdictions in their probe of the disappearances of the women,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, July 27, 1999, p. B3.

131 Lindsay Kines, “America’s Most Wanted host applauds police, politicians for handling of case: John Walsh, in Vancouver working on a segment about the disappearance of 31 women, calls the reward unprecedented,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, July 28, 1999, p. B3.



Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh
Ministry of Attorney General



\$100,000 Reward

Missing Downtown Eastside Women



File: 95-290934
SPENCE, Dorothy
Born: 1962

Last Seen: 95-07-30
Reported Missing: 95-10-30



File: 95-348364
MELNICK, Diana
Born: 1975

Last Seen: 95-12-27
Reported Missing: 95-12-28



File: 97-013529
HOLYK, Tanya
Born: 1975

Last Seen: 98-10-20
Reported Missing: 98-11-03



File: 97-158127
HERRY, Janet
Born: 1951

Last Seen: 97-06-25
Reported Missing: 97-09-28



File: 98-022017
KOSKI, Kent
Born: 1959

Last Seen: 98-01-07
Reported Missing: 98-01-29



File: 98-088436
DEVERES, Sarah
Born: 1969

Last Seen: 98-04-12
Reported Missing: 98-04-21



File: 93-182514
EGAN, Sheila
Born: 1978

Last Seen: 98-07-14
Reported Missing: 98-08-26



File: 95-350514
KNIGHT, Catherine
Born: 1965

Last Seen: 95-04-15
Reported Missing: 95-11-11



File: 96-034215
GANZALEZ, Catherine
Born: 1968

Last Seen: 95-05-77
Reported Missing: 96-02-07



File: 97-001006
LANE, Stephanie
Born: 1979

Last Seen: 97-01-10
Reported Missing: 97-03-11



File: 97-163182
WILLIAMS, Diana
Born: 1973

Last Seen: 96-12-05
Reported Missing: 97-07-24



File: 98-047713
HALL, Inga
Born: 1952

Last Seen: 98-02-20
Reported Missing: 98-03-03



File: 98-095000
BECK, Cindy Louise
Born: 1965

Last Seen: 97-09-77
Reported Missing: 98-04-30



File: 98-205022
FREY, Marlene
Born: 1973

Last Seen: 97-08-15
Reported Missing: 98-05-34



File: 98-220384
HALLMARK, Helen
Born: 1956

Last Seen: 97-06-13
Reported Missing: 98-03-23



File: 96-288097
JARDINE, Angela
Born: 1971

Last Seen: 93-11-10
Reported Missing: 95-12-09



File: 98-008101
CREWSON, Marcella
Born: 1978

Last Seen: 98-12-37
Reported Missing: 99-01-11



File: 92-172303
WATLEY, Kathleen
Born: 1959

Last Seen: 92-06-18
Reported Missing: 92-08-25



File: 95-018782
ALLERBACH, Elaine
Born: 1965

Last Seen: 95-03-10
Reported Missing: 95-04-11



File: 95-147130
YOUNG, Julie
Born: 1967

Last Seen: 95-13-15
Reported Missing: 95-06-01



File: 96-019193
PERKINS, Patricia Gay
Born: 1956

Last Seen: 77-1978
Reported Missing: 96-01-22



File: 90-061877
SOET, Ingrid
Born: 1969

Last Seen: 89-05-28
Reported Missing: 95-10-01



File: 98-100303
BORHAUEN, Andrea Fay
Born: 1972

Last Seen: 1997
Reported Missing: 99-05-18



File: 92-261502
MURDOCK, Jacqueline
Born: 1971

Last Seen: 97-09-14
Reported Missing: 98-10-30



File: 98-297035
GURNEX, Michelle
Born: 1968

Last Seen: 95-10-11
Reported Missing: 98-12-22



File: 99-005009
McDONELL, Jacqueline
Born: 1975

Last Seen: 99-01-16
Reported Missing: 99-02-20



File: 95-000895
COOMBS, Linda Jean
Born: 1959

Last Seen: 90-11-79
Reported Missing: 1993



File: 90-057163
WILLIAMS, Vanessa
Born: 1973

Last Seen: 88-07-07
Reported Missing: 89-03-07



File: 99-080255
SMITH, Karen
Born: 1964

Last Seen: 92-06-77
Reported Missing: 99-04-27



File: 86-060025
HALL, Sherry Lynn
Born: 1956

Last Seen: 84-11-35
Reported Missing: 87-03-08



File: 81-281226
JARSEN, Rose Ann
Born: 1948

Last Seen: 81-10-23
Reported Missing: 81-10-24

The Ministry of Attorney General and the Vancouver Police Board have authorized a reward of up to \$100,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the unlawful confinement, kidnapping or murder of any or all of the listed women, missing from the streets of Vancouver. Upon the arrest and conviction of a person or persons responsible for the unlawful confinement, kidnapping or murder of any one or more of the women listed as missing in this reward poster, a reward will be decided by the Vancouver Police Board, in its sole discretion, and that decision is final, binding and not reviewable.

Only those people who come forward and volunteer information which is received by the Vancouver Police Department on or before May 1, 2000, will be eligible to receive a reward.

Any persons having information regarding the unlawful confinement, kidnapping or murder of any of the missing women listed in this poster are requested to communicate that information immediately to the Vancouver Police Department, Missing Persons Unit.

North America at:
1-800-993-8799 OR

In the Vancouver Area at:
(604) 717-3415 OR

Call your local police agency or
You can remain anonymous and call:
669-TIPS

GREATER VANCOUVER CRIME STOPPERS

Ujjal Dosanjh, Q.C.
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Terry Blythe, Chief Constable
VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Additional details and larger photos are available to the Vancouver Police Department Web site at: www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/police

MEETING HELD REGARDING SECOND

THOMAS DEBRIEF

On July 28th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff met with Sergeant Field, Detective Lepine, Detective Constable Shenher, and Inspector Biddlecombe to discuss Thomas's information. Immediately after the meeting, he contacted Corporal Connor of the Coquitlam RCMP and arranged to meet him the next day to discuss Thomas's information.

That night, Thomas returned a message from Detective Constable Chernoff, and they arranged to meet again on July 30th.

MISSING WOMAN LINDA COOMBES POSSIBLY IDENTIFIED AS AN OVERDOSE VICTIM

On July 28th, 1999, Sergeant Field and Detective Constable Chernoff reviewed a list of unidentified persons kept by the Coroner's Service. They noted that the descriptors of an unidentified female who had died of a heroin overdose in Vancouver in 1994 closely matched the information relating to Linda Coombes, who had been reported missing on April 4th, 1999.

MISSING WOMEN REVIEW TEAM BRIEFING ON INVESTIGATION

On July 29th, 1999, the MWRT investigators held a meeting to discuss the progress of the case, with notes taken by Sergeant Field.¹³² Present were Sergeant Field, Inspector Biddlecombe, Detective Lepine, Detective Constables Shenher, Clarke, Cruz, and James, and their clerk, Parker.

The possible link between the sex trade workers whose bodies were discovered in 1995 and the Missing Women was discussed. Detective Lepine described the "dump sites" and terrain where the bodies of Pipe, Olajide and Younker were found in the Fraser Valley. He advised a helicopter would be needed to search the area for further evidence and that he had the GPS information.

The work being done with the Coroner's Service, Vital Statistics, and the Public Trustee was described. Pursuant to direction from Inspector Biddlecombe, it was noted that Detective Constable Clarke would be contacting the Glenhaven Funeral home to search their records in the event that some of the Missing Women had died and been buried as indigents.

There was also discussion of a suspect in the Fraser Valley murders, —, who was then in custody. The investigation into suspect McCartney was summarized by Detective Constable James, with mention of Calgary files and a North Vancouver sexual assault, and that DNA would be compared. Other suspects were discussed, including suspect "R". (During the meeting, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine left for a meeting in Coquitlam regarding the Pickton file.)

It was agreed that photographs of "persons of interest" would be shown at WISH, and that the DISC members, Detective Constables Oscar Ramos and Raymond Payette, would assist by showing the photographs during the normal course of their work with sex trade workers. The notes indicate Detective Constables Cruz and James were assigned to do some work around solved and unsolved cases from other jurisdictions.

132 Binder 2, Tab 21.

It was noted that the majority of the basic information from tips received had been entered into the SIUSS investigative database, but that a review was needed and overtime was still required. Sergeant Field noted that she would be contacting Staff Sergeant Keith Davidson for profiling assistance. Equipment needs were noted, and that a report either had been, or would be, submitted to Inspector Biddlecombe.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF AND DETECTIVE LEPINE MEET WITH COQUITLAM RCMP RE: PICKTON

After leaving the July 29th, 1999 MWRT meeting, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine travelled to the Coquitlam RCMP office for a noon meeting with Coquitlam RCMP members to discuss Thomas's information. Present from the RCMP were Inspector Earl Moulton, Corporal Connor, Sergeant Robertson, Corporal Justason, and Sergeant Pollock. Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff provided an overview of the Missing Women investigation and details of Thomas's information.

The group discussed possible strategies to implement as part of a joint investigation. It was agreed that Coquitlam RCMP would be responsible for the homicide investigation at the Pickton residence "if the information was accurate and could be verified."

Inspector Moulton agreed to initiate the investigation and to contact Special "O" to provide surveillance. Other resources were also considered, such as tracking devices and video taping of Pickton's property. It was also agreed that Detective Constable Chernoff would continue to handle Thomas and re-interview him on July 30th.

The investigators also discussed the identity of "Lynn" and concluded, based on age and descriptions, that "Lynn", who provided information to Thomas, was not the same individual as Quinn, who provided information to Hiscox (the source from 1998).

Detective Constable Chernoff noted at the time that:

it is important to note that two separate females who have stayed at the Pickton property have described Pickton's activities that subsequently resulted in two different sources contacting police with the information. It is also apparent that "Lynn" was an intricate participant in assisting Pickton in successfully transporting a prostitute to his residence.

In his notes of July 29, 1999, Corporal Connor noted that the information available requires "immediate action." He wrote in his notes that:

physical, electronic surveillance was discussed and the feasibility of such will be looked into. Tracking devices and cameras will also be considered. Undercover Operation through an Ops plan will be submitted. Vancouver police [and] the Unsolved Homicide Unit will assist in the investigation. Thomas will be re-interviewed on July 30th in the morning and Vancouver City Police will report back to the undersigned later that day.¹³³

That afternoon, Corporal Connor's notes indicate that he queried Pickton on PIRS and learned that Constable Jennifer Fraser of the New Westminster Police Service had checked him on March 24th, 1999 at 4:28 a.m. (this may have been an error in Corporal Connor's notes, as the CPIC report indicates March 20th, 1999 as the date Pickton was checked). Pickton had been with Lynn Ellingsen. Corporal Connor phoned Detective Constable Chernoff to advise him of this information at 3:45 p.m.

133 Binder 29, Tab 6, p. 20.

Detective Constable Chernoff located the CPIC report dated March 20th, 1999 from the Pickton file and noted there was no time of the stop indicated on the report, but that the passenger was noted as Lynn Ellingsen, DOB: —, with an address given of —. Detective Constable Chernoff concluded that the “Lynn” described by Thomas was in fact Ellingsen, as Thomas’s information indicated that Pickton and “Lynn” were stopped by the police while attempting to pick up another prostitute, which was consistent with the information from the New Westminster police. This police stop occurred after the homicide at the Pickton residence, according to Thomas.

THE SEARCH OF BURIAL RECORDS FOR THE MISSING WOMEN

Meanwhile, pursuant to Inspector Biddlecombe’s directive, Detective Constable Alex Clarke began the process of searching the records of the provincial government’s indigent burial service at Glenhaven Memorial Chapel. Detective Constable Clarke eventually searched both the government’s files and Glenhaven’s files relating to indigent burials. These files were not computerized, so a manual search was required. In the case of the government files, she searched 6,300 files dating back to 1976, concluding her search on September 2nd, 1999. She also searched Glenhaven’s more comprehensive files back to 1983, completing this task on February 25th, 2000. Detective Constable Clarke determined that neither the government nor the Glenhaven files included any names on the Missing Women list.¹³⁴

THOMAS MISSES MEETING WITH DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF AND DETECTIVE LEPINE

On July 30th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff again spoke to Corporal Connor by phone at 10:50 a.m. and advised him that Thomas didn’t show up for the meeting scheduled for that morning. Detective Constable Chernoff further advised that Thomas had been telephoned and a message left for him to return the call.

CORPORAL CONNOR REQUESTS RCMP SURVEILLANCE OF PICKTON AND RESEARCH INTO ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE; RCMP TEAM NOT AVAILABLE – VPD PROVIDES SURVEILLANCE TEAM

Also on July 30th, 1999, Corporal Connor contacted Special “I” (electronic surveillance) for a feasibility study on the Pickton and Ellingsen residences, then met with members of Special “O” to initiate surveillance on Pickton. Corporal Connor noted that Special “O” was extremely busy, and wouldn’t be able to undertake surveillance in the afternoons until the following Sunday. However, Inspector Moulton was able to retain the services of the Vancouver Police Department’s “Strike Force” (a covert surveillance and arrest unit) for the next three nights, with the RCMP providing daytime surveillance until the RCMP could take over full time.

134 Binder 8, Tab 36.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF AND DETECTIVE LEPINE MEET WITH NEW WESTMINSTER HOMICIDE SERGEANT AND CONTINUE INVESTIGATION

Later on July 30th, at 11:40 a.m., Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine went to the New Westminster Police and spoke to Sergeant Burrows of their Homicide Unit. Sergeant Burrows provided the investigators with a file for their review, which contained information as to the activities of Pickton in New Westminster. The two constables who had dealt with Pickton in New Westminster were identified as Constables Judy Robertson and Jennifer Fraser.

At 11:45 a.m., Thomas contacted Detective Constable Chernoff who advised Thomas that he and Detective Lepine would pick Thomas up at 12:45 p.m.

At 12:30 p.m., Detective Constable Chernoff spoke to Inspector Biddlecombe. Inspector Biddlecombe advised that he had made arrangements for the VPD Strike Force to set up surveillance at the Pickton residence that afternoon (as per Inspector Moulton's request noted above). He requested that Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine brief the Strike Force at 312 Main at 5:00 p.m. He also advised that Special "O" would work day shift starting July 31st and take over the surveillance from the VPD on Tuesday, August 3rd.

At 12:40 p.m., Detective Constable Chernoff left a message for Corporal Connor to change the location of the Strike Force briefing to the Coquitlam RCMP offices. He also requested that Corporal Connor be involved in the briefing as he had more detailed knowledge of the Pickton property and of Pickton himself. Corporal Connor later confirmed this change of location.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF AND DETECTIVE LEPINE MEET WITH THOMAS FOR THIRD DEBRIEF

At 1:15 p.m., Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine picked up Thomas in Surrey and advised him they wanted to be shown Pickton's property in Port Coquitlam. Later, while they were driving past the — Hotel near the —, Thomas identified the immediate area to the northwest of the hotel as the area of the residence of "Lynn", which was consistent with the address of Lynn Ellingsen provided by Corporal Connor.

By 3:25 p.m., Thomas had directed the detectives to 953 Dominion Avenue in Port Coquitlam and advised that this was Pickton's property. Thomas indicated that Pickton's brother (whom Thomas did not know by name) lived in the house at the front of the property just north of Dominion Avenue. He said that Pickton's trailer was at the far back end of the property and was not visible from Dominion Avenue. Several work trucks, heavy equipment and dirt hills were visible from the roadway. The front of the property had a fence and closed entrance gate. Several no trespass and guard dog signs were posted at the front gate. The property appeared very large and possibly several acres of dirt hills and yard area lay behind the house.

Thomas then directed the detectives east to Burns Road then north to 2552 Burns Road, a property he identified as also belonging to Pickton. He identified an area behind the large house and property as "Piggy's Palace," an after-hours club he described as being very popular. There were several barns on this very large property. Thomas advised that Pickton did not live on the premises, and Thomas did not know who the residents were.

Thomas then directed the detectives to Riverside Drive at the rear of the Pickton property, and identified a single-wide trailer towards the north end of the property as Pickton's residence. Directly beside the trailer was an out-building with its roof covered with a dark blue tarp. Thomas identified this building as the "barn" where Pickton slaughtered his pigs. Another large out-building to the south of the barn was described as being the garage where Pickton worked on his vehicles. The detectives had a limited view of the buildings from the street, and couldn't see them in their entirety.

At 3:45 p.m., Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine transported Thomas to the Coquitlam RCMP Detachment and debriefed him in an interview room on the main floor. Thomas provided some additional information and clarification of information previously provided. The following is an edited summary of key information Thomas provided in this July 30th debriefing session.¹³⁵

- P&B Demolition was owned by Pickton and possibly his brother, who was unknown to Thomas. Pickton has several work trucks, and at least two white "International" tractor trailers with flatbeds that are described as being newer vehicles. "P&B Demolition" signs are written on the doors.
- Lynn lived intermittently with Pickton for about a year. He often bought her things, and liked "having her on his arm."
- In the trailer, Lynn had a separate single bed in Pickton's bedroom.
- Lynn had a B.C. Driver's Licence taken away recently for an impaired charge. Pickton arranged for a lawyer for her. She was charged sometime in the end of 1998 or the beginning of 1999.
- Thomas met Lynn through a friend named Stevens, whom he has known for approximately 8 years.
- Thomas described how he first met Pickton

in March 1999. He said that Lynn had contacted Stevens to locate an individual who had stolen Pickton's credit card. Stevens in turn contacted Thomas to assist him in locating this individual. The two were able to find a person who had purchased the credit card, but not the individual in question. Upon returning to Pickton's residence, the individual coincidentally arrived, not knowing that the others were looking for him. Thomas and Stevens, "tuned the guy up" in the trailer. The individual eventually admitted to taking the credit card. Pickton appreciated the "services" of Thomas and Stevens and said to Thomas that Pickton owed him a favour if he ever required. Pickton also offered Thomas a pig.

- A week later Thomas came by Pickton's trailer and Pickton cut up a pig for him.
- Close to the end of April 1999, Thomas was being released from jail. As he had no residence, he contacted Pickton to ask for a place to stay. Pickton allowed Thomas to stay with him and Lynn in his trailer.
- They moved Lynn's bed into the back bedroom and she slept in the same room as Thomas. When they were moving the bed, Thomas observed a pair of handcuffs between the mattresses.
- Lynn confided in Thomas during the period Thomas stayed in the trailer. According to Thomas, Lynn "came on to him" and the two had sex a few times. Pickton was not aware of this.
- During his stay in the trailer, Thomas observed that cock fighting events were taking place in the barn. Apparently the cock fights occurred every weekend in the summer and once each month for the balance of the year. As many as 30 to 40 cars of people would come to place bets on the cock fights.
- Thomas described eating a meal served by

Pickton. The meat came from a “special” freezer located in the barn. Pickton had other freezers that contained more typical items which were wrapped in a standard fashion. The special freezer described by Thomas had items wrapped in black plastic bags. Thomas believed that he had been fed human flesh. It was described as being light in colour and very stringy.

- Thomas described Pickton’s sleeping habits. Pickton often stayed up until midnight or 1:00 a.m. He would sometimes go out for late night walks. Pickton would often slaughter pigs “and get all stinky” before going to bed.
- Thomas stayed with Pickton in the trailer for about ten days.

Thomas related the following information as having been disclosed by “Lynn”:

- Pickton was having trouble getting prostitutes to get in his vehicle. As a result, he had started to offer the prostitutes drugs and alcohol, to entice them to come back to his place.
- The prostitutes weren’t as easy for Pickton to pick up as they used to be, but the prostitutes trusted Lynn. Pickton needed Lynn to assist him in picking up the prostitutes.
- Pickton took care of Lynn by buying her things.
- Lynn would obtain the necessary drugs and alcohol.
- Pickton neither took drugs nor drank.
- Lynn described to Thomas the night they brought the prostitute back to the trailer. When the prostitute was picked up, Lynn gave the prostitute a “rock” to smoke until the prostitute got “totally whacked”.
- Thomas felt that the prostitute sat in the rear jumper seat in the extended cab.

- Lynn gave the prostitute another rock once they returned to Pickton’s trailer. The prostitute and Pickton went in to Pickton’s bedroom. Pickton was not able to obtain an erection.
- Lynn heard the prostitute yelling for help. She was saying, “Come in and help me girl.” (The prostitute didn’t know Lynn’s name and referred to Lynn as “girl”.)
- Lynn went into Pickton’s bedroom. Pickton appeared to be attempting to have anal sex with the prostitute and was being rough.
- Lynn told the prostitute to relax, because it would be worse if she resisted.
- Lynn then went back to the office area and the prostitute started screaming again. Lynn ignored the prostitute’s call for help. A short while later there was silence.
- Lynn saw Pickton take the prostitute out to the barn in handcuffs. Thomas does not know if the prostitute was conscious or not.
- Lynn went into the barn at some point and saw the prostitute standing on a platform. Lynn left the barn and later returned. At that time, the prostitute’s body was “hanging” up and Pickton was cutting strips from her legs. Lynn left the barn and threw up.
- Lynn then packed up and left Pickton’s trailer for about four days. Thomas was not sure of the time frame in which this occurred.
- Lynn told Thomas that Pickton keeps jewellery, credit cards, and pieces of identification that he has taken from prostitutes.

Thomas explained that Lynn seemed to be proud of her role in helping Pickton solicit prostitutes. Thomas believed Lynn thought of herself as the “head girl” and had assisted Pickton in this way on many occasions. Thomas further provided Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine with the following information about Pickton’s barn:

- Thomas described the barn, and drew a hand-drawn diagram from memory.
- He indicated there was a sliding door that led into the middle of the barn.
- The barn closest to the trailer was only used for slaughtering. Pickton had another larger barn he used to fix his vehicles.
- Pickton had a metal pole on wheels which had “S”-shaped stainless steel hooks on it. The hooks were located above a vat where the blood from the slaughtered pigs would flow into.
- Thomas was not sure how the pigs were killed by Pickton.
- There was a meat grinder that Pickton used, but Thomas was not sure if it was automatic or manual.
- In the back of the barn, there was an area where Pickton holds cock fights. A person would have to walk past the slaughtering area to attend the area where the cock fights were held.
- During Thomas’s stay, he observed an ostrich and an emu in the barn. He was surprised when one day Pickton killed them both.

Thomas provided the following information about Pickton’s trailer:

- Thomas described the trailer and drew a diagram of its layout.
- Thomas indicated that upon entering the trailer door, Pickton’s bedroom was to the left. The bathroom was directly ahead. The office area was to the right. Past the office was a laundry

room, kitchen, and a second bedroom. There were a couple of desks in the office area.

- Lynn had told Thomas that there was a false wall in the trailer; however, Thomas did not know where it was.
- Thomas said that Pickton kept an automatic rifle in a closet in the trailer.

The debriefing concluded at 7:40 p.m. Detective Constable Chernoff gave Thomas \$50.00 to partially compensate him for the time spent with police, although Thomas did not request any money. The detectives then drove Thomas home.

Detective Constable Chernoff later spoke to the sergeant in charge of the Strike Force squad conducting surveillance on Pickton and learned there were no observations of interest to report as of 10:40 p.m.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF AND DETECTIVE LEPINE MEET WITH CORPORAL CONNOR TO REVIEW THIRD THOMAS DEBRIEF

On July 31st, 1999 at 9:00 a.m., Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine attended the Coquitlam RCMP office and met with Corporal Connor and Corporal Justasen to review the latest interview with Thomas and to discuss possible tactics. Corporal Connor confirmed nothing of interest had occurred at the Pickton residence based on surveillance the evening of July 30th.

Later that day, Detective Constable Chernoff received a message from Corporal Connor suggesting that Thomas listen to a recording of an earlier Crime Stoppers tip so that Thomas could express an opinion of whether the caller was Pickton.

AMERICA'S MOST WANTED BROADCASTS THE MISSING WOMEN CASE

On July 31st, 1999, the America's Most Wanted episode on the Missing Women case was broadcast. Eventually, 150 tips were received as a result of the America's Most Wanted show. About 20 were deemed to be worthy of follow-up and were assigned, but none of them resulted in any information of value.¹³⁶

A SUSPECT IN THE "VALLEY MURDERS" IS PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED

On July 31st, 1999, the *Vancouver Sun* ran a lengthy article about the suspect in the Agassiz/Mission murders, Tremblay.¹³⁷ The lead investigator, the RCMP's Paul McCarl, was "urging the RCMP to dedicate more resources to the investigation immediately." The article stated that "police have long suspected that one person killed Pipe, Olajide, Younker and Lidguerre, and was likely responsible for the disappearance of Spence. But after recent meetings with Vancouver police, Knight and Gonzales were also identified as possible victims, McCarl said." McCarl was also reported to have stated that investigators were looking into whether they could pinpoint Tremblay being in Vancouver when a number of the Missing Women were last seen. The article also noted that Tremblay's lawyer pointed out that Tremblay had voluntarily consented to providing DNA samples.

AUGUST 1999

LAURA MAH REPORTED MISSING

On August 3rd, 1999, Laura Mah was reported missing to the VPD, having last been seen in 1985. However, Laura Mah was not added to the list of Missing Women until the Joint Task Force took over the investigation in 2001. (Laura Mah lived in the Downtown Eastside, but there was no information revealed in the investigation to suggest she was a sex trade worker. That, coupled with the fact that she had gone missing so many years earlier, likely led the Missing Persons Unit to believe she was not part of the same "series" of Missing Women as the ones who went missing in 1997 and later, who were the focus of the initial investigation. Therefore, the MWRT appears never to have been informed of this report.)

BRIEFING HELD ON PICKTON INVESTIGATION BY COQUITLAM RCMP

Meanwhile, also on August 3rd, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine attended an 8:30 a.m. meeting at the Coquitlam RCMP office. Also present from the VPD were Inspector Biddlecombe, Sergeant Field, and Detective Constable Shenher. Present from the RCMP were Corporal Connor, Inspector Moulton, Corporal Justason, Staff Sergeant Henderson (of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit) and Sergeant Rinn.

Corporal Connor briefed the group on the history of the file up to the latest source information. The group discussed investigative plans and strategies. Corporal Connor noted that the purpose of the

136 Binder 5, Tab 43.

137 Lindsay Kines, "Jailed rapist a suspect in murders, disappearances: Police are investigating the Mission man's involvement in 7 of 31 missing-women cases," in the *Vancouver Sun*, July 31, 1999, p. A1.

meeting was to elicit resources and financial assistance from the RCMP Divisional Units and the VPD. Corporal Connor recorded in his notes that “It was agreed that an investigative team must be formed and from that an operational plan be put in place. Vancouver police provided Detectives Lepine and Chernoff.”

That afternoon, Detective Constable Chernoff researched various police databases to gather intelligence on Lynn Ellingsen. He learned she had an extensive police history, with ———, and that she was then wanted on an outstanding warrant for impaired driving.

PICKTON INVESTIGATORS MEET AGAIN AT COQUITLAM RCMP

On August 4th, 1999 at 8:00 a.m., Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine again met with RCMP investigators at the Coquitlam RCMP office. Present from the RCMP were Corporal Connor, who identified himself as the “file coordinator”; Sergeant Robertson, who was assigned to manage resources for surveillance and inquiries with Special “I”; Corporal Campbell, Corporal Justason and Detective Ballantyne from the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit; and Constables Greig and Stuart of Coquitlam Serious Crime Section. Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine were present and assigned to “handle Thomas and other duties as required.” The group discussed investigative tactics, e.g., surveillance hours of operation on the Pickton property, an undercover or police approach on Lynn Ellingsen, and a “source/agent scenario” involving a Part VI application (electronic surveillance).

CORPORAL CONNOR CONSULTS WITH CROWN ABOUT PICKTON

After the meeting, Corporal Connor met with Crown Counsel Peder Gulbransen to discuss the case, and left the investigation file with him “to digest.” That afternoon, Corporal Connor met with Gulbransen again to discuss the possibility of installing a covert camera to observe Pickton’s “comings and goings.” (The surveillance teams had advised that surveillance of the property was very difficult because of the geography, and that they couldn’t see into the property). Gulbransen advised he needed to consider whether a “General” or “Video Warrant” was required.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF AND DETECTIVE LEPINE MEET WITH THOMAS FOR FOURTH DEBRIEF

Later that day, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine met with Thomas and took him to a restaurant in Coquitlam for another interview. They also provided Thomas with a pager to facilitate timely contact. The following is a summary of the information Thomas provided at this debrief.¹³⁸

- Thomas was at Stevens’s residence the night previous.
- A male by the name of “——” was also there.
- Stevens told Thomas that Lynn was extorting Pickton for payments of \$500.00, and was threatening to go to the police unless Pickton paid. Pickton had been making these extortion payments since he kicked Lynn out of his residence.
- The extortion had been occurring over the past month or so, on a frequent basis.
- Thomas said that Stevens had found himself in the

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role of a mediator between Pickton and Lynn. This is because of Stevens's past relationship with Lynn and his current position as an employee of Pickton's.

- Pickton knows that Stevens is able to exert some control over Lynn.
- Stevens told Thomas that he knew the reason for the extortions. Stevens said that it involved the "killings" on Pickton's property.
- Thomas said that Pickton didn't want to deal with Lynn directly as she is often out of control. Thomas believed that Pickton had trouble standing up to Lynn as she was confrontational and also said that Pickton had "no back bone."
- Stevens told Thomas that Pickton wants to "do" Lynn as she was causing Pickton difficulties.
- Thomas advised that Stevens was not involved in either the extortion or the homicides.
- Stevens told Thomas of a recent incident where Pickton gave Stevens \$500.00 to keep Lynn quiet. Stevens gave the money to Lynn as instructed. Lynn however called Pickton and told him that Stevens had not given her the money. She therefore wanted more.
- Stevens had laughed about the incident and said it was typical of Lynn.
- Pickton had very few, if any, friends.
- Thomas did not believe that Stevens knew any particulars or had any information about the "murders" by Pickton.
- Thomas did not believe that Lynn would go to the police with the information as she herself was involved and "knew what was going on."
- Thomas said that because of the way in which Lynn had described the murder of the prostitute and the events that led up to it, there is no doubt in Thomas's mind that she knew beforehand the prostitute was going to be murdered by Pickton.
- Thomas stated that Pickton was in the process

of leveling off the property at his residence, as it was being sold to developers for eighteen million dollars.

- Thomas did not know when the deal was to be completed.
- Thomas said that about 3:30 a.m. that morning (August 4th, 1999), Lynn had called Stevens's residence. "—" had answered the phone and later told Thomas that the caller was Lynn. Lynn had called to talk to Stevens, who was asleep at the time.
- Thomas had pressed *69 to determine where Lynn was calling from. Thomas could not recall the prefix from memory, but he had written the number on a piece of paper, which he had left at Stevens's. Thomas had checked the prefix in the phone book and determined it to be from Vancouver.
- Thomas said that only the prefix came up on the *69 display and not the entire number. Thomas believed it to be #702 (later checked and found to be a Chilliwack prefix).

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF AND DETECTIVE LEPINE PROPOSE THOMAS ACT AS AN "AGENT"; THOMAS AGREES

After Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine had debriefed Thomas, they presented him with the possibility of becoming a "Police Agent" in the investigation. Thomas indicated that if being an "Agent" would prevent additional deaths or would solve the murder of more women, he would do it. Thomas did not ask if he would be compensated for taking the role of an Agent.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF UPDATES CORPORAL CONNOR ON FOURTH THOMAS DEBRIEF

At 4:10 p.m. on August 4th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff contacted Corporal Connor and updated him regarding the latest meeting with Thomas. Corporal Connor advised that surveillance had followed Pickton to the area of the Patricia Hotel in the Downtown Eastside that afternoon. Pickton was lost in the area for a short time. When “re-acquired,” he was alone in his vehicle.

PICKTON INVESTIGATORS MEET AGAIN AT COQUITLAM RCMP OFFICE

On August 5th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine attended another 8:00 a.m. meeting at the Coquitlam RCMP office to discuss the Pickton investigation. Present were Inspector Moulton, Sergeant Robertson, Corporals Connor, Nash, and Justason, and Constables Stuart and Greig. The investigators discussed obtaining a taped statement from Thomas regarding his conversation with Ellingsen and his observations at the Pickton residence. Corporal Connor noted that Thomas was willing to provide a written statement and become a witness if required. Corporals Nash and Justason were assigned to develop a “Letter of Agreement” and a “Threat Assessment” regarding Thomas. Detective Ballantyne was assigned to conduct a background profile of Thomas, and Constable Greig was assigned to develop a profile of Stevens. Sergeant Robertson was assigned to form an additional surveillance crew to locate and conduct surveillance of Ellingsen to determine her habits and associates.

After the meeting, Corporal Connor contacted Peder Gulbransen at Crown regarding the installation

of a covert camera, and Gulbransen advised that a warrant would be required. Corporal Connor noted that an application for video authorization would be made “about the time this office would apply for a Part VI Authorization.”

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF AND DETECTIVE LEPINE CONDUCT TAPED INTERVIEW OF THOMAS (5TH DEBRIEF)

In the early afternoon, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine picked up Thomas in Surrey, who provided further information. After assisting Thomas with a personal problem, the detectives transported him to the Coquitlam RCMP office. There they tape recorded a statement from Thomas.

Thomas had by this time become willing to identify himself to assist police as either a potential witness or agent. However, Thomas’s physical condition on August 5th was of concern, as he appeared to be falling asleep during the interview. His condition deteriorated throughout the interview, eventually reaching the point where he appeared confused, especially around approximations of time and dates. Thomas attributed his condition to partying the previous night, the stress of the situation, and other un-related problems he had to deal with. He also said that he had only had a couple of hours sleep prior to the interview.

As a result, the detectives gave Thomas several breaks during the several hours they spent interviewing him, to assist him in “waking up.” However, Corporal Connor and other investigators believed that, because of his condition, Thomas would need to be re-interviewed. Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine therefore made arrangements to interview Thomas again on August 9th, 1999

BURNABY RCMP RECEIVE INFORMATION ON PICKTON – REFER TO COQUITLAM

On August 6th, 1999, Corporal Connor noted that Constable Vanoverbeek of the Burnaby RCMP had contacted Coquitlam to advise that he had a couple of people at their front counter with relevant information. The two individuals wanted to report that they had received information from a friend, Lynn Ellingsen, that she had witnessed a murder committed by a man named “Willy.” Arrangements were made to have the individuals attend the Coquitlam Detachment the next day.

PICKTON PICKS UP YOUNG CHILD WHILE UNDER SURVEILLANCE

During the surveillance of Pickton on August 6th, Pickton was observed picking up a female child at a local residence and then going to the local KFC Restaurant. Pickton was observed tickling the child in his vehicle. Concerned for her safety, an RCMP officer, Constable Krasman, checked Pickton under the pretext that there had been an anonymous complaint. The child was interviewed alone and stated Pickton was a good friend of her mother and denied being the victim of anything inappropriate. Constable Krasman suggested to Pickton that he take the child home, which he agreed to do. However, the continued surveillance established that Pickton didn’t take her home, and he was stopped again near his own residence. Pickton became agitated but Constable Krasman calmed him down and took the child home to her mother. Her mother was not the “least concerned with the child’s safety and related that maybe the police should concern themselves with real crime.”

CORPORAL CONNOR INTERVIEWS WOOD (INFORMANT REFERRED BY BURNABY RCMP)

On August 7th, Corporal Connor and Constable Marenchuk interviewed the reportee who had attended the Burnaby RCMP, now identified as Wood. She advised that she was a friend of Lynn Ellingsen, who she said was living with Pickton. Wood described the incident of Pickton hanging a woman in his barn and “gutting” her, as related to her by Ellingsen. Wood also said that Ellingsen had seen women’s identification in Pickton’s trailer and other women’s belongings on the property. Wood said that Ellingsen believed that Pickton was responsible for the killing of other prostitutes. Ellingsen also told Wood that Ellingsen’s boyfriend said that he had looked into a freezer on the property and had seen women’s legs. Wood also advised that Ellingsen had not approached police with the information because Ellingsen believed that she could be considered an accessory to the murder. Wood said that Ellingsen was surprised that nobody else had gone to police with the information as other people “knew about it.” Wood provided other details about Ellingsen and Pickton, and stated she was willing to be a witness.

PICKTON INVESTIGATORS MEET IN COQUITLAM – WOOD INFORMATION REVIEWED – STRATEGY DEVELOPED

On August 9th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine attended an 8:15 a.m. meeting at the Coquitlam RCMP office to review the investigation. Corporal Connor briefed them on the information from Wood, who was then residing at the — in the Downtown Eastside. Corporal Connor advised that Wood had come forward as a result of a discussion she had with Lynn Ellingsen during the month of June, 1999.

The strategy determined by investigators included a “soft approach” interview of Ellingsen by the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit members as soon as she could be located. Corporal Connor noted that if this approach failed, “an undercover operation will hopefully be in place to deal with her.”

Following the meeting, Detective Constable Chernoff attempted to contact Thomas, but was unsuccessful until 11:00 p.m. that night. He arranged to meet Thomas the next day at 9:30 a.m. to obtain a new taped statement.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF AND DETECTIVE LEPINE MEET THOMAS FOR 6TH DEBRIEF

On August 10th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine drove to Surrey and picked up Thomas. Detective Lepine arranged to use a Surrey RCMP interview room in the Whalley RCMP offices on King George Highway to tape a new interview with Thomas. Prior to the interview, Thomas provided some additional information that he had obtained from his friend Stevens over the previous weekend, and which Detective Constable Chernoff recorded in his notes.¹³⁹

Thomas related that Stevens told him about Ellingsen’s continuing extortions of Pickton, and that Pickton had offered Stevens \$2,000 to deliver Ellingsen to Pickton’s property so that he could “take care of her.” Stevens had declined the offer. Thomas also advised that Stevens said that Ellingsen had told him about the homicide of a prostitute at Pickton’s residence. Thomas said that Stevens related the exact story that Lynn had earlier told Thomas. Thomas reported that Stevens believed Pickton was putting body parts into 45-gallon drums and later transporting them to an unknown recycling plant.

At 11:36 a.m., Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine began a two-hour audio taped interview of Thomas in which Thomas again provided the information summarized in earlier debriefs. This interview was later transcribed in its entirety by the RCMP.¹⁴⁰

PROVINCIAL UNSOLVED HOMICIDE UNIT INVESTIGATORS INTERVIEW LYNN ELLINGSEN

Coincidentally (and unintentionally), at the same time as Thomas was interviewed, Detective Ballantyne and Corporal Walters from the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit were interviewing Lynn Ellingsen in another interview room at the same Whalley RCMP office. Fortunately, the investigators were able to keep Thomas and Ellingsen from seeing each other.

In her interview, Ellingsen denied ever seeing Pickton harm any prostitute, but said that she had seen him bring home a prostitute once. Ellingsen also claimed that she walked into the barn and saw Pickton slaughtering a pig, and that she threw up at the sight and left the barn. She admitted to being checked by police in New Westminster with Pickton, but denied approaching any prostitute. Ellingsen further denied seeing, or ever telling anyone about seeing, a woman strung up in Pickton’s barn.

INSPECTOR BIDDLECOMBE DOCUMENTS STATUS OF MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

On August 10th, 1999, Inspector Biddlecombe submitted a “memorandum to file” regarding a meeting with the Missing Women investigative team. (It is not clear whether the meeting took place on August 10th or prior.) His minutes describe investigators attempting to visit the Younker body

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140 Binder 29, Tab 17.

dump site, but being thwarted by snow which delayed the search until weather improved. He noted that the Pickton investigation was active and being worked on by Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff. He noted suspects Tremblay and McCartney were being followed up by James and Cruz, and investigation into other potential suspects was noted. Inspector Biddlecombe listed a number of administrative and investigative issues and their status, including that a 1-800 number was up and running, a “DNR” (Dialled Number Recorder) was in place (to capture the phone numbers of people who called the 1-800 number), and that the Fleet Manager was to be contacted to attempt to get another vehicle for the team.

PICKTON INVESTIGATORS MEET IN COQUITLAM TO REVIEW LATEST INFORMATION; DISAGREE ON ELLINGSEN’S CREDIBILITY

On August 11th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine attended an 8:30 a.m. meeting at the Coquitlam RCMP attended by Corporal Connor and several RCMP investigators. Detective Constable Chernoff’s notes record that the interviews of Thomas and Ellingsen were discussed. Detective Ballantyne of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit advised that Ellingsen gave similar information about Pickton, his property and their relationship as had been given by Thomas. He advised that Ellingsen described Pickton’s personality and mentioned that he was a “weird individual who liked to slaughter pigs and cross-dress.”

Detective Constable Chernoff noted that the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit investigators thought that Ellingsen sounded credible and that it was possible she had seen a pig hanging in the barn and not a human body. The investigators thought it possible that Ellingsen had concocted and related to

various people the homicide story while in a state of alcohol/drug influence. Corporal Connor noted that:

There was discussion as to the soft approach of the interview particularly as she was not challenged on her statements. There was discussion with respect to the comment that the pig was hanging as opposed to a human and how it could be mistaken for a pig. Particularly given Ellingsen’s previous statement to Thomas that it was hanging by the neck and as such she would have had to look at that part of the anatomy therefore, how would you confuse a pig to that of a human.¹⁴¹

As a result, it was the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit investigators’ position that Stevens should be interviewed to determine his knowledge (if any) of the incident (as he had been in a historical relationship with Ellingsen). Corporal Connor and another Coquitlam RCMP member were to locate Stevens for the purpose of conducting an interview.

At this point in the investigation, Detective Constable Chernoff noted that on August 10th 1999, Thomas had described to Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine a conversation he had with Stevens. In this conversation, Thomas reported that Stevens told him a story that was identical to the one he had been told by Ellingsen regarding the homicide in Pickton’s barn. Detective Constable Chernoff further noted that, at the very least, Ellingsen had told three people the same story about Pickton skinning/gutting a female in his barn: Thomas, Wood, and Stevens.

CORPORAL CONNOR INTERVIEWS STEVENS AND QUINN

On August 12th, 1999, Corporal Connor contacted Detective Constable Chernoff and advised him that

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the RCMP had conducted a brief interview with Stevens at his residence that morning. Unfortunately, Stevens's girlfriend was in close proximity and therefore details could not be discussed. Corporal Connor did mention, however, that Stevens related his knowledge of the "barn" incident as described to him by Ellingsen. Corporal Connor recorded in his notes that Stevens said Ellingsen told him that she and Pickton had picked up a prostitute and that she "couldn't believe how we finished her off like we did." Corporal Connor advised Detective Constable Chernoff that a lengthy follow-up interview would be conducted soon to obtain details of the incident. Corporal Connor also advised that Stevens said he knew who [Thomas] was, and would be contacting him to let him know that the police wanted to speak to him (not knowing that Thomas was already a police source).

That same morning, after speaking to Stevens, Corporal Connor went to the residence of Quinn and spoke to her, who he described in his notes as a biker, "fully tattooed, with Nazi flags and paraphernalia on the walls." Quinn assured Corporal Connor that Pickton was "gentle and wouldn't be responsible for violence towards prostitutes."

At 11:00 a.m., Detective Constable Chernoff contacted Thomas and advised him that Stevens had been spoken to by police and that Stevens would be contacting Thomas to suggest that Thomas contact the police.

CORPORAL CONNOR PURSUES ELLINGSEN INFORMATION REGARDING BUTCHERED WOMAN

On August 13th, 1999, Corporal Connor, following up on the issue of whether a hanging pig could be mistaken for a human, contacted Britco Meats and was advised by the manager that a pig's fat is white, not yellow. Corporal Connor arranged to view a

killed pig later that morning to determine whether it could be mistaken for a human when hanging. He learned that pigs are hoisted by the rear legs when they are killed, and observed for himself that pig fat is "almost pure white." After making his observations and speaking to the foreman at Britco, Corporal Connor came to the conclusion that:

it is very unlikely, in fact almost improbable, that Ellingsen could confuse what was hanging there with a pig, regardless of her sobriety, given that she stated she saw the female hanging by the neck.

THOMAS CONTACTS DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF REGARDING PICKTON AND STEVENS

On August 14th, 1999, Thomas called Detective Constable Chernoff and advised that Stevens had contacted Thomas and that they had discussed the questions the police had asked Stevens. According to what Stevens told Thomas, Stevens did not furnish any information to the police of any consequence. Stevens told Thomas that Stevens had advised Pickton that police asked him questions about Pickton and the missing prostitutes. Pickton had apparently responded that he wasn't concerned and that the police wouldn't find anything on his property. Stevens also told Thomas that Ellingsen had been at Pickton's residence over the last few days. Thomas said he and Stevens had joked about this as they knew that Pickton wanted to get rid of Ellingsen because she was extorting him.

CORPORAL CONNOR CONTINUES TO PURSUE ELLINGSEN INFORMATION

On August 16th, 1999, following up on the issue of whether Ellingsen may have mistaken a pig for

a human, Corporal Connor spoke to a member of the RCMP's Forensic Lab Toxicology Section to determine if Ellingsen could have hallucinated the "hanging human" episode while under the influence of cocaine. Corporal Connor learned that cocaine is not a hallucinogenic drug "that at best it would cause paranoia (psychosis)."

PICKTON INVESTIGATORS MEET; STEVENS AND ELLINGSEN TO BE RE-INTERVIEWED

On August 17th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine attended an 8:45 a.m. meeting at the Coquitlam RCMP office to discuss the Pickton file. It was decided at this meeting that Stevens and Ellingsen would be re-interviewed, when possible.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF AND DETECTIVE LEPINE MEET WITH THOMAS AGAIN: PICKTON SAID TO BE GETTING WORRIED

At 12:30 p.m., Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine drove to Surrey and picked up Thomas. He advised that he was at Stevens's residence that morning until about 4:00 a.m. Thomas said Stevens provided him with information regarding a recent conversation with Pickton. Stevens had raised the topic of probable DNA evidence at Pickton's residence. Pickton replied that perhaps he (Pickton) was "over his head" as a result of the police investigations. Pickton reportedly discussed with Stevens that maybe Pickton should leave the country, and perhaps go to the Bahamas.

Thomas also said that Stevens was considering the reward money and that Stevens had discussed the possibility of Thomas, Stevens and Ellingsen approaching the police. However, Thomas told Stevens that this plan would not work as Ellingsen was involved in the homicide. Stevens also discussed the possibility

of extorting money from Pickton by threatening to approach various tabloid papers with the information.

CORPORAL CONNOR PROMOTED OUT OF THE PICKTON INVESTIGATION; STEVENS'S STATEMENT TO SERGEANT POLLOCK INCONSISTENT WITH THOMAS INFORMATION

On August 24th, 1999 at 9:00 a.m., Detective Constable Chernoff contacted Sergeant Pollock in the Coquitlam RCMP regarding the Pickton investigation. Sergeant Pollock advised him that Corporal Connor was now on holidays, but would no longer be involved in the Pickton investigation due to a promotion and subsequent transfer to another squad. Sergeant Pollock advised he would be assigning another investigator to the investigation that day.

Detective Constable Chernoff inquired about the second interview of Stevens that Sergeant Pollock and Corporal Connor conducted. Sergeant Pollock advised that the interview was not audiotaped and was conducted over coffee. He explained this was done as they did not believe Stevens would assist in a more formal process. Sergeant Pollock advised that Stevens was not specific with any details about Ellingsen's involvement in the homicide at Pickton's residence. He said Stevens advised that Ellingsen and Pickton picked up a prostitute in Vancouver while they were looking for Anderson. According to Stevens, Ellingsen advised that "something went wrong," but Stevens wasn't certain what she was referring to. Stevens also said that Ellingsen had commented that she required a lawyer but it was not clear why.

The information obtained in the interview of Stevens was inconsistent with Thomas's statement regarding

Stevens's knowledge of the homicide at Pickton's residence. Thomas had advised that Stevens's version of the incident (as related to him by Ellingsen) closely paralleled his own. Based on the known information, Detective Constable Chernoff did not believe Stevens was being truthful about what Ellingsen had told him.

Sergeant Pollock advised Detective Constable Chernoff that Ellingsen would be re-interviewed sometime that week.

At 9:30 a.m. that morning, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine met with Sergeant Field and others to discuss the file and investigative strategies.

RCMP CONSTABLE YORK ASSIGNED TO REPLACE CORPORAL CONNOR

That afternoon, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine attended the Port Coquitlam RCMP and met with Sergeant Pollock and Constable York. She was assigned to be the new file coordinator for the Pickton investigation, replacing Corporal Connor. The RCMP members advised that Ellingsen was to be re-interviewed on August 25th by Corporal Walters (from the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit) and Constable York, and the members discussed interview strategies.

THOMAS OFFERED JOB BY PICKTON; THOMAS FAILS TO SHOW FOR MEETING WITH DETECTIVE LEPINE AND DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CHERNOFF

Later that day, Detective Constable Chernoff was contacted by Thomas, who said that he had talked to Pickton earlier in the day and Pickton offered him a job working at P & B Demolition.

On August 25th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine travelled to Surrey for a pre-arranged meeting with Thomas, but he did not show up or respond to their pages.

ELLINGSEN INTERVIEWED AND DENIES ALL STATEMENTS ABOUT PICKTON MURDER

At 5:00 p.m. on August 25th, 1999, Sergeant Pollock called Detective Lepine to advise him the RCMP were unable to locate Ellingsen in time to interview her that day. However, he advised that Ellingsen had agreed to attend the Coquitlam RCMP office the next day at 10:00 a.m. and that Sergeant Pollock and Constable York would conduct the interview. It was eventually decided that Detective Lepine and Constable York would conduct the interview.

On August 26th, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine attended the Coquitlam RCMP at 9:45 a.m. for a pre-interview meeting with Constable York. Corporal Walters and Detective Ballantyne of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit had picked up Ellingsen at her residence and arrived at the detachment at 10:30 a.m.

At 10:55 a.m., Detective Lepine and Constable York began a videotaped interview with Ellingsen. Ellingsen took an instant dislike to Detective Lepine and as this was compromising the interview, Detective Lepine stepped out and was replaced by Corporal Walters at 11:38 a.m.

At 11:50 a.m., 12 minutes after Corporal Walters entered the interview room, the interview was concluded. The investigators, including Chernoff, Lepine, York, and Walters, concluded that Ellingsen was avoiding crucial areas of the interview, in particular the details about Pickton bringing a prostitute back to the trailer and her involvement or lack thereof.

The investigators observed that Ellingsen took herself out of the scenario and denied assisting Pickton in picking up a prostitute or transporting her back to Pickton's trailer. She claimed that she did not know why Pickton gave her \$150 while in the trailer with the prostitute. She denied viewing a body hung up in the barn and claimed that she took a cab to "Val's" place when given the cash by Pickton.

When pressed about specifics, Ellingsen on numerous occasions threatened to walk out of the interview. She again denied any knowledge of the homicide, and denied telling anybody about the incident as described by Thomas or Wood. Ellingsen did, however, agree to a polygraph examination.

On August 31st, 1999, at 8:30 a.m., Detective Constable Chernoff spoke to Constable York who advised that an RCMP polygraph test had been arranged for Ellingsen that day at 9:30 a.m. in Surrey. Detective Constable Chernoff arranged to meet with York that afternoon in Coquitlam.

Later that day, Sergeant Pollock phoned Detective Constable Chernoff to advise that Ellingsen had now declined to take a polygraph test on the advice of counsel.

At 4:30 p.m., Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine attended the Coquitlam RCMP office and met with Sergeant Pollock and Constable York to discuss the Pickton file and investigative strategies. They concluded that Pickton should be interviewed as soon as possible.

SEPTEMBER 1999

RCMP INVESTIGATORS ATTEMPT TO INTERVIEW PICKTON

On September 1st, 1999, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine met with the RCMP investigators in Coquitlam at 7:15 a.m. At 8:00 a.m., Sergeant Pollock and Constable York attended Pickton's residence, but he was apparently not on the property and they weren't able to determine his location. Sergeant Pollock and Constable York advised Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine that they would continue their attempts to locate Pickton, and would advise the VPD investigators when they were successful.

At 9:11 p.m. that evening, Pickton phoned Sergeant Pollock and agreed to speak to him the next day to "clear the air." Sergeant Pollock advised Constable York, who was now in charge of the Pickton file (and was formally assigned the file on September 30th, 1999 by Sergeant Pollock, with a diary date of December 30th, 1999).

On September 2nd, 1999 at 7:45 a.m., Sergeant Pollock again spoke to Pickton by phone but he said he wasn't available and wanted to meet with the RCMP that night. Sergeant Pollock wasn't available so plans were made to schedule the interview the following week. However, Constable York's notes indicate she was tied up on a triple homicide investigation the following week.

On September 22nd, 1999 at 8:40 a.m., Constable York phoned Pickton at home to arrange an interview. Pickton wanted to do it in his trailer, but Constable York advised him it would have to take place at the

RCMP office. At Pickton's request, Constable York phoned Dave Pickton, who convinced her to wait for rainy weather to do an interview because he and his brother needed to take advantage of the dry weather. No further substantive investigation was to occur until January 2000.

Detective Constable Chernoff recalled his frustration with the Coquitlam investigation into Pickton stalling:

I remember specifically saying to Geramy and Ron and Connor, this just can't be swept away. And Connors was 100% with us and he believed it too. But right at the end of August he got promoted. He had started to draft up a strategy, and the original strategy was to use undercover operators to meet up with Lynn Ellingsen to see if they could get her to talk about what was going on on the property. We started to do surveillance...We originally thought about putting cameras up at Carnoustie the golf course, to get a look. But we weren't in our territory, it was their jurisdiction, because we were all convinced if women were being killed, they were being killed on the property. We agreed they would have gone there voluntarily and they knew it was [Coquitlam's] responsibility...we were pretty sure the RCMP were going to do something to find some evidence and either clear him or get on him.

Connor had a lot of credibility out there and he was totally behind us. We discussed a lot of things...We talked about strategies, implementing a joint investigation, and Coquitlam said they'd be responsible for the homicide part at the residence. So if the info was accurate and if there was a body there, it was clarified, not an issue, that it was their responsibility.

On the 24th of August I was advised Connors was promoted and would no longer be involved in the investigation. I had talked to him about how the project was imploding and I couldn't believe it and he agreed. Anyway, they were going to assign another investigator. Once Connors was removed it wasn't being driven anymore. He was the impetus. It just seemed odd to assign someone else to this case.

On Aug 31st...Ron and I met with Pollock and York to discuss tactics and they said they would interview Pickton ASAP, and they went but he wasn't there and they told us they would try to go see him as soon as they could. They were going to do whatever follow-up, do an interview of him, follow up on Ellingsen. It was out of our hands, and all the momentum was gone.

Ron and I went back to 312 to work on other tips. Our connection to the investigation was handling Thomas and without that, the VPD had no connection to this investigation, because it was in Coquitlam and it was their investigation. Lori and Connor had been talking because of her informant, but it was Thomas's information that really brought everyone together to get it together, or not. And he was 100% willing to do anything, be an agent, wear a wire, he was 100% convinced and in hindsight, I wonder if he even knew more than he told us.

I remember going back [to the VPD] and telling the other investigators and that I just didn't believe what was happening, and they didn't understand either and just said, "it's their show, there's nothing you can do about it." I was quite upset... We were sure Coquitlam was going to get a warrant any week, but it just didn't happen. We didn't know York, we didn't know the sergeant. Once Connors left, it just didn't

happen. Even he couldn't convince his bosses, so we didn't think it was going to happen.

I got the feeling no one was going to go to bat for us, like our Inspector or Deputy go over to the RCMP and say what the hell's going on. Ron, I, Geramy, Lori, we were all passionate about it. It was just beyond our control. I guess I regret I didn't stand up and scream more, but Pickton didn't live in Vancouver and we couldn't do anything about it. It went high in the RCMP...and they make the decisions, not us.

Detective Lepine had a similar recollection of the Coquitlam investigation losing momentum at the end of August 1999:

We thought PUHU was really quick to write off our informant because they believed Ellingsen, and she was the horse's mouth...Thomas was thinking we're going to bring in the troops and it wasn't happening; it looked like we weren't taking him seriously. We discussed at the PoCo briefings about him going from being an informant to being an agent...and PUHU shot us down in flames because they would have had to approve Thomas being an agent and they thought he was a flake.

So we had kind of a "my flake's better than your flake" argument... Connor was totally on board with us. He felt strongly that our information was legitimate. And by this time another witness I think had come forward who reported the exact same story that Thomas said Ellingsen had told him. We also learned that Ellingsen was blackmailing Pickton for money. We found Thomas to reinterview but he wasn't in good shape. The cameras were rolling and everything was watching, but he was stoned and it was embarrassing. Mark and I were interviewing and they were all looking like, "this is your star witness?" and we were going down in flames. Connor was being promoted right at this time

and a new investigator was sent in to replace him, York. She replaced him and that was a real problem because she didn't know anything...so Ballantyne's partner, Walters, the Mountie, went in with her. She denied that she'd ever said or saw anything like our informant had reported. Then it went downhill from there.

After the interviews with Ellingsen and Thomas, we talked about bringing in Pickton but the RCMP were really worried about what their grounds were. Thomas had already told us about seeing women's purses, but he didn't see names on them, and Connor had already tried to get a warrant and wire and Crown said no. And the concern was that you couldn't just go in there and look around, it was all or nothing, you had to go in there like they eventually did, with a fence and lots of bodies and a digger. Because we knew he could dispose of things well and evidence would be scarce, so it would have to be a big operation. So when we got to the point where we'd done everything we could, couldn't get a warrant, the RCMP wouldn't agree to use Thomas as an agent to introduce an undercover. So we were left with it being their area, their jurisdiction, we thought he was good for our Missing Women, but we had to go with what they wanted to do with it, and they said they were going to wait for an opportunity to talk with him. By this time we were getting real pressure to help with homicide because they had lots of cases backing up, we weren't being on call for homicide, so what we were doing just sort of died a natural death.

Shortly after that we were back in Homicide, Connor was gone, and the Coquitlam RCMP were just losing interest. I think when we left, they sort of lost interest too...In the RCMP, it was Connor pushing that thing, and without him pushing it no one could justify putting the resources into it. Because what they're doing today is what would have been needed then.

Constable York (who retired in 2001 and agreed to be interviewed for this Review) agreed that the Coquitlam RCMP did not put enough resources into the case after the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit investigators found the informant information not credible:

——[an RCMP polygraphist] was very effective for the most part but he became very opinionated and he just thought we were little grunts from Coquitlam and he thought Walters had the experience to read these people. But right from the point Walters went to Ellingsen's door banging on it and calling her names, he was so arrogant about it and you just don't do that. He was so arrogant about things and we were just little nothings. I think this was the point that the file got sidelined because Walters was believed. Connor was so passionate about it, and he had a lot of credibility in Coquitlam because of all his experience, but when he left the file he just washed his hands of it.

Unsolved Homicide didn't believe it, and so therefore those above us may have been disbelievers and also just didn't think they had enough to put resources into this file.

Detective Constable Shenher later related that with the intense investigation into Pickton coming to a virtual standstill, frustration set in:

I remember being initially excited about the creation of the MWRT, that someone got it, that we would see some resources. So through that summer of '99 I was naively optimistic, that the Rossmo report and other reports like my recommendation for a suspect-based investigation [would make a difference], so at that time I felt pretty good. Mid to late summer when I saw what the real commitment to resources really was, and who we got, like Cruz and James, about the way this was really viewed. Like we weren't getting experienced investigators, not as many as I requested. SIUSS wasn't working for us

and we didn't have an analyst. I remember Doyle¹⁴² being around with all these promises, but the ink wasn't even dry and we never saw him again.

So there was one thing after another that made me think "lip service." I saw what was going on in the HITF with...really experienced guys, and the contrast was huge. It was the people I really looked at. All the people that went in there were strong investigators, up and coming investigators. There was some thought that went into it. Then I looked at us, me without a ton of experience, light duties people, —————, so I really felt like we were the poor cousins. That's where frustration really set in. Before we had nothing and we were getting something. But now we had something but it wasn't good enough. Working with Cruz and James really wore on me, there was no cooperation, no sharing of info.

Then the Pickton thing didn't work out and that was hugely damaging to morale, we thought that was the big break we were waiting for, but it didn't work out and just the way it was managed, I felt like I was in the twilight zone, and I talked to my supervisor but I just didn't know what to do.

... in the late summer and fall of 1999, I would make regular calls to the major crime investigators with the Coquitlam RCMP, asking what was new on the Pickton file, who had it, et cetera. My impression was that since Mike Connor had left, no one was really managing the file at all. I made the suggestion at various times to Staff Sergeant Keith Davidson, Corporal Scott Filer, Corporal Marg Kingsbury and Constable Dave Strachan that they should try to get the consent of the City of Coquitlam to go on the property to search and take soil samples as I had learned the pieces of Pickton land parceled

142 Mr. Doyle was the company representative who sold a SIUSS (Special Investigative Unit Support Software) licenses to the VPD for the Missing Women investigation.

off were sold to the City of Coquitlam. This suggestion was met with enthusiasm, but never acted upon to my knowledge.

MISSING WOMAN LINDA COOMBES CONFIRMED DEAD OF OVERDOSE

On September 17th, 1999, as a result of extensive follow-up investigation and DNA analysis, the MWRT investigators concluded that the unidentified female who died in 1994 (described earlier in the chronology) was, in fact, Linda Coombes. The investigators determined that on the day she died, Coombes had robbed a store on Dunsmuir Street, purchased heroin, then overdosed using it. Sergeant Field notified Linda Coombe's mother by phone in Ottawa that day. Media spokesperson Constable Anne Drennan was quoted the following week in a *Vancouver Sun* article about the Coombes and Karen Smith files:¹⁴³

Obviously we can provide closure to two of the families, but it is only two out of 31...having found two of the women dead...doesn't necessarily indicate one way or another the fate of the remaining 29 missing...Every door remains open...The possibility of foul play, serial killer, multiple killers is still out there. And we're not closing that door in any way. Still we are going through every record that is available to us in minute detail to see if perhaps there are more on the list that may have met with similar types of deaths.

MISSING WOMEN REVIEW TEAM MEETINGS HELD TO REVIEW THE INVESTIGATION

On September 19th, 1999, the Missing Women investigators held a meeting to review the file.

¹⁴⁴ Present were Sergeant Field, Detective Lepine, Detective Constables Shenher, Clarke, Chernoff, James and Cruz, and Parker.

Several issues were discussed, with a focus on the status of various leads being followed up. Parker noted that about one quarter of the current 480 tip files had been entered into SIUSS, and that analysis was constant, in terms of names, plates, and descriptions being compared to Sexual Offence Squad files. (SIUSS is analytical software that looks for links between pieces of information. For example, if a suspect in a sexual assault was subsequently checked picking up a sex trade worker, and both those pieces of information had been entered in SIUSS, they would be instantly linked. This makes it easier to identify potential suspects when the volume of information is large.)

Sergeant Field noted the challenges being presented by the Pickton investigation in Coquitlam, i.e., that the Unsolved Homicide Unit "Don't agree with Coquitlam on the veracity of [Ellingsen's] story." She noted that an undercover project was possible, and that it was a "Coquitlam file." She further noted that Coquitlam would submit a proposal for an undercover project "as per our discussion during homicide conference" (referring to speaking to Constable York).

Sergeant Field noted that Paul McCarl, the RCMP investigator on the Valley murders, was resubmitting the DNA evidence to compare to the suspect Tremblay,

143 Lindsay Kines, "2 missing women confirmed dead: They were among the 31 missing Vancouver women suspected of being victims of a serial killer, but a police probe reveals one died from heart problems and the other from a drug overdose," in the *Vancouver Sun*, September 23, 1999, p. B1.

144 Binder 2, Tab 25.

and that Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine would be following up on this issue.

OCTOBER 1999

On October 5th, 1999, the MWRT investigators held another meeting. Present were Sergeant Field, Acting Inspector Matthews, Staff Sergeant Giles, Detective Lepine, Detective Constables Shenher, Clarke, James and Cruz, and Parker. The status of various tips was reviewed, and various investigative strategies were discussed.

On October 7th, Inspector Biddlecombe worked his last day in the VPD, going on sick leave leading up to retirement. Staff Sergeant Matthews was put in place as the Acting Inspector in charge of the Major Crime Section.

SERGEANT FIELD SUBMITS STATUS REPORT: FULL TIME SERGEANT RECOMMENDED

On October 22nd, 1999, Sergeant Field submitted a status report on the Missing Women investigation to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness.¹⁴⁵ At this time, she advised that the MWRT consisted of the following personnel:

Sergeant Geramy Field	(shared duties with Team 2 Homicide)
Detective Ron Lepine	on loan from Homicide
Detective Constable Mark Chernoff	on loan from Homicide
Detective Constable Lori Shenher	Missing Persons Unit
Detective Constable Dan Dickhout	Missing Persons Unit
Detective Constable James	on loan from District 2

Detective Constable Cruz	on loan from CLEU
Detective Constable Alex Clarke	on loan from District 2
Constable Dave Dickson	part time from District 2
Ms. Gray	clerical, on loan from Robbery

(Sergeant Field later recorded in a timeline that while there were 10 members of the MWRT, “only D/C Shenher, Cruz, James and Clarke are full time.”¹⁴⁶)

Sergeant Field also advised that the team had been assisted by Constable Carl Vinje, Detective Constable Sue Jarvis, Detective Frank Owen, and Constable Barry Pickerell, who all helped with SIUSS data entry. (All of these officers had regular full time assignments but assisted the MWRT on an overtime basis when available).

Sergeant Field pointed out that many of the team members recently transferred in to the team already had their annual leave booked, so very few members were available to work on the case during the summer, but the team was now up to full strength.

At this time, the official list of missing women had been reduced from 31 to 29, with the confirmation that both Linda Coombes and Karen Smith were deceased (of an overdose and medical problems, respectively).

Sergeant Field outlined the work Detective Constable Clarke was doing in relation to indigent burials, and that she had so far searched over 6,300 files in an attempt to link any of the Missing Women to indigent burial records. Sergeant Field pointed out some of the challenges posed by cases of people who have died under a married name or alias, particularly outside Vancouver.

Sergeant Field noted that since January 1999 there had been six more prostitutes reported missing, but that due to immediate follow up, all six were

145 Binder 5, Tab 43.

146 Binder 10, Tab 38.

located and were safe, and since January 16th, there had been no new unexplained disappearances of prostitutes. Jacqueline McDonnell was the most recent, having last been seen on January 6th, 1999 and reported missing to the VPD on February 22nd, 1999.

(However, it should be noted that Missing Women Andrea Borhaven and Julie Young had both been reported missing after January 1999 – in May and July 1999, respectively – and were on the MWRT’s list of Missing Women. In an unfortunate report writing oversight, Borhaven and Young were not included in status reports by Detective Constable Shenher and Sergeant Field because they were not new “missings,” only new “reports.” That is, although Borhaven was reported missing in May 1999, she had not been seen since 1997. Likewise, Young had not been seen since October 1998; neither had gone missing since the MWRT began its investigation and so written reports to management did not identify that the number of women who had gone missing in 1997 and 1998 had grown slightly.)

In terms of tips, Sergeant Field advised 537 tips had been assigned for follow-up, and that of the 150 tips received as a result of the America’s Most Wanted show, about 20 were assigned as a tip file but none of them had provided information of value.

With respect to suspects, Sergeant Field advised that there were active investigations into 13 suspects (with Pickton number one on the list). She also advised that a large number of other subjects had been identified from a variety of sources, and that “there is no end to the number of strange, violent men who could be considered ‘persons of interest’....” Sergeant Field stated that the majority of the team’s efforts had been concentrated on Pickton. She

advised that the Coquitlam RCMP had utilized the services of the VPD Strike Force, liaised with the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, and were currently working with Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff to develop further plans targeting Pickton. Sergeant Field summarized the investigations into several other suspects, McCartney and Swanson, both of whom were expected to be charged with a number of violent sexual assaults (and subsequently were).

Sergeant Field described several investigative difficulties: “The greatest obstacle we have...is the fact the majority of the ‘missings’ are reported long after they may have actually disappeared. It is impossible to create any realistic timeline to compare to our suspects’ activities because we can’t positively say when the women went missing.” Sergeant Field also advised that without forensic evidence or witnesses, it was very difficult to determine who was a viable suspect.

Sergeant Field concluded her report with an assessment of where she thought the investigation might go, and suggested that a full time sergeant was required. She later recalled that she made further inquiries on this issue:

I requested a full time sergeant, I suggested Bill Emerslund, because he was a new sergeant [in Patrol] and had taken the profiling course, he was an experienced investigator...and he was interested. I heard that Blythe said even early on when Biddlecombe wanted more manpower, or McGuinness, that it had to come from within the Division. The feeling was that they couldn’t afford to lose any more patrol members.

Inspector Biddlecombe later recalled the Sergeant Field had also earlier in the investigation suggested

that Sergeant Bill Emerslund could be assigned as the full time sergeant, but:

...I went to the Deputy. Bill had been spoken for by Patrol and we were told we couldn't have him, the priority was with Patrol. It wasn't the best to have Geramy doing both jobs, wearing two hats.

VPD MEETS AGAIN WITH RCMP TO DISCUSS MISSING WOMEN CASE

On October 27th, 1999, MWRT members met at Surrey RCMP offices to discuss the case with them. Sergeant Field, and Detective Constables Shenher, Cruz and James were present from the VPD. From the RCMP were Superintendent Gary Bass, Sergeants Bill Thordarson and Bob Paulson, Corporals Nicole St. Mars and Margaret Kingsbury, and Constable Paul McCarl. The investigators discussed suspects Tremblay and McCartney, and “file interviews.”¹⁴⁷

NOVEMBER 1999

VPD PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGES LIKELIHOOD OF “ONE OR MORE SERIAL KILLERS”; MCCARTNEY ELIMINATED BY DNA FROM VALLEY MURDERS

In November 1999, the magazine “Elm Street” published an article about the women of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. John Lowman, a professor from Simon Fraser University with expertise in prostitution, was quoted as saying there were probably three or four serial killers at work. The VPD’s media spokesperson, Constable Anne Drennan, was quoted as saying that the police now realized that there were too many missing women for it to be coincidence and acknowledged that there could be one or more serial killers.¹⁴⁸

By November 16th, 1999, it was determined that the suspect on which Detective Constables Cruz and James had been focusing, McCartney, had been eliminated by DNA from the Agassiz murders of Pipe, Olajide and Younker.¹⁴⁹

DECEMBER 1999

DECEMBER 1999 STATUS REPORT: NO NEW MISSING WOMEN SINCE JANUARY 1999; TREMBLAY ELIMINATED BY DNA FROM VALLEY MURDERS

On December 9th, 1999, Sergeant Field submitted an update on the Missing Women investigation to Acting Inspector Matthews, which he in turn passed on to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness for his information.¹⁵⁰ In this update, she advised that the team had met on December 7th. Present were Sergeant Field, Detective Lepine, Detective Constables Shenher, Chernoff, Cruz, and James, and Parker. Detective Constable Clarke and Constable Dickson were away.

Issues covered in the update were a month’s worth of SIUSS data entry, work being done to determine if recovered body parts with the Coroner’s Service matched any of the Missing Women, and that DNA had now been acquired for 20 of the 29 women on the list.

Sergeant Field again reported that there had been no missing women reported and not found since January 1999, and that this might be attributable to quick reporting and response by police, or because the suspect(s) had left the area due to media pressure, death or imprisonment. (In his year-end report to the Police Board for his Division, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness provided some of this

147 Binder 32, Tab 1.

148 Binder 2, Tab 76.

149 Binder 32, Tab 1.

150 Binder 2, Tab 30.

information, but excluded any mention of Sergeant Field's comments referring to a suspect.¹⁵¹⁾

Regarding checks of provincial vital statistics, Sergeant Field advised that Manitoba was insisting on a fee for services and that Newfoundland had not responded.

In terms of suspects, Sergeant Field advised that charges were likely forthcoming against McCartney, and that Pickton was still being investigated by the Coquitlam RCMP "however it is not a high priority with them at this time." Sergeant Field also confirmed that the RCMP's prime suspect in the Fraser Valley murders – Tremblay – had been eliminated by DNA so the RCMP investigators were very interested in the MWRT's persons of interest list.

Sergeant Field concluded her status report by stating that:

It is anticipated that in the absence of any new information and with the completion of all tips, the [MWRT] should be in a position to wind down within the next two months...A review in January will be more conclusive regarding a concluding date.

Sergeant Field later explained her thinking:

After...Pickton...was out of our hands, and then we had a couple of homicides and Mark and Ron went on them and never really came back. They were kind of in and out. So it was looking at the other potential suspects, but no one to follow up. We had 10 good suspects, even with one we didn't have the staff to do an adequate job. We really had no investigators because Cruz and James were focused on McCartney. It was basically if a new missing came in...we had ones from Chilliwack, New West, Squamish we were looking at. At that point, we

were so beaten up from trying to get more help that we just were trying to do what we could with what we had.

By December of '99, when I was saying this could conclude, Davidson and Filer were convincing me that the bodies were going to be found in RCMP jurisdictions and the RCMP had to get on board. We really knew that from the spring of '99. I talked to them early on but it was like there wasn't enough at that point, that we needed to keep working on it. Davidson and Filer's unit was fairly new, and I think they didn't have a lot of clout, that criminal/geographic profiling didn't have a lot of credibility, that they [management] wanted evidence. So my whole focus was on getting the RCMP on board.

REQUEST FOR FULL TIME SERGEANT

On December 7th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher had made a request to Sergeant Field for a full time sergeant for the MWRT. Sergeant Field advised her on December 9th that Acting Inspector Matthews had turned down the request.¹⁵²

Inspector Matthews later recalled:

I don't recall being asked for a full time sergeant, but I can state that getting more resources was going to be impossible. Operations was really trying to get us to give them people back. Would I have gone to McGuinness? Yes, but I don't recall doing that, and I know his answer would have been no. His response would always be that he would talk to the Ops DCC and see what he could get. And the moment they came Ops would want them back. But that would have been the response. I'm not saying that didn't happen, but I don't recall it.

151 Binder 10, Tab 41.

152 Binder 32, Tab 1.

WENDY CRAWFORD REPORTED MISSING

On December 14th, 1999, Wendy Crawford was reported missing to the Chilliwack RCMP, having last been seen in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside on November 27th, 1999. (The VPD was made aware of Crawford's disappearance soon after she was reported missing, but Chilliwack RCMP maintained control of the investigation, and did not advise the VPD until May 9th, 2000, that Crawford might fit the profile of the other Missing Women.¹⁵³)

TWO MORE MISSING WOMEN FOUND ALIVE: — AND —

On December 15th, 1999, another of the Missing Women, —, was located in Ontario through Ministry of Health records. She had been reported missing in January 1996, but was last seen alive by her family in 1978, at which time she left behind a one-year-old son. She had known police were looking for her but didn't wish to be found and asked that her location not be disclosed to her family.

Also on December 15th, 1999, as a result of the same records check that located —, another of the Missing Women, —, was located in Ontario through Ministry of Health records. She was living under a different name. She had been reported missing on October 24th, 1999.

MEDICAL RECORDS SEARCH

On December 21st, 1999, Detective Constables Shenher and Clarke, along with the VPD's Freedom of Information Coordinator, Melissa Clark, met with representatives from agencies such as the Coroner's Service and the Public Trustee to determine whether anything had been overlooked in terms of accessing

medical services records. Larry Campbell, then B.C.'s Chief Coroner, offered to take the list of Missing Women and send it to every Chief Medical Officer and Coroner's Service across Canada to expedite medical database queries. There was discussion around various related issues, including the systemic weaknesses around confirming the identity of deceased persons.¹⁵⁴

PICKTON INVESTIGATION REMAINS DORMANT

On December 29th, 1999, Constable York recorded in her notes that:

This file remains SUI (still under investigation) however, due to recent shortages in staff and other priority files, it has not been actively investigated over the last two months. DD (diary date) extension required. Extend DD to 00-MAR-20.

York's notes indicate that in October 1999 she drove by the Pickton property and left two messages several weeks apart requesting he contact her, but that he did not return her calls.

JANUARY 2000

SERGEANT FIELD SUBMITS STATUS REPORT: DATA ANALYSIS, RESOURCES CONTINUE TO BE A PROBLEM

On January 10th, 2000, Sergeant Field submitted a status report to Acting Inspector Matthews.¹⁵⁵ In it she noted problems with analyzing the volumes of information that had been collected and that Parker was trained in data entry, but not as an analyst.

Sergeant Field advised that Chief Coroner Larry

¹⁵³ Crawford missing person file, p. 32.

¹⁵⁴ Binder 3, Tab 19.

¹⁵⁵ Binder 15, Tab 47.

Campbell would be assisting the MWRT in overcoming challenges with obtaining medical records from other Provinces, noting that “many of inquiries have not been acknowledged, some have requested funding...and others have refused.” Sergeant Field advised that approximately ten new missing women fitting the profile had been reported in 1999 but all had been located with two weeks of the initial police report. This Missing Women list remained at 27 (the original list of 31, minus the four who had been found).¹⁵⁶

Sergeant Field advised that research into unidentified body parts stored by police departments in the Lower Mainland had been completed, and none of the body parts belonged to the Missing Women.

With respect to suspects, Sergeant Field advised that charges were being processed for multiple offences against McCartney, and that it would be a complicated case due to the multiple jurisdictions involved. Sergeant Field stated that the investigators now had approximately 40 photos of subjects brought to the team’s attention through various investigations, and that these photos would be shown to sex trade workers to solicit further information. She also advised that the DEYAS “Bad Date” lists from the last four years were being analyzed for repeat offenders.

In terms of staff, Sergeant Field advised that Detective Constable Clarke was near to completing her follow-up regarding missing persons in the Glenhaven and government records, and that she may be able to return to her original assignment within the month. Sergeant Field noted that Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff had been tied up with an unrelated homicide investigation for the last month due to the Homicide Squad’s high case load in December, and that she did not expect them

to return to the MWRT in the near future. Detective Constables Cruz and James were doing the majority of the MWRT’s investigative work, with Constable Dickson assisting with some inquiries.

SERGEANT FIELD CONSULTS WITH RCMP PROFILERS – BC-WIDE REVIEW PROPOSED

On January 13th, 2000, Sergeant Field met again with Staff Sergeant Keith Davidson, the RCMP criminal profiler, and Corporal Scott Filer, the RCMP geographic profiler, to discuss obtaining a suspect profile in the Missing Women case. (Sergeant Field reported on this meeting in a memo to Acting Inspector Matthews on January 20th.¹⁵⁷) Specific suspects were discussed, including Pickton, and “it became apparent that there was a need to have another look at some of the previously unsolved hooker homicides, the more recent unsolved homicides and our current missing prostitutes and see if there are any common threads or connection between them.” Sergeant Field also reported that because of similarities between BC cases and some cases in Edmonton and Calgary, cases from those cities should be included in the review. Sergeant Field advised a proposal would be developed to formally review the files in a manner similar to a 1991 review called Project Eclipse, in which numerous police agencies attended a two-week conference to examine unsolved prostitute homicides throughout the Province.

Sergeant Field recalled that Davidson and Filer said:

based on their knowledge of serial killings as profilers, the bodies will be found in RCMP jurisdictions, and they’d get stuck with the investigation anyway so they needed to get on board.

A draft proposal was developed by the profilers for

¹⁵⁶ Wendy Crawford had been reported missing in December 1999 but that file was still under investigation and Crawford had not yet been added to the list of Missing Women.

¹⁵⁷ Binder 15, Tab 52.

a Joint Forces Operation Task Force to investigate “a significant number of homicides involving prostitutes.”¹⁵⁸ The proposal set out in detail the investigative difficulties then being experienced in BC with unsolved murders of prostitutes, missing women “with strong reason to believe they have been murdered,” and uncoordinated and incomplete investigations. The report set out that the profilers believed that there was a strong probability of “at least three serial killers operating in BC” at that time, noting the Olajide, Pipe, and Younker cases, another group of three in the “North District” (of British Columbia), and “Vancouver PD’s 20+ missing prostitutes.” Three suspects were identified, with Pickton being number one.

Sergeant Field later commented that the profilers advised her that “they talked to Gary Bass (about the Joint Forces Operation proposal) and were told that he wanted to help but didn’t have the manpower.”

PICKTON INTERVIEWED BY COQUITLAM RCMP

On January 19th, 2000, the RCMP interviewed Pickton, having arranged to speak to him through his friend Gina Houston a week earlier. Constables York and Fox conducted the interview, with Houston present and participating in the interview. Constable York later explained that Pickton wouldn’t agree to the interview without Houston present.

The interview was not well done, and was unproductive. (The interview will be the subject of further comment in the analysis of the Pickton investigation in Part II of this Review.) Constable York later agreed saying:

The interview was a “cluster.” Fox should have never been in there. We should have coerced Houston not

to be in there. It was useless, produced nothing, went on longer than it should have for what we got out of it. It should have been Pollock and I doing it and we should have planned better but he wasn’t available. It should have been planned better...I look back and I know I flubbed it.

In the interview, Pickton consented to police searching his property. But this wasn’t pursued, as Constable York later explained:

I was told that if we found anything we’d need a warrant, everyone was so leery about getting on board with the investigation, worried about his rights. There was a real lack of experience out there in Coquitlam, and when Walters got involved, it really shut it down.

(It appears the VPD wasn’t made aware of the interview until months later, demonstrating the lack of communication and coordination.¹⁵⁹)

After the interview, there was to be no substantive investigation of Pickton by the RCMP until November of 2000, as Constable York explained:

After that, not a lot happened. All these other files came in and they wouldn’t give any priority to the Pickton file...HQ, Special “O” wouldn’t give us any surveillance, we couldn’t convince Unsolved to take it. Unsolved Homicide thought Ellingsen was a storyteller. We believed her information because the average person doesn’t know human fat is yellow. There was the Anderson thing, there were too many loose ends...The important thing was the Anderson case that never went forward, the info from Lepine’s informant that the average person couldn’t know, women’s ID and personal belongings from other females there in Pickton’s place. ...I think the biggest problem was that Walters convinced —, the polygraph guy, that Ellingsen

158 Binder 1, Tab 30.

159 Binder 15, Tab 16

was a big storyteller. But there were too many things that Ellingsen knew about, that he would wear a wig, that he would use her or Houston to get women into cars because they wouldn't get in the car otherwise. Pickton told me he still saw Ellingsen and he continued to give her money, and he said she didn't tell me anything anyhow, and I asked what was she supposed to not tell me and he got mad.

Earl Moulton was the Ops officer briefly, but then — came in. Earl was very good. But — went from Corporal to Inspector and he didn't have much file experience, he had worked on some important cases but I don't think he'd got his hands dirty. He wanted a lot from us, but there were no resources, no "O," no OT (overtime) authorized.

We needed to work this file until there was nothing left to work. But the section was fragmented because 3 members were gone, people were seconded, Strachan didn't have much experience but had a lot of brains, he went North to G Division with his wife. So we lost a lot of experience.

We went up twice in the helicopter and we took great aerial shots to get the lay of the land. A year later we went up and everything had changed.¹⁶⁰ I was worried that he was getting rid of evidence because he knew we were suspicious. I told Pollock and our staff sergeant, Brad Zalys, who was the Staff Sergeant of all the plainclothes units.

I'd go up there to the new development and look from this hump where the barn was and I kept saying we should get out there, we needed to get out there at night. The new housing development was getting closer to the barn and it was easier to see from there. We needed to do it at night but we couldn't get the manpower or the money for OT to do it. We would have meetings to discuss our cases

and this would be brought up, I'd say this is what we could do and they'd say, there's no bodies available. We couldn't get bodies from other sections, General Duty was short, Drugs had a big project, we couldn't get any wiretaps because there were no lines available. An arson came in and we wanted a wiretap on that, which we did eventually, but there were no lines available for the Pickton investigation, even if we'd got one authorized.

There were a lot of things that we should have followed up on but we couldn't get approval.

PROPOSAL FOR FORMAL MULTI-AGENCY REVIEW OF PICKTON AND OTHER SUSPECTS

On January 20th, 2000, Sergeant Field submitted a report to Acting Inspector Matthews summarizing efforts to develop a profile of possible suspects. She outlined a proposal to conduct a formal review of files involving persons of interest such as Pickton and others. As she had discussed with RCMP Staff Sergeant Davidson the week prior, Sergeant Field suggested the review should be similar to "Project Eclipse" in 1991, where investigators from numerous agencies attended a two-week conference to examine unsolved prostitute homicides throughout the province.¹⁶¹

160 Aerial photos were taken of the Pickton Dominion Street property By RCMP Corporal D. Thompson on April 14th, 2000 and provided to Constable York (Binder 33, Tab 3).

161 Binder 3, Tab 21.

FEBRUARY 2000

RCMP CONDUCT PICKTON FILE REVIEW, DEVELOP “GAMEPLAN” AND ASSIGN TASKS

By early February 2000, according to a “confidential” memo he wrote later to Sergeant Connor ¹⁶², RCMP Corporal David McCartney had conducted a “complete file review” for Constable York and two meetings were subsequently held pursuant to that review. The first meeting was held February 9th, and was a “gameplan” meeting to arrange to:

- interview “Lynn” and her current boyfriend;
- identify “——” their drug connection;
- timeline the file;
- arrange for “Edcass”; aerial photos of the farm; ViCLAS;
- contact Sgt. Keith Davidson;
- interview —— (who witnessed Pickton “checking out” the missing women’s poster in the Coquitlam RCMP lobby);
- prepare an affidavit for an intercept on Pickton’s phones; and
- check into the feasibility and prepare an Information to Obtain for a camera in the pig barn.

On February 10th, tasks were assigned: Constable Fox was to profile Pickton for Sergeant Davidson; Constable York was to arrange for the helicopter for the aerial photographs and to start the timeline; and Corporal McCartney was to start the Affidavit.

(Some of these tasks were completed: Humphries was interviewed about her observations of Pickton; a draft affidavit was completed, but didn’t proceed further; Constable Fox did begin the process of gathering information about Pickton for a profile;¹⁶³ and Constable York did arrange for photos to be taken

of the Pickton property. Other than these tasks, as Corporal McCartney wrote in a later memo, and as verified by Constable York, the Coquitlam RCMP virtually abandoned the Pickton investigation by mid-February 2000 because of other priorities.)

RCMP PROFILERS AGREE TO SEEK FUNDING FROM RCMP OR ATTORNEY GENERAL TO RE-OPEN PICKTON FILE AND FORM JOINT TASK FORCE

On February 10th, 2000, Detective Constable Shenher, Detective Lepine, and Detective Constable Chernoff attended a meeting called by Staff Sergeant Keith Davidson and Corporal Scott Filer of the RCMP Criminal/Geographical Profiling Unit.

¹⁶⁴ The meeting was held at RCMP “E” Division Headquarters, and the purpose was for the VPD members to liaise with RCMP members investigating the unsolved homicides of Pipe, Olajide, and Younker – found in the Agassiz area in 1995, as described earlier.

Others present at the meeting were RCMP members Corporal Marg Kingsbury, Constables Nicole St. Mars and Paul McCarl, and Grant Johnston. Constable McCarl provided complete files to the VPD members on the three unsolved homicides. Several persons of interest were discussed, including Pickton. Another suspect, Schmidt, was then serving a life sentence for the murder of a prostitute in his home. Detective Constable Shenher agreed to attempt to identify from the DEYAS Bad Date Sheets registered owners of four-wheel-drive vehicles who lived in the Fraser Valley (who therefore had the means of disposing of bodies in remote areas). McCarl was to form a list of males who had been in custody at some time in correctional facilities north of the Fraser River near the body dump sites, as well as other potential data sources. It was noted that Abbotsford Police had a large pool of potential

162 Binder 33, Tab 7.

163 Binder 33, Tab 8.

164 Binder 1, Tab 28.

suspects as a result of the Terry Driver (“Abbotsford Killer”) investigation, and DNA samples for over 100 of the suspects. It was agreed that this information and several other unsolved prostitute homicides should be reviewed.

Detective Constable Shenher’s report noted that Staff Sergeant Davidson and Corporal Filer were going to submit a proposal to Assistant Commissioner Gary Bass asking for funding and resources to:

- profile the suspect(s);
- re-open the Pickton file;
- assist with SIUSS data entry and analysis;
- improve coordination between the unsolved prostitute homicide investigation and the Missing Women investigation; and
- propose a Joint Forces Operation.

Detective Constable Shenher also noted that if the RCMP refused funding, Staff Sergeant Davidson and Corporal Filer were prepared to seek funding from the Attorney General.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER SUBMITS STATUS REPORT: “NO SHORTAGE OF ‘PERSONS OF INTEREST’”

On February 11th, 2000, Detective Constable Shenher submitted a status report to Acting Inspector Matthews on the Missing Women investigation. She noted that:

- a second data entry person was being trained on SIUSS;
- unidentified body parts held by the coroner were being investigated but didn’t appear promising;

- DNA had been acquired for 22 of the 27 missing women with the acquisition of a sample for a 23rd missing woman in progress, with the assistance of Prince Rupert RCMP;
- there had been no new missing women reported (see previous explanation regarding Borhaven and Julie Young as “historical” missings. Wendy Crawford was a “new” missing who had been reported missing in December 1999 and was last seen in November 1999, but her case was still under investigation at this time.);
- medical records were being searched, but that there were “holes” in the medical system in terms of confirming the identities of people who pass away;
- one more day of manual searching was needed at Glenhaven; and
- [McCartney](#) would be charged for several sexual assaults, and there was “no shortage” of other persons of interest, but nothing concrete to link them to the disappearances of the Missing Women.

Other records showed that by this point in the investigation, the investigators were following up on tips and avenues of investigation such as:

- A report from a person who had “visions” of a particular man strangling some of the Missing Women;
- A witness who reported a “hunch” about a man who might strangle the Missing Women;
- Consultation with the BC High Risk Offenders’ Program to determine if there were high risk offenders who were out of custody during 1997 and 1998, but were in custody at the beginning of 1999 when it seemed that sex trade workers had stopped going missing;
- Interviews of people who were last to see the Missing Women;

- Information from a woman who thought her brother was “weird,” had abused her as a child, and she thought could be a killer of sex trade workers;
- Information from a woman about a former boyfriend who was violent and sadistic, and liked to drive through the “strolls”;
- A tip about a sex trade worker rescued from a male in a car by a passerby;
- Information about known violent sex offenders;
- Interviews of “wannabe” detectives with theories on the Missing Women; and
- Information regarding a strange male who was rich, lived in a trailer, ran a chicken farm, had multiple vehicles, and who the reportee thought would be good for police to investigate.

The investigators continued to be frustrated by the large pool of potential suspects, but the complete lack of the type of information necessary to eliminate any of them. This would normally include forensic evidence, recent and accurate information about when women went missing to compare to timelines of suspect activities, and any knowledge about what had actually happened to the Missing Women, to use in interviewing suspects.

RCMP HOLD MEETING TO DISCUSS INVESTIGATIVE STRATEGY FOR PICKTON

On February 14th, 2000, Corporal McCartney, Corporal Filer, Sergeant Davidson, Cst. St. Mars and Cpl. Kingsbury from ViCLAS met to discuss the Pickton file. In a later memo, Corporal McCartney wrote that “we were just getting ready to push on the file,” but when an unrelated murder occurred on February 19th in Coquitlam, “everything went into the dripper. From here on out, we had a string of attempted murders and the Johal homicide until I left in September.” ¹⁶⁵

POLICE BOARD ADVISED OF STATUS OF MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

On February 14th, 2000, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness submitted a report authored by Acting Inspector Matthews to the Police Board. This report summarized both the investigation into home invasions of the elderly as well as the Missing Women investigation, which were running simultaneously.¹⁶⁶ With respect to the Missing Women investigation, the information provided to the Board was similar to that contained in Detective Constable Shenher’s reports of February 10th and 11th, although no suspects were named in the Board report. In the conclusion to the Board report, Acting Inspector Matthews noted that “...the life of the specialized task force...is declining. If new information is not forthcoming I foresee the files reverting to the regular investigative units in the next couple of months.”

Detective Constable Shenher was very concerned about the deterioration of the MWRT’s investigation, as she related later:

Regarding the winding down of the MWRT that [Inspector Matthews] reported to the Board, I never got that...I was saying we can’t drop this and say we’re done just because we say we are. I remember planting the seed that we needed to strategize around where the investigation was going. I was keenly aware of my own burnout but knew it had to go to someone that would carry on the investigation. I was baffled by the whole thinking of we were winding down. It was bizarre. I think I failed to understand throughout the process that there was an attitude from McGuinness and Unger that whatever we were doing was a favour to the women, a nice to do, because we were not obliged to do anything because we didn’t have evidence that we had a killer.

165 Binder 33, Tab 7.

166 Binder 21, Tab 30.

In hindsight, based on all the information available, it may be difficult to understand Inspector Matthews's conclusion that the MWRT was destined to be dissolved. But his conclusion was consistent with Sergeant Field's report of December 1999 in which she discussed concluding the investigation, believing a JFO with the RCMP was necessary to advance the investigation, and was going to occur. And Inspector Matthews's understanding of the circumstances, although obviously quite incomplete, provides a context that makes the decision to eliminate the MWRT a logical one. Because of his own lack of inquiry – and his assumption that Staff Sergeant Giles was ensuring that investigation was proceeding properly – severe “information warping” had occurred, as Inspector Matthews explained later:

I became the Acting Inspector when Fred was away...I did a fair amount of acting [because of Inspector Biddlecombe's frequent medical leaves). So other than the regular day to day things, we had 3 major files going on. One was the abortion doctor shootings, the MCS Inspector sat on an international committee, lots of committee work. The second was the Home Invasions of the Elderly and resources were taken to do a special project. The third thing was the Missing Women issue...It was specifically communicated to me that it was not a task force. HITF was a task force. The twin room was for a “review team” not a task force. They were supposed to gather the information and look for the people. So there was an interesting mindset.

So I was the Acting Inspector walking in there once in a while, managing MCS of which the MWRT was a small part. It was supervised by a Sergeant from Homicide, and she reported to Staff Sergeant

Brock Giles who reported to me.¹⁶⁷ I visited all the work sites on a regular basis to see how things were. There was this unending resource crunch. In October of 1999, Fred went off sick and we knew he wasn't coming back and I was made [Acting Inspector]. MWRT was one of the units I was in charge of. My recollection is from my walkarounds, I had very little contact with Geramy because she wasn't in their room. But I would sit down with Alex or Lori and ask how they were doing. Occasionally they would have found a woman who had died somewhere else, or they found her alive. I remember they were going through the funeral home records, and I remember Cruz and James were working hot and heavy on McCartney. But I wasn't supervising them specifically. They were being supervised by Geramy who was reporting through Brock to me. Then Brock went off sick and Al Boyd replaced him. That was at the end of January 2000, Brock went off on long term sick leave, and Al Boyd took over from him.

In October 1999, my understanding was the MWRT was looking for the women, dead or alive. Until Cruz and James got there, I had no sense they were focusing on suspects. Cruz and James were focused on one suspect. My sense of what Lori and the others were doing was focusing on where the ladies had gone, and they had some success at that. They were slogging through reports and records trying to find them. I recall Chernoff and Lepine having some input but I don't really remember what they were doing. They ended up on a murder on Wall Street. I wasn't doing day to day supervision. I wasn't familiar at all with the Pickton investigation in the summer of 1999. It wasn't until way after the

167 Staff Sergeant Giles disagreed with this assessment. It is well-documented that he was away sick for significant periods of time, and that Sgt. Field was generally reporting directly to the Inspector, other than for relatively minor administrative issues. This is supported by numerous pieces of documentation, and is consistent with Inspector Biddlecombe's recollections, i.e., that he had briefed Inspector Matthews on the Missing Women investigation and transitioned responsibility to him, not to Staff Sergeant Giles.

fact that I became aware of it, not until they went out and executed the search warrants out there.

Regarding the theory of what was causing the Missing Women, my recollection of what they were doing was records searches. As the Acting Inspector or the Staff Sergeant, both Alex and Lori were very polite to me but I didn't get the sense that they were comfortable talking to the boss, it was very much the subordinate talking to the boss, smiling and nodding. So didn't I get a sense of what was really in their minds or hearts at the time, no.

Regarding the December 1999 report from Geramy talking about a suspect possibly having gone to jail... the comment about killer or killers maybe having left the area wasn't a surprise, but my belief was that with this many people missing, absolutely there could be a killer or killers out there. But the process of looking for these women was part of the process of tracking back and looking for where we might be looking for a suspect. Cruz and James were doing research on who had we checked, who were the hot suspects; in retrospect they may have had tunnel vision if they were only looking at McCartney. But in the realm of all the resource difficulties we had with the HITF, homicides, etc., there were a number of resources looking at this and I wasn't hearing from Geramy that there were any problems.

I hadn't read Rossmo's report of May 1999 and so had no knowledge of his assessment and I hadn't been briefed on it. When I saw the comment about Pickton in the December 1999 report, it didn't mean anything to me because I had never been briefed on that investigation.

...I wasn't aware of the problems in the room, Brock wasn't sharing it with me, Geramy wasn't coming to me. Geramy was smart, likable, well respected, but not the strongest in confronting things. No one

outlined big resource needs to me in a memo like for the HITF when I was the Acting Inspector in early 1999, and if they had, I would have supported it more, like I did with the HITF.

...If someone had come to me with a report saying we had a serial killer and this is what we need, like with the HITF, I would have gone to the Deputy and said this is a big issue and it needs to be dealt with. And if he had said no, I would have made a note of that...

By the time Geramy is saying that we might be able to release Alex, and no new missing women have been reported, whatever they are looking at is historical, so hearing that Alex could be released, didn't lead me to believe that they were needing more resources. There was nothing in there saying we need more resources.

Regarding the memo about her visiting Filer and Davidson [and proposing a province wide review], I would have said "sure, you go do that, tell me where we go from here." I never didn't believe that some of these women were murdered. Whether it was one guy or 5 guys, in my mind, that's what this review was for, to find out where we were going from there.

Regarding the report to the board about winding down, it wasn't an investigation winding down, this was a review team that they kept pounding into me, it wasn't an investigative unit. It was that we had gone through all these steps, and now the next step was to create a JFO. The review probably took way too long but what was needed was to create a JFO. The review team had done its job, and the thinking was that because of the province-wide ramifications, we needed a JFO and that's what the report said, that if the RCMP couldn't fund it, then we needed

to go to the AG for funding. This was a slow train running on a track with 15 other trains. We had 600 sex cases that year. We had the Wall Street murders, we had the HITF. We need a better system provincially to get these things going faster, because it was a long time between February 2000 and when the JFO got going. We need to do better on that.

Our information by 2000 was that the serial killer wasn't active, and we needed to get together with the RCMP because of the cross boundary issues, and I guess it took a long time to get it done. My naïveté was that once the MWRT wound down, the other thing would be up very quickly. That it would continue on. The AG had given a bunch of money for the abortion doctor shooting investigation, so the belief was that if the RCMP couldn't come up with the money then the AG would.

...It was an age of no body, no crime, right or wrong. It was very much no body no crime. It was, we react to a dead body. When you're entrenched in your historical view that no body no crime, and when you found several women, it supported that this was a review team, that we would find them...If I were McGuinness I'm sure they're thinking they can't take a leap of faith based on a statistical report when they had real murders like on Wall Street and they didn't have enough resources.

MARCH 2000

MISSING WOMEN REVIEW TEAM LOSES STAFF

On March 14th, 2000, a team meeting was held and the notes indicate that Detective Constable Clarke was going to be returning to her original assignment in a General Investigation Team (having finished her records searching assignment). In addition, ———, who had been assisting Parker with SIUSS data entry, was returning to the Sexual Offence Squad.¹⁶⁸

SECOND ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE IS HELD FOR THE MISSING WOMEN

On March 18th, 2000, a memorial service was held at Portside Park to dedicate a bench to the memory of the Missing Women. The event was reported in the *Vancouver Sun* on March 20th.¹⁶⁹ The reporter, Lindsay Kines, noted that Detective Constable Shenher was present:

But like a number of the 25 people standing under umbrellas around the bench, she was too emotional to speak. She later expressed her frustration with the inability of the police to bring closure to the case, saying "all I can tell [the families] is where they aren't. As far as where they are, we haven't got there yet."

The article noted that Patricia Coombes, mother of Linda Coombes, expressed her gratitude to the police for "giving her a measure of peace" by finding out what happened to her daughter.

¹⁶⁸ Binder 32, Tab 1.

¹⁶⁹ Lindsay Kines, "Park Memorializes Missing Women," in the *Vancouver Sun*, March 20, 2000, p. B1.

JENNIFER FURMINGER REPORTED MISSING

On March 30th, 2000, Jennifer Furminger was reported missing to the VPD, having last been seen on December 27th, 1999. Furminger was the first woman meeting the profile of the Missing Women reported to the VPD and to have gone missing after January of 1999, as far as the MWRT knew.¹⁷⁰ (Jacqueline McDonnell was the most recent, having last been seen on January 6th, 1999 and reported missing to the VPD on February 22nd, 1999. Brenda Wolfe was last seen on February 17th, 1999 but was not reported missing until April 25th, 2000.)

APRIL 2000

STATUS REPORT TO POLICE BOARD: MWRT STAFF REDUCED

On April 10th, 2000, Sergeant Field submitted a report to the Police Board recommending that the Board extend by one year their \$30,000 portion of the \$100,000 Missing Women reward.¹⁷¹ (The Board approved this recommendation.) Sergeant Field also noted that the MWRT had been reduced by one investigator, Detective Constable Clarke, and that the two Homicide investigators, Detective Constable Chernoff and Detective Lepine, had returned to regular duties but would continue to assist on an “as needed” basis.

PICKTON IDENTIFIED BY SEX TRADE WORKERS IN THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

In April 2000, Detective Constables James and Cruz showed an array of suspect photographs – including Pickton’s – to several sex trade workers. James and Cruz had been using these photographs ostensibly to identify possible suspects in the Missing Women case. However, their focus was on gathering evidence against McCartney. On April 5th and 12th, their notes indicate three different sex trade workers selected Pickton’s photo. One sex trade worker advised she had seen Pickton walking around Oppenheimer Park in 1999. Another said Pickton had taken her to a house in Surrey or Coquitlam, and although the notes are cryptic, it appears a third recognized him as someone who drove an old blue van.

The lack of this sort of information had frustrated the Pickton investigators in 1998 and 1999; they felt it was necessary to link Pickton to the sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside to have a chance at obtaining a search warrant or a wiretap. Unfortunately, Detective Constables James and Cruz did not report on this information to Detective Constable Shenher or anyone else in the MWRT. (Further comment on this matter is provided in Chapter 6 of the Analysis.)

AERIAL PHOTOS TAKEN OF PICKTON PROPERTY

On April 14th, 2000, Corporal D. Thompson of Coquitlam RCMP’s Forensic Identification Section took a series of aerial photographs of the Pickton property on Dominion Street for Constable York.

170 In fact, Wendy Crawford had also been reported missing, on December 14th, 1999, but this information had apparently not been provided to the MWRT by the VPD’s Missing Persons Unit staff.

171 Binder 21, Tab 28.

CONSTABLE YORK UPDATES RCMP STAFF SERGEANT ZALYS REGARDING STATUS OF PICKTON INVESTIGATION; ZALYS NOTES CONSULTATION WITH INSPECTOR MOULTON RE: RESOURCES

On April 18th, 2000, Staff Sergeant Zalys made notes that he met with Constable York about the status of the Pickton file since the Pickton interview in January, as well as resource concerns:

She said she hadn't been able to do anything since the Karaoke Club homicide in January. I told her I had spoken to Insp. Moulton about this again. He said it was a priority of his but also said we were stretched with the priorities of the day. No additional resources were forthcoming and the unit was to work on it when we could.

Spoke to Sgt. Pollock (as per discussion @ MCM) about this file. His unit will get at it when they can but that might be a while. This was in large part because of the recent homicide, two members being seconded to the 'E' Div Major Crime Unit & other incoming priorities. I told him that Insp. Moulton had told me that 20 resources were forthcoming and to do the best we can when we can. He would deal with matters down the road should they arise.¹⁷²

MCCARTNEY ARRESTED FOR MULTIPLE OFFENCES IN ALBERTA

On April 21st, 2000, Detective Constables James and Cruz, with the assistance of the — police, executed an arrest warrant and a search warrant on McCartney in —¹⁷³ Detective Constables James and Cruz had conducted an extensive investigation into McCartney, and had come to the conclusion that he was responsible for murdering most of Vancouver's

Missing Women, and may have been responsible for killing women in various jurisdictions in Alberta. As a result of the investigation conducted by Detective Constables Cruz and James, McCartney had already been charged in Vancouver with 14 counts of assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, robbery, administering a noxious substance and unlawful confinement prior to the — arrest.¹⁷⁴

The search of McCartney's home did not reveal any evidence connecting him to the Missing Women. Detective Constables Cruz and James conducted a very lengthy interview of McCartney, not on their substantive charges, but on the Missing Women case. Although McCartney denied any knowledge of the Missing Women, Detective Constables Cruz and James became even more convinced, as a result of viewing McCartney's "body language," that he was responsible for the Missing Women, and later reported their conclusion verbally, and in a report to Chief Constable Blythe.¹⁷⁵

Detective Constables Cruz and James committed a number of serious investigative errors in their handling of the McCartney case in —, but these errors were not fatal to the charges because they revolved around the Missing Women investigation, not the offences for which McCartney was charged. (McCartney was subsequently convicted of multiple offences and sentenced to five years and time served.)

BRENDA WOLFE REPORTED MISSING

On April 25th, 2000, Brenda Wolfe was reported missing to the VPD. She had last been seen more than a year earlier, on February 17th, 1999.

172 Binder 33, Tab 2.

173 Binder 3, Tab 32.

174 Petti Fong, "Pimp quizzed about missing prostitutes: A man arrested in Alberta faces charges in connection with sexual assaults in Vancouver," in the Vancouver Sun, April 26, 2000, p. A1.

175 Binder 3, Tab 32.

MAY – JUNE 2000

SERGEANT FIELD ADVISES HER INSPECTOR: RCMP TO BECOME INVOLVED

On May 9th, 2000, Sergeant Field e-mailed Inspector Spencer, who had replaced Acting Inspector Matthews the previous month, to update him on the Missing Women investigation. (The implied context is concluding the VPD investigation and passing it on to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit or a task force to continue the investigation). The e-mail advised that the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit or a task force would be looking at unsolved homicides of sex trade workers, Vancouver's Missing Women cases, and persons of interest such as McCartney. Sergeant Field advised that she had spoken to the RCMP's criminal profiler, Staff Sergeant Davidson, that morning, and that he was going to "more formally re-approach Superintendent Gary Bass." She also advised that there was a meeting with Staff Sergeant Doug Henderson, the RCMP officer in charge of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, the next day.

Sergeant Field recalled that:

May of 2000 was the first time Doug Henderson said there was a possibility the RCMP would take this over because Davidson and Filer have convinced him that this was going to be their file, that the Missing Women would turn up in RCMP territory.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLES CRUZ AND JAMES LEAVE THE MWRT

On May 9th, 2000, Sergeant Field and Inspector Spencer met with Detective Constables Cruz and James regarding their performance in the MWRT and the future of the investigation. As a result of this meeting, they were advised to finish up their existing files and that they would be leaving the MWRT. (See Chapter 6 of the Analysis for further details.)

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER SUBMITS STATUS REPORT: MORE WORK NEEDED ON PICKTON

On May 10th, 2000, Detective Constable Shenher submitted a report to Sergeant Field summarizing the investigation to date. She advised that only four of the 31 Missing Women had been located, and that there were no real leads on any suspect, despite a reward poster, a tip line, and a segment on America's Most Wanted. However, Detective Constable Shenher advised that three suspects stood out on the list of persons of interest, because of their "involvement with and propensity toward violence against sex trade workers in this area". The three suspects were Robert Pickton, suspect "R", and McCartney. Detective Constable Shenher suggested that if the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit could help, it would be in the investigation of these three men.

Detective Constable Shenher briefly summarized Thomas's information on Pickton, and that the Coquitlam RCMP and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit had worked extensively on the file. She stated, "it is my feeling that there is more follow up to be done with respect to his activities and his property..." Detective Constable Shenher also summarized the information available about suspects

“R” and McCartney and suggested further investigation would be appropriate.

Detective Constable Shenher advised that regarding the victims’ files, they were largely complete except for the location and interview of nine acquaintances and boyfriends of the victims. These tasks had been assigned to Detective Constables Cruz and James in August 1999, but had not been completed.

CONSTABLE YORK NOTES CHANGES IN PICKTON PROPERTY MAKING IT EASIER TO VIEW; REQUESTS FILE EXTENSION

On May 15th, 2000, Constable York made notes about the changes in the Pickton property evident in the photos taken April 14th, and also requested an extension on conducting further investigation:

Two sets of aerial photos have been taken of the target’s property by FLV and FIS Coquitlam...the property has had an enormous amount of earth moved. The “pig” barn appears to have had the roof cave in. Due to the development of a subdivision adjacent to the property, it is quite easy to view the trailer and back property from the subdivision. As time permits, further interviews will be conducted. Lynn Ellingsen appears to be back drinking and using drugs. She was recently arrested by Surrey Det. for fighting with Wood. Diary Date extension required. Please extend to 2000-07-20.¹⁷⁶

CAPACITY TO CONDUCT SUSPECT BASED INVESTIGATION LOST

By the fall of 1999, the MWRT had lost the majority of Detective Lepine’s and Detective Constable Chernoff’s time to homicide investigations (although the records show they were still following up on some Missing Women tips well into 2000), impairing

the MWRT’s ability to conduct a suspect-focused investigation. With the removal of Detective Constables Cruz and James from the team, the capacity to focus on suspects was virtually eliminated, as described later by Detective Constable Shenher:

After the fall of 1999, Mark and Ron were pretty much back in Homicide. We were still quite active, we had lots of tips to follow up from America’s Most Wanted. Administratively I was quite busy trying to keep track of all the information coming in. We were very actively pursuing leads on the four women we found. That took a lot of time. — and — were easy, but the two deceased women were a lot of intensive work, rewarding and time consuming, so that’s where a lot of Alex and my energies were focused. We were kind of back in a missing persons based investigation. It was only really suspect based for a few months, then the Pickton thing happened, then it got blown out of the water, then we became really fragmented and that’s where Cruz and James went full on McCartney and wouldn’t do anything else. Mark Chernoff and Ron Lepine were so disheartened by the Pickton thing and didn’t want to be in the room with Cruz and James but they were really not available to us much after that. So everything suspect-based was on hold because of McCartney being their total focus, then Cruz and James left and we really never were suspect-based again.

We had all these interviews to do that were assigned to Cruz and James but they never did them and we ultimately had to get some Homicide guys to do them. When time passed I knew we had to keep checking PIRS and CPIC for our victims to see if they would get checked. I felt that work had to be repeated every 6 months or so to make sure nothing fell between the cracks. We were still following up on MSP checks and so on, but we just didn’t have the resources to continue in a suspect based way from the fall of ‘99 until the McCartney thing blew up. It was just survival mode. I was trying to keep

176 Binder 33, Tab 3.

on top of entering all the tips and on top of what the other investigators were doing. I was trying to keep track of Cruz and James because they weren't telling me what they were working on.

We always hoped a good tip would come in that would get things going again. I became burnt out because I thought we were never going to solve the case. I thought we knew what we needed to know, that Pickton was the guy, that until we had a way to dig in his yard, that we weren't going anywhere.

However, the records of the Missing Women investigation do show that although the MWRT had essentially been reduced to Detective Constable Shenher as the only full time member, Sergeant Field continued to assign various tips for follow-up to investigators assigned to her Homicide squad. Investigators involved included Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff, but also other Homicide Squad detectives who hadn't been part of the MWRT.¹⁷⁷

JULY 2000

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER REQUESTS "DATA MINING" TECHNOLOGY; SIUSS A PROBLEM

On July 7th, 2000, Detective Constable Shenher submitted a memo to Acting Inspector Al Boyd regarding the cost of creating a computer software utility to allow "data mining" of information not then compatible with SIUSS, such as DEYAS Bad Date Sheets and traffic ticket data.¹⁷⁸

On July 25th, 2000, Detective Constable Shenher noted that SIUSS had been at a "standstill all week," that the import feature wasn't working, and that no one was trained to use the new Oracle-based system that had been imposed.¹⁷⁹

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER APPLIES TO LEAVE MISSING PERSONS

By July of 2000, Detective Constable Shenher had had enough:

I asked to leave Missing Persons in the summer of 2000. I was burnt out, frustrated, didn't feel supported. I thought that my leaving might spur some change. I felt in some ways like I hadn't done a good job, but also thought I had and had put a good face on the investigation. Dealing with Cruz and James took a lot out of me. It opened my eyes... there were aspects of that that just astounded me. I'd been on the list to go to Homicide, and decided I didn't want to go there anymore, or even continue in policing... Anyway when I decided I wanted to leave...I'd made Geramy aware of it and that I was going to apply to [the Diversity Relations Unit] but

there was great resistance to letting me go. I just said I had to leave and December of 2000 was when I left.

AUGUST 2000

On August 9th, 2000, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that the original team of nine officers working on the Missing Women case had been downsized by

¹⁷⁷ For example, on June 2, 2000, Detective Constable Chernoff investigated information about a reportedly strange chicken farmer who lived in a trailer (Binder 20, Tab 48), and on November 6, 2000 Homicide Detectives Faoro and Porteous conducted an interview of a male associated to Missing Woman Jennifer Furminger (Binder 12, Tab 2).

¹⁷⁸ Binder 15, Tab 80.

¹⁷⁹ Binder 32, Tab 1.

three as a result of a lack of leads.¹⁸⁰ By this time, Detective Constables James, Cruz and Clarke had all left the team. While Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff were still “available” to the team, they had for all intents and purposes been back in the Homicide Squad since late 1999. And by August 15th, Detective Constable Shenher was moving from the MWRT project room back into the Missing Persons Unit office, and was being assigned “regular” missing persons files.¹⁸¹

ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF SPENCER MAKES FORMAL REQUEST TO RCMP FOR REVIEW OF MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

On August 10th, 2000, Inspector Spencer of the Major Crime Section, then acting as the Deputy Chief in the Division, wrote a memo to Acting Inspector Doug Henderson of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit requesting that the RCMP conduct a review of the VPD Missing Women investigation.¹⁸² In his memo, Acting Deputy Chief Constable Spencer advised that the VPD had investigated approximately 1,200 tips, employed a variety of investigative techniques and strategies, and consulted with other police agencies, but all efforts had been fruitless. Acting Deputy Chief Constable Spencer requested “a complete review of all data collected, suspects profiled and interviewed,” and invited suggestions regarding any further viable avenues of investigation that could be pursued. Acting Deputy Chief Constable Spencer further advised that while it was originally anticipated that all information would be provided in September,

because of technical difficulties with SIUSS, this would be delayed until October.

Inspector Spencer then assigned Sergeant Field to work full time with Detective Constable Shenher for several weeks to ensure the Missing Women investigation files were properly organized before turning them over to the RCMP. (This was the first and only time Sergeant Field was assigned full time to the Missing Women investigation.)

SEPTEMBER 2000

JENNIFER FURMINGER ADDED TO MISSING WOMEN LIST; OTHERS DELETED

On September 28th, 2000, Detective Constable Shenher noted that Jennifer Furminger was being added to the list of Missing Women. Furminger was reported missing to the VPD on March 30th, 2000, having last been seen on December 27th, 1999.

Detective Constable Shenher also noted that several others who had been reported missing did not fit the profile or timeline of the women who had gone

missing from 1995 to 1999 so would be deleted from the list.

The Missing Women who were considered to be unconnected to the investigation were Ingrid Soet, reported missing in 1990 and last seen in 1989; Elaine Allenbach, reported missing and last seen in 1986 (and who appeared on the original Missing Women poster); Taressa Williams, reported missing

180 Lori Culbert and Lindsay Kines, “Special city force aimed at solving missing-women mystery cut back: The original team of nine officers has been cut to six as police are receiving fewer tips and leads,” in the Vancouver Sun, August 9, 2000, p. B1.

181 Binder 32, Tab 1.

182 Binder 1, Tab 9.

in 1989 and last seen in 1988; Sherry Rail, reported missing in 1984 and last seen in 1983; and Kathleen Wattley, reported missing and last seen in 1992. (All of these Missing Women would eventually appear on the list of 61 Missing Women released by the RCMP – VPD JFO, but none were linked by their DNA to the Pickton property.)

Detective Constable Shenher later recalled the process for dealing with new reports of Missing Women during the investigation, and the problems encountered:

There were probably about 50 women a year reported missing from the Downtown Eastside, and I knew we just didn't have the resources to track down women hiding from their boyfriends and that kind of thing. Geramy and I agreed that Missing Persons should be the clearinghouse to do the initial investigation and in 2 to 4 weeks turn it over to us if they hadn't located her.

When a new Missing Woman came in, Missing Persons was supposed to bring it to [the MWRT]. But that fall (1999), I realized we weren't acting on new ones in a timely way. I remember sitting down with Geramy and Dan Dickhout...He didn't have a huge sense of urgency about the files. I told Geramy that we needed to know when a new one came in, but we didn't have the resources and the Missing Persons Unit had to do it. Dan was supposed to advise us, then do the initial investigating to rule out the usual things. Then if after a few weeks she was still missing they were to bring it into our office and we would make a decision to add it to our list. It didn't go smoothly. We wouldn't get notified, or it would take a couple of months, like Brenda Wolfe, Cindy Felix, Furminger. I actually did a bit of work on Furminger with Dan because there was a boyfriend living at the Marr...One day I just grabbed Dan and went out with him and did it. I knew when

we had a fresh case, it had to be investigated, but we were so swamped that it would take us away from looking at suspects...I took too much on myself.

We knew about Creison right away, I considered her one of the missings from 1998. Furminger and Wolfe didn't come to us in a timely way, but I was aware of them and that Dan was working on them, to determine if they were really missing and if they met our profile. I remember being frustrated that we needed to rule these women in or out. There was just never the importance given to investigating these things fast to determine whether there was an ongoing problem. I think maybe we got desensitized a bit about how helpful it would be to get on it more quickly. The sense of urgency should have been there and it wasn't and I take full responsibility for that. I talked to Geramy about needing procedures in place, and that Dan maybe wasn't the best guy for this but that was who we had and we had to work with him. In retrospect in terms of assessing priorities it should have been one and it fell by the wayside.

PROBLEMS WITH VPD INVESTIGATIVE DATABASE DELAY RCMP REVIEW

By the time the MWRT was being downsized, Sergeant Field had discussed her conviction that a JFO was needed with Inspector Spencer, who she described as being "totally on board and agreed that there was no way Vancouver could do this, it was too big, we had to get the RCMP on board." As a result, in the late summer of 2000, Inspector Spencer authorized Sergeant Field to work full time with Detective Constable Shenher to ensure the Missing Women files were prepared for transfer to the RCMP for review, as Sergeant Field later recalled:

Gord basically said get the material into some form, and we thought we were going to get big help analyzing this in SIUSS and it was just a big mess. I think that Gord had verbal agreement from the RCMP through the summer of 2000 to do the review. A few of us met with Don Adam to try to get it going, but people weren't available. There was a delay in getting the investigators on the Chilliwack one freed up and we went up there and looked at the sites and tried to get us started. Gord Spencer told me to go in the room and work on it full time to get the files in order. We were agreed in the fall of 2000 that we were doing this but the RCMP were too busy. [We thought] there was no urgency because there hadn't been any new ones for quite a while and we thought the guy maybe had died or gone to jail or something.

On September 29th, 2000, Sergeant Field wrote a memo to Inspector Spencer confirming a "setback in our plans to have the RCMP assist with the Missing Persons Review Team investigation." She advised that a "major problem" had been a lack of investigative staffing, and also a lack of trained SIUSS data entry and analysis personnel. To compound this problem, the team's SIUSS data entry clerk, Gray, had gone on "stress leave," leaving them with no one trained to perform this function. Sergeant Field requested that the services of Detective Constable Sue Jarvis, a VPD member with the appropriate training on assignment at the Organized Crime Agency of B.C., be obtained for the MWRT. On October 2nd, it appears Sergeant Field provided a copy of her memo to Deputy Chief Constable Unger with handwritten comments asking "Do you have more pull at OCA (the Organized Crime Agency of B.C.)...than I do?" The services of Detective Constable Jarvis were subsequently obtained.

OCTOBER 2000

MWRT MEMBERS' SECOND CONSULTATION WITH SPOKANE HOMICIDE TASK FORCE – AFTER ARREST OF ROBERT LEE YATES, JR. FOR MURDERS OF SEX TRADE WORKERS

On October 10th, 2000, Detective Constables Shenher and Dickhout attended a presentation of the Spokane Homicide Task Force following the arrest of Robert Lee Yates, Jr., the previous April for a series of murders of sex trade workers. The information presented included a synopsis of each of the cases, weapons and vehicles involved, and a timeline of Yates' activities so that other police agencies could "determine if they might have additional cases possibly linked to Yates."¹⁸³ Detective Constable Shenher subsequently wrote a memo to Sergeant Field summarizing what they learned, and advised that the investigators involved were the same ones they consulted with in the summer of 1999 regarding the Missing Women case. Detective Constable Shenher summarized information about Yates that might have been relevant to the Missing Women case, and advised she would maintain contact with the Spokane Task Force. She advised that the information they had learned about Yates "represents another example of why it would be helpful to have DNA profiles done on all of our missing women to compare to [Spokane's] unidentified samples and I will continue to work towards this end."¹⁸⁴

183 Binder 1, Tab 19.

184 Binder 18, Tab 6.

SERGEANT FIELD, DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER AND DETECTIVE CONSTABLE MCCLUSKIE VISIT POSSIBLE CRIME SITES IN AGASSIZ

On October 11th, 2000, Sergeant Field and Detective Constable Shenher accompanied Detective Constable McCluskie and the former wife of a “person of interest” to the Missing Women investigation to several locations in the Fraser Valley.¹⁸⁵ This investigative strategy followed Detective Constable McCluskie’s investigation into —, who had been designated a “Dangerous Offender” as the result of a violent assault on a sex trade worker in 1997, and other unreported sex offences that came to light in Detective Constable McCluskie’s investigation.¹⁸⁶

SERGEANT FIELD REQUESTS MORE ANALYSIS FROM DETECTIVE INSPECTOR ROSSMO

On October 12th, 2000, Sergeant Field wrote a brief memo to Detective Inspector Rossmo:¹⁸⁷ “On 99-05-27 and 99-05-25 you submitted two reports relating to the Downtown Eastside Missing Persons Project. At that time you came to some conclusions based on the information available to you at that time. Since that time, more follow-up work and information has been received relating to the case. I am requesting your assistance to further review the available material/data to determine if there is any new theory or conclusion that can be drawn relating to the missing women.” Sergeant Field asked that Detective Inspector Rossmo contact her at his earliest convenience and thanked him for his assistance. Inspector Spencer e-mailed Deputy Chief Constable Unger that day advising that he had sent a hard copy of Sergeant Field’s request to Detective Inspector

Rossmo “indicating the file is a priority.” Deputy Chief Constable Unger provided a handwritten response to Inspector Spencer and Sergeant Field thanking them “for your response to my request for Geographic Profile reviews” and asked to be kept posted on the results.¹⁸⁸

Sergeant Field did not recall the outcome of her request; Detective Inspector Rossmo recalled that, “I’m sure I would have responded, but I don’t think I wrote a report. I think I had a verbal meeting with Geramy. I don’t remember having any great insights or anything like that.” (Detective Inspector Rossmo left the VPD at the end of 2000.)

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER APPEARS LIVE ON “VICKIE GABEREAU SHOW”; ADVISES FAMILIES SHE’S LEAVING THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

In late October 2000, Detective Constable Shenher appeared on the televised Vickie Gabereau Show. She later recalled the theme of her comments:

The thrust of the Gabereau show was that this was a genuine mystery. Sandra Gagnon and I were on and she interviewed us together. We both stressed how unusual it was for Janet Henry, Sandra’s sister, to go more than a day or two without calling and I remember making the point that this was the case with a good percentage of the Missing Women: many kept in regular contact with loved ones and suddenly, that contact stopped. I said that in my opinion, this was highly irregular for many of these women and we were getting closer and closer to ruling out all the possible types of accidental and medical scenarios they could have encountered and I was quite certain they were the victims of foul play - I always used those words.

185 Binder 32, Tab 1.

186 Further information on this case is included in Appendix A.

187 Binder 1, Tab 32.

188 Binder 1, Tab 33.

I think Vicky asked me if I thought there was a serial killer at work, and I answered the same way I always did when asked that: more and more, as we ruled out more places these women were not at, we were looking at that as a strong possibility and our investigation was proving there was no shortage of men in the Lower Mainland with the propensity for that level of violence against women. I always had my mind turned to Pickton, but I was very careful not to make any references to him - veiled or otherwise - when I was interviewed. I actually recall answering her question of “what would it take to find out where these women are?” or words to that effect. I answered with something like, “I suspect we’re dealing with someone with the means to hide evidence, we need a phone call, a tip, so we can have a place to start.” I know I talked at length about how, in all cases, someone always knows something and we needed people to come forward and do the right thing. I know I made an appeal to the public on that show.

On October 20th, 2000, Detective Constable Shenher phoned family members of some of the Missing Women, including Sandra Gagnon, Lynn Frey, Michelle Gurney, Robert McClelland and Shirley-Ann Egan, and advised them she would be leaving the Missing Women Investigation. She noted she would be calling the rest of the family members as well.¹⁸⁹

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED TO INVESTIGATIVE DATABASE CONTINUE

On October 17th, 2000, Sergeant Field submitted a memo to Inspector Spencer advising that she had just learned that their recently arrived SIUSS analyst, Detective Constable Jarvis, would have to leave the

next day for medical reasons and would be absent for three to five weeks. Sergeant Field summarized her efforts to have a clerk reassigned and given rudimentary training to perform SIUSS data entry, expressing her frustration at the situation with the comment, “what else can happen?”¹⁹⁰

JENNIE LYNN FURMINGER ADDED TO THE MISSING WOMEN LIST

On October 19th, 2000, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that the VPD had added the name of Jennie Lynn Furminger to the Missing Women list, bringing it to 28.¹⁹¹ Furminger was last seen in the Downtown Eastside in December 1999, but not reported missing until March 30th of 2000. The article noted Constable Drennan stated that the four remaining members of the Missing Women Review Team were conducting a “full review of all the data and information received right from the very beginning of the investigation.” The article noted that the file review was expected to take about a month, then the case would be passed to members of the Province’s unsolved homicide unit for further analysis.

NOVEMBER 2000

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER SUBMITS SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION

On November 7th, 2000, Detective Constable Shenher submitted a report to Inspector Spencer and Sergeant Field summarizing the Missing Women investigation to date.¹⁹² The report included:

189 Binder 32, Tab 1.

190 Binder 1, Tab 33.

191 Lindsay Kines, “Another woman added to list of missing: Jennie Lynn Furminger brings number of women who disappeared from the Downtown Eastside to 28,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, October 19, 2000, p. D12.

192 Binder 15, Tab 16.

- the number and profile of the missing women;
- the review of four unsolved homicides in RCMP jurisdictions to determine if there were links to the Missing Women investigation;
- that there were few leads on any solid suspects and that neither the reward poster or tip line had generated any solid leads;
- that the SIUSS database contained over 1,300 tips and suspects that had been investigated as “far as ...reasonable considering the lack of ...evidence to tie them to our missing women”;
- that the B.C. High Risk Offenders’ list had been reviewed to determine timelines for suspects, but this was frustrated by not knowing the dates the Missing Women went missing;
- that the team had undertaken a data-mining project to help narrow the field of potential suspects using data such as traffic tickets, violent incidents involving sex trade workers, “bad date” sheets, and other sources;
- that the team had identified Pickton, suspect “R” and McCartney as suspects who stood out because of their propensity for violence toward sex trade workers;
- a summary of the Pickton investigation (as well as the information about suspect “R” and McCartney), in which Detective Constable Shenher noted:

Extensive work on Pickton has been done by the Coquitlam RCMP and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit. We recently became aware that Pickton has been interviewed by RCMP members, but we do not know the contents of that interview. It is my feeling that there is more follow up to be done with respect to his activities and his property, which was recently sold. As of November 2, 2000 he was still living there.

- that parental or sibling DNA had been collected for 14 of the Missing Women, and that efforts were being made to obtain pap smear slides from the B.C. Cancer Control Agency to provide victim DNA;
- that sources of information and resources tapped included:
- financial assistance databases across Canada;
- the RCMP Profiling Unit and the VPD Geographical Profiling Unit;
- various sources of information in the VPD, including the Vice Squad, DISC Unit and Patrol members;
- canvassing of police agencies across Canada (which revealed that not one RCMP or municipal agency reported any “outstanding serial missing sex trade worker files”);
- witness protection program files;
- all victims entered on ViCLAS and regular

queries of police databases;

- drug rehab/methadone records;
- AIDS hospice records;
- Vital Statistics records;
- U.S. Mental Hospitals and Welfare intake;
- Coroner's databases in Canada;
- Medical Services Plan of B.C.;
- all available dental records entered on CPIC and NCIC;
- phone records;
- indigent burials;
- the Public Trustee;
- provincial and federal Corrections Services;
- the carnival circuit in Canada and the U.S.;
- liaison with the Women's Inner-city Safe House (WISH);
- extensive national and international media coverage;
- a reward poster sent to police agencies across Canada in 1999 and 2000, and to B.C. hospitals in 1999 and 2000.

Detective Constable Shenher also explained the need to have fully trained SIUSS analysts, and described

problems caused by an unexpected upgrade to SIUSS. She also detailed some of the systemic barriers to identifying individuals who die in Vancouver with false identification. Finally Detective Constable Shenher stated that:

...a review of this investigation could lead to new ideas as to what direction to take in order to determine what has happened to these women. As we close off more and more potential non-criminal avenues, I believe we will need to focus more attention on possible suspects and locating these women's bodies.

B.C. HOMICIDE INVESTIGATORS AGREE SERIAL KILLER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MISSING WOMEN: AGREE JOINT FORCE OPERATION NEEDED TO PROPERLY INVESTIGATE

On November 21st, 2000, Sergeant Field wrote a memo to Acting Deputy Chief Constable Spencer advising that she had recently attended a Profiling Seminar in Kelowna sponsored by the RCMP Profiling Unit.¹⁹³ Detective Inspector Rossmo was present from the VPD, along with members of the RCMP. RCMP investigators Paul McCarl and Bill Birnie presented the three unsolved sex trade worker homicides from 1995 in the Agassiz area, which the investigators believed were committed by the same suspect.

Sergeant Field then presented the investigation into the 24 sex trade workers who had gone missing from the Downtown Eastside since 1995. She pointed out that if the bodies of Lidguerre, Olajide, Pipe, Younker, and Gordon – all sex trade workers – had not been found in various remote areas in RCMP jurisdictions, their names would likely be on the Vancouver Missing Women list. Sergeant Field advised she provided a chronological review of the

193 Binder 10, Tab 36.

investigation, then asked the group – all experienced homicide investigators – for investigative advice.

The consensus was that the Missing Women cases were probably linked to the Agassiz cases, and the question was asked why there hadn't been a joint investigation with the RCMP. It was explained that the VPD was aware of the three Agassiz homicides at the outset, but the RCMP believed they had a good suspect (Tremblay) who was in custody for other sexual offences during the time more women went missing, and this suspect had now been cleared by DNA. It was "unanimous that a joint VPD/RCMP investigation was the only way to investigate and conclude these files properly." Sergeant Field further noted that "it was apparent to everyone...due to the unique nature of these crimes and the fact that no more bodies have been located since 95-10-21, the women most likely fell prey to a serial killer." Sergeant Field noted that although the women were from Vancouver, "historically the bodies have shown up in RCMP detachment areas and become their murder investigations...Criminal Profiling reports support this theory."

Sergeant Field summarized presentations on prostitute homicides from Courtenay and Saanich, and noted that an RCMP investigator from the Prince George area "reminded the group of the vast numbers of unsolved homicides of women found along the major north-south highway corridors."

Sergeant Field advised that the seminar attendees agreed a "joint request would be made by the VPD and RCMP to create a properly funded and staffed task force, with a long term mandate to solve these homicides." She finished her report with specific recommendations to form a task force coordinated by the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, using the Major Case Management model, to be located

out of the Surrey Satellite Serious Crimes premises for its central location. In another report Sergeant Field prepared, she noted that she presented Pickton as a suspect at this conference, that Coquitlam RCMP members were present, and that they advised they were still working on the file. She also noted that there was discussion of the legality of using Pickton's DNA from the Anderson case in the current investigation¹⁹⁴ (i.e., to compare Pickton's DNA from blood at the scene of the Anderson incident to the unknown DNA from the "Valley Murders").

RCMP AGREES A JOINT TASK FORCE IS NEEDED

On November 21st, 2000, Inspector Spencer met with Staff Sergeant Doug Henderson from the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, and others, and it was agreed a joint force operation (a "JFO") led by the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit was required.

On November 28th, 2000, Inspector Spencer wrote a memo to Deputy Chief Constable John Unger regarding the task force recommended by Sergeant Field, and summarizing his meeting with Staff Sergeant Henderson.¹⁹⁵ Inspector Spencer advised that the MWRT had been working for several weeks preparing the Missing Women file for a complete review by the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit.

PICKTON EXCLUDED BY DNA FROM THE VALLEY MURDERS; INVESTIGATION ENDS

On November 21st, 2000, RCMP records show that Constable York requested that Pickton's DNA be compared to the DNA from the Valley Murders. A Constable Strachan retrieved an exhibit from the 1997 Anderson file – a blood-soaked bandage – and

194 Binder 5, Tab 49.

195 Binder 1, Tab 37.

forwarded it to the RCMP's Toxicology Section. A determination was made that the bandages were "cast off" samples and so there was no expectation of privacy. Constable Strachan requested that the Pickton exhibit be compared to the DNA profile from the Valley Murders.

Pickton was eventually excluded by DNA from being a suspect in the Valley Murders. (It appears no further investigation on the Coquitlam RCMP Pickton file occurred until November 2001 when Constable York's replacement, Constable Sherstone, made several attempts to reinterview Ellingsen but was unsuccessful.¹⁹⁶)

DECEMBER 2000

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE SHENHER TRANSFERRED FROM MISSING PERSONS

By the beginning of December, 2000, pursuant to her request in July 2000, Detective Constable Shenher was transferred from the Missing Persons investigation to the VPD's Diversity Relations Unit. As she later related, she left with considerable bitterness:

By late 2000 when Geramy was pursuing a JFO, I was so utterly burnt out and disillusioned. I had cared too much about the file to my detriment. I was just fried. I wanted to get as far away from anything remotely related to the file. It was such a bitter experience that soured me on the Department, not just the tragedy of the investigation, but the ineffectiveness of the chain of command, to have a message start here then become so watered down by the time it got to where the decisions were being made...Geramy and I spent months going through

all the tips so I knew about every piece of paper that went out there and made recommendations as to what needed to be done. I've got lots of calls from people at the JFO who had trouble getting into SIUSS, they couldn't find our tip log which I made specifically for them, they couldn't find the hard copies. I put together a big package of information for them but it seems like they couldn't find anything.¹⁹⁷

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR ROSSMO SUES VPD OVER CONTRACT DISPUTE

In December 2000, Detective Inspector Rossmo, unable to negotiate a mutually agreeable renewal to his five-year contract, resigned from the VPD and initiated legal proceedings for wrongful dismissal. (The trial would begin in June of 2001.)

DAWN GREY REPORTED MISSING

On December 11th, 2000, Dawn Grey was reported missing to the VPD. She had last been seen on November 1st that year.

RCMP – VPD JOINT FORCE OPERATION CREATED: "PROJECT EVENHANDED"

GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE JFO DEVELOPED

On December 12th, 2000, Sergeant Field met with then-Sergeant Don Adam, the Special Projects Investigator from the RCMP's Serious Crimes Unit.

196 Coquitlam RCMP Major Crime Section Timeline March 1997 – January 2002.

197 Jim McKnight of Project Evenhanded confirmed in a March 2004 telephone conversation with the writer that the JFO lost the package of information Detective Constable Shenher provided.

In her memo to Inspector Spencer summarizing the meeting, she advised that the immediate goals of the JFO were to search for other possible victim files; brainstorm with investigators; look at the strongest cases and leads; prioritize the suspect list; and establish investigative approaches. Sergeant Field advised this would be accomplished in January 2001 and that the investigation would then begin full time, based out of one of the RCMP's Surrey offices.¹⁹⁸

DEBRA JONES REPORTED MISSING

On Christmas Day, 2000, Deborah Jones was reported missing to the VPD. She had last been seen a few days earlier, on December 21st.

JANUARY 2001

CYNTHIA FELIKS REPORTED MISSING

On January 8th, 2001, Cynthia Feliks was reported missing to the New Westminster Police Service. She hadn't been seen since November 26th, 1997.

JOINT FORCE OPERATION TASK FORCE MEETS

On January 17th, 2001, the newly formed JFO met. Present from the RCMP were Corporal Margaret Kingsbury, Nancy Joyce, Judy Priest, Sylvia Port, Jim Lucas, Peter Samija (from the crime lab), Mike Kurvers, and Sergeant Don Adam, and Sergeant Field from the VPD.¹⁹⁹

The first topic discussed concerned ensuring that DNA from suspects in solved/unsolved prostitute murders was entered into DNA data banks.

Following that, Corporal Kingsbury provided statistics from ViCLAS, such as there being 52 unsolved prostitute murders in B.C., and 31 unsolved female "hitchhiker" murders. She provided comparative figures from Alberta of nine and four unsolved murders in the same two categories. There was also discussion of the investigative approach to be taken regarding suspects, with two opposing views considered. One was that DNA be obtained from prime suspects in the Chilliwack/Agassiz cases. The other favoured creating a more comprehensive list of suspects by using computer cross-referencing of various information pools. Advantages and disadvantages of each approach were discussed, with Sergeant Adam leaning towards having a comprehensive list created.

The systemic problem of there being no DNA databank for missing persons cases was discussed, and it was noted that Sergeant Field had obtained DNA for the Missing Women cases, but had nowhere to store it.

It was noted that all DNA exhibits from VPD cases had been forwarded to the RCMP lab beginning in 1994, and that there may be pre-1994 exhibits that had previously been unsuitable for analysis, but with advancing technology, may be useable.

Several goals were set out to develop a suspect list:

1. Determine the number of pre-1994 cases where there may be DNA exhibits not yet submitted, and submit these to the RCMP lab for analysis;
2. Assign a member to research "old" VPD homicide files (Detective Constable Alex Clarke was assigned); and
3. Determine the number of sexual assaults against prostitutes that may have potential DNA and submit those for analysis.

¹⁹⁸ Binder 1, Tab 41.

¹⁹⁹ Binder 15, Tab 9 and Binder 18, Tab 24.

SERGEANT FIELD PROVIDES REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT OF JFO AND PROBLEMS IN VPD INVESTIGATION

On January 25th, 2001, Sergeant Field submitted to Inspector Spencer a comprehensive report summarizing the status of the MWRT and the progress made in creating a JFO with the RCMP.²⁰⁰ She summarized the meeting held on January 17th, as described above, and discussed the working theory and investigative strategy as follows:

A common agreement [was reached] that three RCMP prostitute homicide cases from 1995 (Pipe, Olajide, and Younker) are directly related to the missing prostitutes in Vancouver. There is DNA evidence in two of those cases and similar fact evidence links all three. Analysis...has linked, at least in theory, these cases to at least 17 of our missing prostitutes. The only theory we are left to work with is that there is one or more serial killers who have been successful in the removal of women from the Downtown Eastside and is adept at disposing of their bodies.

Regarding the VPD investigation, Sergeant Field advised that an extensive list of potential suspects had been created, but there was no other direct evidence to work on and only a few of them had been investigated extensively. She reported that two suspects had been cleared by DNA analysis [regarding the 1995 Valley Murders] and one of those, McCartney, had been charged with kidnapping and sexually assaulting Downtown Eastside prostitutes.

Sergeant Field stated that the majority of work done for the previous two years on the Missing Women case was “an extensive and exhaustive search for the Missing Women,” but that only four were located.²⁰¹

Sergeant Field advised that there had been “many problems” in the investigation, most noteworthy being the lack of a full time supervisor, lack of adequate staffing to follow up leads on suspects, and major problems with SIUSS. As a result of the SIUSS problems, Sergeant Field reported she was not confident that all relevant information was in the system, or that all files had been investigated fully. She also pointed out that a “vast number” of outstanding tips had not been investigated, and that many tips related to information on violent offenders and sexual assault suspects who had preyed on prostitutes. Sergeant Field advised that she was the only VPD police member assigned to the MWRT currently, and was part-time, but would be converting to full time (with the JFO).

Sergeant Field’s report summarized the next phase of the investigation as focusing on two areas simultaneously. Efforts were to be concentrated on DNA analysis of crime scene evidence from homicides of BC females. A second focus was to be a review of all the sexual assaults and violent incidents that had occurred against Downtown Eastside prostitutes since 1990. This strategy was based on the knowledge that prostitute killers often start out with sexual assaults with escalating violence. “This knowledge leads us to believe that the person responsible for killing the prostitutes found in Agassiz, and the persons(s) responsible for the missing women will have previously assaulted the prostitutes in the Downtown Eastside.”

200 Binder 3, Tab 12.

201 While only four of the Missing Women on the Reward Poster were located, Ida Prevost was located before the Reward Poster was released, and the MWRT also located 10 other women reported missing from the Downtown Eastside in 1999.

Sergeant Field summarized that the benefit of these strategies would be to create a more complete bank of crime-scene DNA to compare to suspect DNA. This would lead into the second phase of obtaining suspect DNA to hopefully solve the Agassiz homicides, identify suspects in other homicides, and hopefully determine who was responsible for the Missing Women. Sergeant Field requested the services of Detective Kean in the Sexual Offence Squad to review Sexual Offence Squad files for DNA evidence and to prioritize the violent incidents against prostitutes since 1990.

Inspector Spencer forwarded a copy of Sergeant Field's memo to Deputy Chief Constable Unger with handwritten comments supporting Sergeant Field's recommendations and advising that the RCMP were taking the lead role in the project.

THE JFO CONTINUES REVIEW AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

On January 31st, 2001, the JFO members met again at the RCMP's Fairmont facility.²⁰² Sergeant Geramy Field and Detective Constable Alex Clarke from the VPD were present, with Sergeant Don Adam, Corporal Marg Kingsbury, Nancy Joyce, Sylvia Port, and Jim Lucas from the RCMP. There was discussion of whether all the potential cases of murdered or missing prostitutes had been captured. It was discussed whether sex trade workers Dawn Crey, Brenda Wolfe, and Deb Jones should be added to the list as well as several files reported to other B.C. jurisdictions. Systemic issues around missing persons reports were discussed, with a view to developing a consistent reporting policy in BC.

FEBRUARY 2001

REVIEW OF HISTORICAL CASES FOR DNA EVIDENCE BEGINS

On February 9th, 2001, in the initial stages of the creation of the JFO, Detective Constable Alex Clarke and Constable Paul Verral of the VPD – an experienced Forensic Identification Squad member – were assigned to review historical cases that might include exhibits suitable for re-submission to the RCMP Crime Lab. Their initial work involved the analysis of a list of 45 Vancouver homicides provided by the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, and 12 cases submitted by ViCLAS which involved 11 homicides and two assaults involving hitchhikers or sex trade workers.²⁰³

Around the same time that Detective Constable Clarke and Constable Verral began their review, Detective Trish Keen from the VPD's Sexual Offence Squad was assigned to examine assaults on sex trade workers, initially from 1990 to 1999, but eventually the review included cases from 1986 to 1989 as well.

MEDIA REPORTS ON JFO REVIEW: MORE WOMEN BEING ADDED TO LIST

On February 9th, 2001, the *Province* reported that the VPD was about to add Dawn Theresa Crey and two more unnamed women to the list of Missing Women.²⁰⁴

On February 15, 2001, Sergeant Adam and Sergeant Field corresponded by e-mail regarding a media inquiry about the Missing Women case. They agreed they would advise the media that:

202 Binder 18, Tab 25.

203 Binder 6, Tab 35.

204 _____, "More east-side women missing as cops cut back," in the *Vancouver Province*, February 9, 2001 p. A16.

Vancouver Police and the RCMP are jointly reviewing the information collected and investigation completed so far by the VPD MPRT [the MWRT]. The next best course of action will be determined following a complete review. Any new cases are being actively investigated by the VPD Missing Persons Section.²⁰⁵

VPD HOMICIDE DETECTIVES ASSIGNED TO THE JFO – DEVELOPMENT OF JFO CONTINUES AND STRATEGIES REFINED

On February 26th, 2001, Sergeant Field met with Sergeant Adam and Detectives Jim McKnight and Phil Little, VPD Homicide detectives who had been assigned to the JFO that day.²⁰⁶ Topics discussed included coordination of exhibits, linkage analysis, a discussion as to which case management software would be used, office space, and obtaining a commitment from the Chilliwack RCMP that they would continue participating in the JFO even if a DNA “hit” was obtained for their three murders. Sergeant Field recorded in her notes that the immediate goals were to concentrate on developing and prioritizing the suspect lists, and then creating a proper JFO based on the Major Case Management model. An RCMP file coordinator would be assigned, and both the RCMP and the VPD would assign a “lead investigator” to the project, with either Detective Little or Detective McKnight assigned from Vancouver. Sergeant Adam was to be assigned as the Team Commander, with Sergeant Field assisting “from the Vancouver perspective.”

On February 27th, 2001, Sergeant Field met in Mission with Sergeant Adam, as well as Constable McCarl and Detectives Little and McKnight. The group then visited the Olajide and Pipe homicide sites. Sergeants Field and Adam discussed their

next steps, and agreed Sergeant Adam would draft a memo to RCMP Inspector Killaly outlining an investigation proposal and requesting office space. It was agreed that Sergeants Field and Adam would work together to develop a Memorandum of Understanding for the file. They agreed that both agencies would continue to examine cases for possible DNA evidence, starting with female hitch-hiker and prostitute homicides, and progressing to cases of sexual assaults on prostitutes. ViCLAS would continue its analysis to determine how many killers there were, and the JFO would continue to develop a suspect list. A strategy would be developed to obtain “cast off” DNA from suspects, to compare to crime scene DNA, and a joint operational plan would be developed, possibly involving a Part VI (wiretap) and undercover operation if a suspect of particular interest was identified.²⁰⁷

MARCH 2001

SERGEANT FIELD REPORTS ON STRATEGY REGARDING DNA AND THE VALLEY MURDERS

By March 2001, the creation of the JFO was well underway, as was the development of the investigative strategy. In a March 6th, 2001 report to Acting Inspector Al Boyd,²⁰⁸ based largely on a memo from Sergeant Adam,²⁰⁹ Sergeant Field reported that office space was being secured in the Surrey Satellite office. She also reported that a number of issues were being examined and “all of this work is predicated on the belief that the three Agassiz prostitute homicides are related to our missing women cases,” noting there was DNA available from those crime scenes. Sergeant Field discussed the need to develop a local

205 Binder 1, Tab 46.

206 Binder 20, Tab 58.

207 Binder 18, Tab 23.

208 Binder 1, Tab 50.

209 Binder 1, Tab 52

data bank of crime scene DNA as well as expanding the data in the national DNA data bank.

Sergeant Field detailed the investigative strategy regarding DNA, reporting that investigators would:

1. examine 52 unsolved prostitute and 33 unsolved hitchhiker murders in BC for potential DNA;
2. review cases of sexual assault against prostitutes from 1990 to 2000 for DNA evidence, on the premise that prostitute killers would be “violent users of prostitutes”;
3. have ViCLAS conduct a comprehensive review of 83 solved prostitute and hitch-hiker homicides to look for patterns and linkages;
4. conduct a comprehensive review of suspect lists from the Missing Women case and the Agassiz homicides;
5. obtain cast off DNA from the suspects;
6. employ an undercover operation, a Part VI (wiretap), and a well-structured interrogation with an identified suspect.

Sergeant Field advised that she and Sergeant Adam were discussing technical support for file management and data analysis, and “E&R” (“Evidence and Reports”) would probably be used for case management software. Sergeant Field advised that once the project had been transitioned to the JFO over the next month, Detectives Little and McKnight would be the VPD members assigned full time, with Sergeant Field remaining at the VPD and available for assistance and inquiries.

In Coquitlam, now-Sergeant Mike Connor – the original lead investigator on the Pickton investigation – was transferred in the RCMP as the Sergeant in charge of the Coquitlam Major Crime Section, replacing Sergeant Pollock.

GEORGINA PAPIN REPORTED MISSING

On March 14th, 2001, Georgina Papin was reported missing to the VPD and the Mission RCMP. She had last been seen on March 2nd, 1999.

SERGEANT ADAM PROPOSES OPERATIONAL MANDATE FOR THE JFO

On March 20th, 2001, Sergeant Adam sent a memo to Sergeant Field containing a proposed operational mandate setting out that the RCMP and the VPD “jointly resolved to...investigate the Missing Street Trade Workers.”²¹⁰ Sergeant Adam set out some assumptions, as follows:

1. Some or all of these women have met foul play, and the killer(s) have successfully hidden their remains;
2. There may be one or several killers;
3. The most viable investigative technique is to focus on similar victim [cases] where there are viable investigative leads;
4. Primarily this will be street trade murders where bodies have been recovered (DNA available), and major sexual assaults (DNA available).

Sergeant Adam set out the four phases of the investigation, as summarized above in Sergeant Field’s memo of March 6th. He also noted that the VPD had assigned two full time investigators but the “RCMP have yet to assign a member full time,” although his memo of February 28th reported that the JFO would comprise five full time investigators as well as himself.

210 Binder 1, Tab 54.

YVONNE BOEN REPORTED MISSING TO SURREY RCMP

On March 21st, 2001, Yvonne Boen was reported missing to the Surrey RCMP. She had last been seen on March 16th that year.

APRIL 2001

JFO DEVELOPMENT CONTINUES

In April of 2001, work developing the JFO continued. The issue of using SIUSS or E&R was debated as the infrastructure for the investigation was developed. (By September 2001, problems had still not been resolved and Sergeant Adam notified Mr. Doyle, the SIUSS representative, that “due to the many delays etc...we will not be going forward with SIUSS.”) Detective Constable Clarke’s review of historical VPD homicides was well under way and she had located DNA in several cases. Detective Kean had started her review of historical assaults against sex trade workers.

JFO ADVISED OF ADDITIONAL MISSING WOMEN

In addition, the VPD Missing Persons Unit advised the JFO that several more Downtown Eastside sex trade workers were missing, despite significant efforts made to locate them. They were Dawn Crey, reported missing on December 11th, 2000, and last seen on November 1st, 2000; Deborah Jones, reported missing December 25th, 2000, and last seen December 21st, 2000; and Brenda Wolfe, reported missing April 25th, 2000, and last seen February

17th, 1999. In addition, the Missing Persons Unit advised that Georgina Papin was missing, who was last seen in March 1999 and reported missing on March 14th, 2001, to the Mission RCMP.²¹¹

COQUITLAM RCMP MAJOR CRIME UNIT REVIEWS PICKTON FILE

On April 11th, 2001, members of the Coquitlam RCMP Major Crime Unit met to review all outstanding major files.

The Pickton file was one issue that was reviewed and...the priority was set as high...It was agreed that to present a formal package to S/Sgt. Don Adam of the MWTF in an attempt to associate Pickton to another offence this point, Pauline Johnson. To conduct further surveillance of Pickton to establish any pattern changes from the previous surveillances and to ask for consideration of a [undercover operation] targeting Ellingsen.²¹²

(No information was located during this Review, either in documents or through interviews, to suggest that Staff Sergeant Adam was actually presented a package on Pickton by Coquitlam RCMP. Nor was there any information to suggest that additional surveillance of Pickton or an undercover operation targeting Ellingsen were actually attempted.)

211 See Evenhanded notes 01E1388 and VPD Missing Persons Unit files on each subject.

212 Coquitlam RCMP Major Crime Section Timeline March 1997 – January 2002.

MAY 2001

RCMP BRIEFS MEDIA ON “JOINT FORCE FILE REVIEW”

On May 1st, 2001, the RCMP released a media “briefing note” regarding the creation of a “Joint Forces File Review of Street Trade Workers.” The note stated there would be “a long methodical review using other investigative tools previously not available,” and that the review would not be limited to the women on the Missing Women poster. The document also stated that:

The Vancouver Police Department should be commended on their diligent work as they were able to eliminate four women of the 31 listed on the Missing Women poster through outstanding police work. In addition, they located 10 women reported missing in 1999.²¹³

ELSIE SEBASTIAN REPORTED MISSING

On May 16th, 2001, Elsie Sebastian was reported missing to the VPD. She had last been seen in 1992.

VPD SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM AND POLICE BOARD BRIEFED

On May 16th, 2001, Sergeant Field made a presentation to the VPD’s Senior Management Team providing the history of the Missing Women investigation. The minutes of the meeting report that Sergeant Field advised it was generally suspected that the Missing Women were the work of a serial killer.²¹⁴

On May 16th, 2001, the Vancouver Police Board approved a recommendation from Deputy Chief Constable Unger – based on a report to the Board²¹⁵ authored by Detective McKnight – recommending renewal of the \$100,000 reward regarding the Missing Women.²¹⁶

PATRICIA JOHNSON REPORTED MISSING

On May 31st, 2001, Patricia Johnson was reported missing to the VPD. She had last been seen on March 3rd, 2001.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPED BETWEEN RCMP AND VPD

By the end of May 2001, a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the RCMP and the VPD had been developed.²¹⁷ This Memorandum set out the investigative strategy (as described earlier) for the JFO and resource commitments from each agency. Resources from the RCMP included a Team Leader, File Coordinator, two investigators, and two ViCLAS analysts. The VPD committed two investigators, a SIUSS analyst for the initial stages of the investigation and a civilian SIUSS analyst for the duration of the project. In addition, the VPD committed a Homicide Squad sergeant to assist with the creation of the team, and three additional investigators to assist with the identification of suitable suspect DNA from homicide and sexual assault cases. The Memorandum of Understanding specified that each agency would be responsible for the salary and overtime costs of its employees, but that it was agreed in principle that any additional operating expenses that may be incurred as a

213 Binder 1, Tab 61.

214 Binder 27, Tab 18.

215 Binder 21, Tab 26.

216 Binder 21, Tab 24..

217 Binder 10, Tab 16.

result of obtaining a ‘hit’ from DNA would be shared equally. Chief Constable Blythe signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the VPD on May 30th, and the Commanding Officer of the RCMP in E Division, Bev Busson, signed it for the RCMP on June 26th.

JUNE 2001

ANDREA JOESBURY AND HEATHER CHINNOCK REPORTED MISSING

On June 8th, 2001, Angela Joesbury was reported missing to the VPD. She had last been seen on June 5th, 2001.

On June 16th, 2001, Heather Chinnock was reported missing to the Surrey RCMP. She had last been seen in April 2001.

INITIAL PHASE OF HISTORICAL CASE REVIEW FOR DNA COMPLETED

By June 20th 2001, Detective Constable Clarke and Constable Verral had completed the initial phase of their review of historical cases searching for DNA evidence. Detective Constable Clarke identified several systemic problems caused by the failure to keep accurate records when exhibits were moved for various reasons. However, during their review they determined twelve cases had evidence suitable for submission to the RCMP Crime Lab.²¹⁸

FORMER DETECTIVE INSPECTOR KIM ROSSMO’S LAWSUIT AGAINST VPD BEGINS

In June 2001, Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo’s lawsuit against the VPD commenced in BC Supreme Court. His May 1999 analysis of the Missing Women case became one of the issues in the trial, which garnered considerable media attention due to several sensational allegations. Many of these allegations focused on the part Deputy Chief Constable Unger played in Detective Inspector Rossmo leaving the VPD. (The lawsuit and a subsequent appeal were unsuccessful; this issue is also discussed in Chapter 6 of the Analysis.)

THIRD ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR MISSING WOMEN HELD

On June 25th, 2001, a third memorial ceremony for the Missing Women was held at Crab Park in the Downtown Eastside.²¹⁹

JULY 2001

VPD PROVIDES INCONSISTENT MESSAGE REGARDING SERIAL KILLER THEORY

On July 3rd, 2001, Erin McGrath, the sister of one of the Missing Women – Leigh Miner – sent an e-mail to Detective Constable Dan Dickhout in the Missing Persons Unit. (Leigh Miner was reported missing in 1994 but it appears her file was archived

218 In addition, in their review of a 1974 homicide file, Constable Verral found fingerprints that had never been submitted to the B.C. Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), which resulted in the identification of two possible suspects not listed in the original file. Constable Verral also located fingerprints in a 1976 and a 1980 file, resulting in the identification of three suspects. The success of this review started a process of ongoing submissions to B.C. AFIS for fingerprint identifications on historical homicide files.

219 Lindsay Kines, “Missing women remembered,” in the Vancouver Sun, June 23, 2001, p. B5.

on microfilm and was only retrieved when McGrath made inquiries sometime later. Miner was not included on the original Missing Women poster.) Ms. McGrath noted that she had seen Detective Constable Shenher on the Vicki Gabereau show (a rerun) and that Detective Constable Shenher stated that she believed a serial killer was responsible for the Missing Women. She asked “what has changed since that interview for the department to believe a serial killer no longer exists?” (She also expressed strong concerns about the conduct of [Parker](#), the Missing Persons Unit clerk. This was a recurring theme with family members of the Missing Women, even years after Ms. [Parker](#) had any dealings with them, and contributed to considerable hostility between some family members/community members and the VPD. Specific analysis of the concerns raised about Ms. [Parker](#) is provided in Chapter 3 of the Analysis.)

Detective Constable Dickhout responded, “I don’t believe the Department has a stated position on whether or not a serial killer is at work. I discussed this point with my Inspector (Acting Inspector Al Boyd) and we believe that it is possible but as yet there is no evidence that supports or refutes this theory.”

Although the investigative focus of the JFO was well-established by this point, and had been clearly documented in reports submitted by Sergeant Field, Detective Constable Dickhout later recalled:

That issue [a serial killer] was the topic of discussion once or twice a week and everyone and their dog had an opinion. It could have been a holdover from the other project, but everyone was paranoid about saying there was a serial killer, that no one was going to say the words serial killer. Evenhanded may have gone in thinking there was a serial killer, but it wasn’t coming out of them, it was like a secret society. There was no policy statement put out saying anything.

AUGUST 2001

MORE MISSING WOMEN IDENTIFIED

By August 14th, 2001, a search on CPIC for all Missing Women in the Province had revealed up to 22 more Missing Women unknown to the JFO. As a result of the potential new additions to the Missing Women list, it was determined that a meeting would be arranged with senior management of both the VPD and the RCMP highlighting the problem with a recommendation that more resources be added.²²⁰

SEREENA ABOTSWAY REPORTED MISSING

On August 22nd, 2001, Sereena Abotsway, a Downtown Eastside sex trade worker, was reported missing to the VPD. She had last been seen earlier that month. (Pickton was charged with Abotsway’s murder on February 22nd, 2002, the first of the murder charges against him.)

DATA ENTRY EMPLOYEE SUBMITS ANALYSIS CRITICAL OF MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

On August 23rd, 2001, Brian Oger, a 22-year-old civilian employee of the VPD who had been assigned to a SIUSS data entry function for the JFO, submitted a report on the case. He titled it “The Serial Killer Theory: A Report on the Downtown Eastside Missing Prostitutes.” His report summarized his assessment of what had occurred so far, Detective Inspector Rossmo’s report, and the direction of the current JFO investigation. His report suggested that insufficient resources were being applied to the case, and made a number of investigative recommendations.²²¹

220 Evenhanded notes, and interview of Inspector Don Adam.

221 Binder 10, Tab 33.

WOMEN STILL GOING MISSING; STAFF SERGEANT ADAM DESCRIBES CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS IN THE VPD INVESTIGATION; STATUS OF THE INVESTIGATION

By the summer of 2001, the JFO had become concerned that, contrary to their assumption when the JFO investigation began, they were not dealing with a “historical” serial murder investigation review in which all the murders had taken place prior to 1999. In fact, eleven additional reported Missing Women had last been seen in 2000 and 2001, nine of them reported to the VPD and two to RCMP detachments. In addition, six women last seen in 1999, and reported missing from 1999 to 2001, had also been determined to be the potential victims of a serial killer. The serial killer was active.

On August 30th, 2001, Staff Sergeant Adam met with senior management from both the VPD and the RCMP and presented the results of the JFO review to date, based on a “Management Briefing” document regarding the JFO.²²² The purpose of the meeting was to obtain additional resources. Present from the RCMP were Assistant Commissioner Gary Bass, Superintendent Larry Killaly, and Staff Sergeants Doug Henderson, Don Rinn, Leon Vandewalle, and Christine Wozney. Present from the VPD were Deputy Chief Constable John Unger, Acting Inspector Al Boyd, and Detective Jim McKnight (assigned to the JFO). In his report, Adam cited problems in the VPD investigation:

- lack of bodies eliminated forensic potential
- loose time frames surrounding disappearances limited the ability to investigate
- large suspect pool
- inadequate resources

Staff Sergeant Adam reported that for the investigation to succeed, the suspects would have had to call attention to themselves such as being on the “Bad Trick List”, or have committed a serious sexual assault or murder of a sex trade worker. He also advised that the VPD investigation had not identified ties between any suspect and a significant number of missing women. He identified the four phases of the investigative strategy:

1. build up the crime scene DNA banks;
2. review and prioritize suspects;
3. obtain DNA from suspects; and
4. upon obtaining DNA hit, confirm/eliminate the suspect’s involvement with missing sex trade workers.

Staff Sergeant Adam then provided details on the progress of the investigation to date, with recommendations to address problems identified. He advised that as a result of the JFO’s investigation, 22 additional missing sex trade workers had been identified who “may match the profile of the original 31.” He requested that two investigators be added to conduct further investigation into “the actual numbers of missing sex trade workers.”

Staff Sergeant Adam noted that the RCMP had identified 101 potential suspects from their file review, and that the VPD through the MWRT had identified approximately 300 suspects, although there might be some duplication of suspects.

In terms of suspect investigation, Staff Sergeant Adam advised a number of tasks were required, including off-line searches of victims and suspects.²²³ Other tasks identified by Staff Sergeant Adam

222 Binder 10, Tab 23.

223 An off-line search is a sophisticated query of CPIC that cannot be conducted “on line” by investigators. An example would be a query for all persons run on CPIC within five minutes of the last CPIC query of a Missing Woman (in hopes of identifying a person of interest also checked at the same time).

included a complete review of Missing Women files for potential investigative leads, and completion of inquiries into the 1348 tips received by the VPD. For the latter task, Staff Sergeant Adam also requested two additional investigators as well as personnel for computer work. Staff Sergeant Adam advised that when crime scene DNA had been analyzed and suspects had been prioritized, additional staff would be needed to obtain cast-off DNA. Staff Sergeant Adam also advised that “from all indications, sex trade workers are continuing to go missing. There is significant urgency that we move quickly to identify a suspect if possible.” The final phase would be to target identified suspects with other investigative strategies, such as undercover operations.

In Coquitlam, the lead investigator on the Pickton file, Constable York, retired from the RCMP. It appears the file was reassigned to a Constable Sherstone.²²⁴

SEPTEMBER 2001

MORE VPD RESOURCES REQUESTED FOR JFO

On September 7th, 2001, Al Boyd, now the Acting Inspector in the Major Crime Section, submitted a report regarding the Missing Women’s Task Force to Deputy Chief Constable Unger.²²⁵ He summarized the investigation to date and recommended that four additional VPD members be added to the investigation, bringing the total to seven. He also requested vehicles, computers, and other items for the investigators. Advising that the members would likely be required for up to three years, he requested

authorization to fill the vacancies created. The total budget for the staff and equipment for the estimated three years was approximately two million dollars. Acting Inspector Boyd repeated Staff Sergeant Adam’s warning that, “from all indications sex trade workers will continue to go missing.” (Acting Inspector Boyd also submitted an addendum to his memo on October 18th, 2001 requesting additional computers and an additional investigator with high-level qualifications on SIUSS.²²⁶ At this time, the JFO was still using SIUSS, although it later abandoned the software in favour of E&R.)

All the requests for additional staffing from the VPD were approved. Staff Sergeant Adam later said the VPD “provided everything requested, forthwith.”

DEPUTY CHIEF UNGER RECOMMENDS REQUEST TO CITY FOR FUNDING

As a result of Inspector Boyd’s memo, On September 10th, 2001, Deputy Chief Constable Unger submitted a memo to Chief Constable Blythe requesting that the Executive of the VPD approach the City Manager/Council to seek funding so that the VPD staff assigned to the JFO could be replaced.

MEDIA FOCUS INTENSIFIES REGARDING PROBLEMS IN VPD INVESTIGATION AND ADDITIONAL MISSING WOMEN

On September 21st, 2001, the *Vancouver Sun* published a major piece on the Missing Women investigation.²²⁷ The focus of the article was that more than a dozen women were going to be added

224 Coquitlam RCMP Major Crime Section Timeline March 1997 – January 2002.

225 Binder 10, Tab 15.

226 Binder 10, Tab 14.

227 Lori Culbert; Lindsay Kines and Kim Bolan, “Investigation turns up startling new numbers: Police to announce expanded probe; Women have history of drugs, prostitution and links to Downtown Eastside,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, September 21, 2001, p. A1.

to the list of Missing Women, some of them reported years earlier, and some reported more recently. The report stated that the RCMP – VPD team was being increased from 10 to 16 investigators, and that Chief Constable Blythe said he would be “making a special request to city council for more money to cover the cost of the additional officers for up to a four-year period.” Erin McGrath, sister of Missing Woman Leigh Miner, was quoted as being critical of the way the Missing Persons office treated her family.

The article also noted that the RCMP – VPD team was focused on reviewing old files, and that new reports of missing women were still being investigated by the two detectives in the VPD’s Missing Persons Unit.

The article examined the lack of resources in the VPD, based on a confidential VPD report obtained by the *Vancouver Sun* via a Freedom of Information request. Chief Constable Blythe was interviewed for the article, and pointed out that other jurisdictions had to accept some responsibility as the Missing Women weren’t only reported in Vancouver. The article cites the case of Angela Arseneault, who was reported missing by her mother to the Burnaby RCMP, stating that:

Blythe refrained from criticizing another police agency, but the RCMP only became directly involved in the case earlier this year. RCMP media relations Constable Danielle Efford said the Mounties formed the review team as soon as they were asked, arguing it was a file that fell under Vancouver’s jurisdiction until that point.

The JFO team leader, Staff Sergeant Don Adam, was also interviewed, and was quoted as saying, “Our issue is there are so many guys capable of this that it’s mind-boggling.”

On September 23rd, 2001, a *Province* article reported that the new VPD spokesperson, Constable Sarah Bloor, warned that it’s premature to conclude a serial killer is running loose, terrorizing hookers and junkies. “We just don’t have any concrete fact to suggest that.” ²²⁸

On September 24th, 2001, the *Vancouver Sun* published another extensive article about the Missing Women case and a memorial service in Abbotsford. The article quoted family and friends of the Missing Women who were critical of the VPD investigation, and also the RCMP – VPD investigation, for lack of results. The thrust of the article was that family and friends believed “added pressure must be applied to senior officers, municipal politicians and the provincial government to take the situation more seriously.” ²²⁹

Another article in the *Vancouver Sun* on September 24th, 2001, explored the problems caused by the lack of a databank for the DNA of missing persons.²³⁰ And on September 26th, 2001, the *Vancouver Sun* published a major story focusing on the negative impact of “the patchwork quilt of municipal police forces and RCMP detachments across the Province...”. The focus of the story was police investigators’ belief in the need for regionalization, Major Case Management training, and a provincial standard for Major Case Management computer

228 John Colebourn, “Police still leery of serial-killer theory,” in the *Province*, September 23, 2001, p. A28.

229 Lori Culbert, “Families call for action: Aboriginal leader whose sister is missing tells memorial service: we ‘deserve better,’” in the *Vancouver Sun*, September 24, 2001, p. A7.

230 Kim Bolan and Lindsay Kines, “DNA samples are taken but not used: Coroner, police want data bank but B.C. has put it on hold,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, September 24 2001, p. A1.

systems that allows easy sharing of information, and that the impetus must come from the provincial government.²³¹

OCTOBER 2001

ADDITIONAL VPD MEMBERS ASSIGNED TO EVENHANDED

By October 3rd, 2001, VPD members Constable Paul Verral from the Forensic Identification Squad, Detective Constable Daryl Hetherington from Vice, and Acting Sergeant Don Jarvis from Homicide had all been assigned to the JFO, with two civilian members committed as well.²³²

PICKTON A SUSPECT IN SEXUAL ASSAULT

On October 10th, 2001, VPD Sexual Offence Squad members met with Staff Sergeant Adam for the purposes of identifying women who had survived attacks where it appeared they were going to be killed.

Staff Sergeant Adam was informed that on August 3rd, 2001, a woman who had been drinking in the Downtown Eastside voluntarily entered the car of a man who offered her a beer. The suspect then violently sexually assaulted her, and claimed he was the one who had killed “the girls who are missing.” The victim escaped only by jumping from the suspect’s moving vehicle.

Constable Dickson learned of the assault and advised Detective Constable Jim Scott of the VPD Sexual Offence Squad that investigators should consider Pickton as a possible suspect. Pickton was eventually excluded on the basis of the victim’s failure to identify him from a photographic line-up.

Detective Constable Scott noted in his report about the meeting that “Staff Sergeant Adam indicated that he was familiar with the Pickton file and advised that he was not sure if information on the Picktons was fact or urban myth.”²³³

JFO INVESTIGATORS MEET WITH FAMILY MEMBERS OF MISSING WOMEN

On October 14th, 2001, a meeting was held in Delta with JFO investigators and 35-40 family members of the Missing Women to brief them on the status of the investigation. Detective McKnight submitted a report to Inspector Boyd about the meeting on October 22nd, and characterized it as a “positive contact with the family members.” However, he advised that the attendees raised concerns that the VPD was not doing enough to identify any new missing women. The family members were also concerned that insufficient resources or priority was applied to missing persons reports, and complained that they were treated in a rude and belligerent fashion by [Parker](#), a clerk in Missing Persons who they had been led to believe was a police officer.²³⁴

A similar but more detailed report on the meeting was prepared by the RCMP, and describes the

231 Lindsay Kines, Lori Culbert and Kim Bolan, “B.C. slow to adopt lessons of Bernardo: Police face obstacles tracking down serial predators,” in the Vancouver Sun, September 26, 2001, p. A1.

232 Binder 10, Tab 22.

233 Binder 8, Tabs 21 & 22.

234 Binder 10, Tab 20.

information given to the family members about the progress of the investigation. The RCMP report also alludes to steps being taken to prevent further sex trade workers from going missing from the Downtown Eastside, but does not provide details.²³⁵

A *Vancouver Sun* article the next day about the meeting quoted a number of the family members, and their comments were consistent with the police assessment of the meeting.²³⁶

On October 24th, 2001, as a result of the meeting with the family members, Acting Inspector Boyd directed Sergeant Carl Hetherington to conduct a review of the Missing Persons Unit policies, with specific attention to the conduct of *Parker*.²³⁷

JFO INVESTIGATION INTENSIFIES REGARDING “NEW” MISSING WOMEN

By October, the notes of the JFO indicate an increasing concern for new reports of Missing Women. Earlier in October, it was noted that four of the 22 Missing Women added to the list had been located as a result of intensive investigation. But on October 24th, it was noted that:

We need to work with Dickhout and a “here and now” team to deal with the new missing sex trade workers. If Dickhout does not have enough resources, we need to make sure that enough resources are received...Field suggested looking at all the new missing sex trade workers as potential homicides...The Sergeant at MCS should be involved in any potential homicide in order to give it the proper prioritization.

Inspector Adam later noted that the JFO investigation was hampered by the fact that the VPD investigators most familiar with the file, such as Detective Constable Shenher, did not come to the JFO (although he understood from a “human perspective” why). Although the JFO had experienced homicide investigators, they were not familiar with the culture of the Downtown Eastside and so wrongly assumed that the sex trade workers might be transient. As Inspector Adam later explained, their lack of knowledge about Downtown Eastside sex trade workers resulted in:

...a lot of inquiries around the country that we didn’t need to do looking for the new Missing Women, but we had to know we were right that they were really missing. But by late October we had solidified that we would go proactive. There was a fantastic response from the VPD and Superintendent Killaley for a proactive team, but the team couldn’t be created overnight. Operational by January was fast.

NOVEMBER 2001

JFO INVESTIGATORS CONSULT WITH GREEN RIVER AND SPOKANE HOMICIDE TASK FORCE MEMBERS

On November 5th, 2001, members of the JFO travelled to Spokane and met with investigators assigned to the Green River Task Force (which had not yet arrested Gary Ridgway for the Green River killings).²³⁸ Detective McKnight noted in his report about the meeting that the U.S. investigators were astounded by the number of files that the JFO had reviewed to identify DNA evidence and persons of interest. He pointed out that the Green River

235 Binder 10, Tab 20.

236 Lindsay Kines, “Police have 600 suspects in missing women case: Families encouraged after meeting with investigators,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, October 15, 2001, p. B1.

237 Binder 10, Tab 19.

238 Binder 18, Tab 25.

investigators had the advantage of dumpsites and bodies.

On November 6th, 2001, JFO investigators met with members of the Spokane Sheriff's Department who were investigating the murders of sex trade workers found on Mount Spokane. (Spokane investigators subsequently arrested, charged and convicted Robert Lee Yates, Jr., a helicopter pilot, for the murders of the sex trade workers). The investigators related that they had encountered many of the same challenges faced by the VPD in their investigation. Detective McKnight concluded his report with a list of priorities for the JFO investigation, most of which he advised had been completed or were being dealt with.

COQUITLAM RCMP ATTEMPT TO RE-INTERVIEW ELLINGSEN

On November 6th, 2001, Constable Sherstone, who had replaced Constable York as the Coquitlam RCMP's lead investigator on Pickton, advised Sergeant Connor that she had located Lynn Ellingsen and asked for permission to attempt to interview her. Sergeant Connor contacted Sergeant Clary of the Missing Women Task Force JFO to ensure this wouldn't interfere with their investigation and was advised it wouldn't, so encouraged Constable Sherstone to conduct the interview. (Coquitlam RCMP's records indicate that Constable Serstone made a "couple of attempts" to interview Ellingsen at a women's shelter but was unsuccessful because staff wouldn't let Constable Sherstone into the facility.²³⁹)

239 Coquitlam RCMP Major Crime Section Timeline March 1997 – January 2002.

PROACTIVE TEAM PROPOSED FOR DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE TO PREVENT FURTHER MISSING WOMEN

On November 14th, 2001, Inspector Beach, who was scheduled to take over the VPD's Major Crime Section on November 18th, met with Superintendent Killaly of the RCMP regarding the JFO. The JFO proposed fielding a semi-covert team of 12 officers in the Downtown Eastside. As a result, Inspector Beach submitted a memo outlining the proposal to Deputy Chief Constable Unger. The unit was to be comprised of six VPD and six RCMP members, for the purpose of conducting semi-covert intelligence gathering work in the interests of preventing more sex trade workers from going missing, and to hopefully identify a suspect. Inspector Beach pointed out that "the suspect(s) is/are likely still active" and that women were still going missing at the rate of one every six weeks.²⁴⁰

(Inspector Beach subsequently put together the six officers from the VPD to work with six RCMP officers and the unit became operational in mid-January of 2002. A bulletin was sent to street officers with directions on how to submit reports and information to the unit.²⁴¹)

FUNDING THE VPD STAFF ASSIGNED TO THE JFO PROBLEMATIC

On November 23rd, 2001, Deputy Chief Constable Unger wrote a memo to Chief Constable Blythe (received in the Chief's office November 27th) regarding funding for the VPD resources committed to the JFO:

[City Manager] Judy Rogers returned my short note re: the budget implications. It appears they will not

240 Binder 6, Tab 29, and statement of Inspector C. Beach.

241 Binder 9, Tab 10 and Binder 27 Tab 2.

allocate special funding for this project. We are proceeding as per the plan. For your information.

Appended to the same memo was the handwritten note from the City Manager that Deputy Chief Constable Unger referred to:

John, I have reviewed the file, [and] had a discussion with the Mayor. We prefer to include implications of the Task Force Team within the budget discussions. Judy.²⁴²

Deputy Chief Constable Unger explained his perspective on the circumstances later:

There was lots of discussion with the Board and the City about us being under resourced and I had a number of discussions with Judy and Brent about discretionary funding. They said if we had specific cases where we needed funding, they would provide it. So calling their bluff, this was an attempt by us to show them what we had, what we needed, and to give them an indication of what we would need to properly staff the task force. By her memo back to us, it was proof to me that they had no intentions of giving us additional resources, it was all smoke and mirrors. It was very unusual to give a report about an investigation to a City Manager. Terry and I went to talk to her in her office and laid it out for her personally and thought she was going to help. Two weeks later I get back this terse memo. My memo to Terry regarding proceeding as per the plan reflected my intention to exceed our budget and do it anyway, unless Terry said no. So we did it anyway and we got chewed out by the mayor for it a year later, but the plan in that memo is what we did.

Chief Constable Terry Blythe also recalled the meeting with the City Manager:

We'd had 9 consecutive years of budget cutbacks and that led me to believe we had to get some extra funding and give her some heads up about what was coming when Evenhanded started. We had a pretty frank discussion that we trusted her to keep confidential, but the bottom line after the discussion was she said whatever extra money we required would have to be found in our own budget resources and that was the end of it...when John said that we were going to do it even without the funding, I agreed with him that we had to do this, we couldn't not proceed. It wasn't the first time where we had to do something even though they wouldn't agree to fund...Because there was almost no flexibility in our budget because it was almost all salary, there was no way to deal with these emergency things without going over budget – we had so little flexibility in the budget because almost all our budget was committed.

Notwithstanding the efforts made and legitimate concerns expressed by Chief Constable Blythe and Deputy Chief Constable Unger, their approach to acquiring additional funding was outside the normal process, which would generally involve the Inspector in charge of Planning and Research and also VPD Finance staff, who were accustomed to working with City staff to make budget/resourcing requests. While there were concerns around the confidential nature of the file, their approach was destined to be unsuccessful, as Judy Rogers later explained:

I do recall the meeting [with Terry Blythe and John Unger]. They came to me and they were very secretive about the issue. They said they had this big problem and I agreed it was a big problem, but they couldn't say what the scope was or exactly what they

242 Binder 10, Tab 12.

wanted or needed. I didn't have the authority to just give them taxpayers' money. They needed to involve the Mayor as Chair of the Board, they needed to come forward with a proper report to go to Council, in other words to follow the process that's required for good management of the taxpayers' money. Budget discussions were going to follow the very next month and there was nothing that I could do for him to solve his problem immediately, because I couldn't create police officers for him because of the lag in hiring and training. They needed to do what they could with their resources and they knew that we would cover any overruns in the budget, and that when the budget for the following year went forward, staffing issues could be addressed for the longer term. In the short term, they needed to put existing staff where they needed them, and the City would cover budget issues, i.e., for additional overtime incurred because of the assignment of staff to this project.

I can't remember the details of the conversation, but it would be really unusual for me not to have said, "Have you had thorough discussions with the Board and the Mayor in his role as the Chairman of the Board?" In an issue like this, they would go more than one way to alert the Board and me; it would be a two pronged approach. Maybe they did go to the Board, but there would be more documentation of it. There was nothing documented around what they needed, staffing options, I couldn't add additional dollars to their budget without a formal council report.

The timing of the request and the fact we'd always covered their shortfalls both needed to be considered because January would have been a new round of

budget discussions, and although I can't remember the discussion, that would have been the time that we would have dealt with new staffing needs, such as for the task force. I think there was some naiveté on their part in terms of not understanding how the process works, because that's not something they would normally be involved in.

JFO STAFF MEET WITH MISSING WOMEN FAMILY MEMBERS AGAIN

On November 25th, 2001, members of the JFO again met with the families of the Missing Women at a four-hour information meeting in Surrey to outline the status of the investigation. The families were advised that the JFO would be shortly releasing a new Missing Women poster with 18 missing women added (as seen below).²⁴³

243 Kim Bolan, "18 additional women to be featured in new poster issued by police investigators," in the Vancouver Sun, November 26, 2001, p. A6.

HEATHER BOTTOMLEY AND MONA WILSON REPORTED MISSING

On November 29th, 2001, Heather Bottomley was reported missing to the VPD. She had last been seen on April 17th, 2001. From this point forward, once the initial missing persons report was taken by the VPD, the JFO took responsibility for investigating new reports of Missing Women meeting the profile, rather than the VPD's Missing Persons Unit. ²⁴⁴

On November 30th, 2001, Mona Wilson was reported missing to the VPD. She had last been seen on November 25th, 2001.

MEDIA FOCUSES ON FUNDING OF VPD STAFF AT THE JFO

On November 29th, 2001, the *Vancouver Sun* published an article describing the request for funding for the staff and resources already committed to the JFO:

Inspector Chris Beach said he made a request to the city manager about two weeks ago for “a significant amount of money” to cover his department’s five investigators and two clerks already working on the joint RCMP – VPD task force. While Beach said he has yet to hear back from the city, his officers are already working with the RCMP on the case. “We have to do this, period. Sending those resources off to the task force, as far as I’m concerned, there is no other option,” Beach said.

18 Additional Missing Women			
			
ABBOTTSWAY, Serena DOB: 1971/08/20 Last seen: 2001/08/01 Reported: 2001/08/22	ARSENEAULT, Angela DOB: 1977/05/20 Last seen: 1994/08/19 Reported: 1994/08/29	CHINNOCK, Heather DOB: 1970/11/10 Last Seen: 2001/04 Reported: 2001/06/19	CRAWFORD, Wendy DOB: 1956/04/21 Last Seen: 1999/11/27 Reported: 1999/12/14
			
GREY, Dawn DOB: 1958/10/26 Last seen: 2000/11/01 Reported: 2000/12/11	FELIKS, Cindy DOB: 1954/12/12 Last seen: 1997/11/26 Reported: 2001/01/08	FURRINGER, Jennifer DOB: 1971/10/22 Last seen: 1999/12/27 Reported: 2000/03/30	IRVING, Sherry DOB: 1973/03/19 Last seen: 1997/04 Reported: 1998/03/21
			
JOESBURY, Angela DOB: 1978/11/06 Last seen: 2001/06/06 Reported: 2001/06/08	JOHNSON, Patricia DOB: 1975/12/02 Last seen: 2001/03/03 Reported: 2001/05/31	JONES, Debra DOB: 1957/12/31 Last seen: 2000/12/21 Reported: 2000/12/25	MAH, Laura DOB: 1943/03/23 Last seen: 1985/08/01 Reported: 1999/08/03
			
MINER, Leigh DOB: 1958/03/24 Last seen: 1993/12/12 Reported: 1994/02/24	PAPIN, Georgina DOB: 1964/03/11 Last seen: 1999/03/02 Reported: 2001/03/14	WOLFE, Brenda DOB: 1968/10/20 Last seen: 1999/02/01 Reported: 2000/04/25	YOUNG, Francis DOB: 1960/01/07 Last seen: 1996/04/06 Reported: 1996/04/09
Nancy CLARK (Alias GREEK) DOB: 1966/07/29 Last Seen: 1991/08/22 Reported: 1991/08/23		Elsie SEBASTIAN: DOB: 1952/01/11 Last Seen: 1992/10/16 Reported: 2001/05/16	

²⁴⁴ Jim McKnight of the JFO advised the writer on March 8th, 2004 that when the JFO began, it advised it would review the existing list of Missing Women, but not investigate new cases. Starting with the disappearance of Missing Woman Mona Wilson on November 30th, 2001, the JFO took responsibility for conducting the investigation.

DECEMBER 2001

Inspector Beach subsequently sent an e-mail to City Manager Judy Rogers on December 3rd, 2001 apologizing for the article, advising that it was “written in a way to convey that I am completely unconcerned about how we (VPD) are going to pay for this. Nothing could be further from the truth.”

NEW MISSING WOMEN POSTER RELEASED: 18 MISSING WOMEN ADDED; MORE RESOURCES TO JFO

On December 4th, 2001, the JFO released a new Missing Women poster with the photos of an additional 18 Missing Women, for a total of 45.

(The decision to add these Missing Women to the list was made by the JFO the previous month after preliminary investigation into the files yielded no results. Each of the 18 additions was assigned to investigators for more intensive investigation.²⁴⁵) In addition, the media release advised that the “review team” then consisted of 16 investigators (seven from the VPD and nine from the RCMP) and five support staff (two VPD and three RCMP).²⁴⁶ A *Vancouver Sun* story the next day discussed some of the victims added to the list, and advised that the task force would meet with the Green River investigators to see if there might be a link to their suspect, Gary Ridgway.²⁴⁷

DIANNE ROCK REPORTED MISSING

On December 13th, 2001, Dianne Rock was reported missing to the VPD. She had last been seen October 19th, 2001.

JANUARY 2002

FIVE ADDITIONAL WOMEN ADDED TO MISSING WOMEN LIST

On January 15th, 2002, the JFO issued a press release advising that the names of another five women were being added to the Missing Women list.²⁴⁸ The new additions were:

- Rebecca Guno, last seen June 22nd, 1983 and reported missing to the VPD June 25th, 1983;
- Heather Bottomley, reported missing April 17th, 2001 to the VPD, having last been seen that day;
- Mona Wilson, reported missing to the VPD on November 30th, 2001 and last seen a week earlier;
- Dianne Rock, reported missing to the VPD on December 13th, 2001, having last been seen October 19th, 2001; and
- Elaine Dumba, reported missing to the Coquitlam RCMP on April 9th, 1998, having last been seen in 1989.

245 Evenhanded file notes.

246 www.rcmp-bcmedia.ca/pressrelease.jsp?vRelease=567

247 Kim Bolan, “Police raise tally of missing women: Eighteen names are added to Eastside list, bringing it to 45,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, December 5, 2001, p. A1.

248 www.rcmp-bcmedia.ca/pressrelease.jsp?vRelease=705

The same day, the Major Crimes Unit in the Coquitlam RCMP held a meeting and it was “confirmed that Constable Sherstone had conduct of the Pickton file. She was encouraged to follow up with the information.” ²⁴⁹

Also in mid-January, the proactive team of 12 officers was deployed in the Downtown Eastside to collect information and to try to prevent further women from going missing.

FEBRUARY 2002

SEARCH WARRANTS ARE EXECUTED ON THE PICKTON PROPERTY

On February 4th, 2002, the Missing Women investigation took a dramatic turn. A Coquitlam RCMP member with less than two years’ service, Constable Nathan Wells, obtained a search warrant in relation to information he received that Pickton was in possession of an illegal firearm. Because Pickton was entered on CPIC as a person of interest to the JFO, Constable Wells contacted the JFO to advise them of the information and to invite them to attend while he executed the search warrant the next day, February 5th, 2002. ²⁵⁰

Pickton was one of many suspects on the JFO suspect list, but there was no active investigation targeting him. However, it was agreed JFO investigators would attend as observers, although they stayed off the Pickton property while the warrant was being executed. During the search for the firearm, the investigators also observed other items, including a piece of identification and an inhaler belonging to two of the Missing Women. As a result, the JFO investigators, Detective Little and Constable Fox, were called on to the property. The weapons search was suspended and the property was sealed off. JFO investigators began work to obtain a warrant to search for evidence related to the murder of Missing Women, which was executed the next day.

This investigation turned into the most massive serial murder investigation in Canadian history. The VPD contributed 29 police investigators and two civilian

249 Coquitlam RCMP Major Crime Section Timeline March 1997 – January 2002.

250 In addition, the informant, —, said in his evidence at Pickton’s preliminary hearing that he told Constable Wells that a year previously he had called the RCMP with his suspicions that Pickton might be connected to the Missing Women but “the RCMP never followed up on it.” Constable York advised she had never heard of — and never received any information he may have reported.

employees who joined dozens of RCMP members in the investigation at the Pickton property. (According to Inspector Don Adam and his file coordinator, Sergeant Wayne Clary, the investigative team would eventually swell to over 280 police and civilian employees at its peak.) Within weeks, Pickton was charged with the murders of two of the Missing Women, and has since been charged with a total of 27 murders.²⁵¹

Many of the Missing Women from the Downtown Eastside had finally been found.

251 On May 25th, 2005, the Crown filed a Direct Indictment charging Pickton with 27 counts of 1st degree murder related to: the original 15 counts laid prior to the preliminary hearing, the evidence led at the preliminary hearing regarding 7 additional counts, and five additional cases.

PART II

ANALYSIS OF THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

As discussed in the Introduction to Part I of this Review, its purpose is to attempt to identify what went wrong in the investigation of the Missing Women, and to determine how the VPD – and other police agencies – can learn from those mistakes and do a better job in the future. Therefore, “Part II” of this Review provides a detailed analysis of the conduct of the investigation to identify the internal and external factors that contributed to a serial killer operating unchecked for so long.

There were a number of internal challenges in the VPD that hindered the effective investigation of the case, including a lack of resources; a lack of consistency and effectiveness in those in leadership and investigative positions; personality conflicts; and the command and control hierarchy. External challenges included the reluctance of sex trade workers to admit to their knowledge of Pickton and the absence of the bodies of the victims. Further, relations with the RCMP were sometimes characterized by a lack of cooperation, poor lines of communication, and a lack of consistency in the investigative activities of the RCMP. Other external challenges included the lack of continuity in leadership and line officers in the RCMP; the failure of the RCMP to share information in a timely manner; the difficulty in “getting the attention” of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit; and the failure of the RCMP to capitalize on information provided by key informants (e.g., Thomas and Hiscox). The VPD had sole control over some of the internal challenges, but much less control over the external challenges.

In addition, the Review explores how the external challenges persisted partly because of internal difficulties within the VPD, e.g., an under-resourced investigative team and the failure of senior police managers to pressure their RCMP counterparts. Further, the Analysis attempts to provide an understanding of why certain decisions were made, how the approach might be different in the future, and what factors should be given attention in order to ensure that the same errors are not repeated.

It should be noted that the VPD’s MWRT did an incredible amount of good work (as did Corporal Connor in the RCMP), but the VPD investigation of the Missing Women certainly could have been improved. However, a variety of internal and external factors, and a poor investigation of Pickton by Coquitlam RCMP and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, resulted in Pickton not being arrested until his farm was searched in February 2002 by a junior RCMP constable investigating information about an illegal firearm. Had this serendipitous investigation not occurred, a person who may become Canada’s, and North America’s, most notorious serial killer may have escaped undetected. How the problems with the VPD’s investigation fit into the larger issue of how Pickton was able to allegedly murder numerous women in the Lower Mainland before being caught is the subject of analysis in this Review.

The case of the Missing Women was unusually difficult in many respects. The women had disappeared from the Downtown Eastside without a trace and the lifestyle of sex trade workers in that area made it difficult to determine if and when the women had actually gone missing. With respect to not being able to determine “when” the women had gone missing, this created immense investigative challenges. However, the failure to determine “if”

the women had actually gone missing was the result of a lack of effective analysis, as will be detailed later.

When the investigation shifted to a suspect-based investigation, there were further external challenges. The nature of street prostitution meant that the women could have been picked up by any number of individuals. In addition, other sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside provided little assistance to the police. On a number of occasions sex trade workers were shown Pickton's photograph and did not identify him as someone they knew, although it now appears likely that many knew him. This may have occurred because of the mistrust sex trade workers often have for the police, but more likely, it may have happened because until Pickton decided to kill a woman, he appears to have been considered a "good date" who would provide money and drugs to sex trade workers.

Notwithstanding the external difficulties, however, the VPD's investigation was beset by numerous interrelated internal problems. This Review identifies three primary problems that together contributed to the investigation's deficiencies.

First, there came a point in the VPD's investigation when it should have been determined that the cause of the Missing Women was most likely a serial killer or partner serial killers who were successfully disposing of the bodies of their victims. To commit to a theory that the women were being killed required a conceptual leap to be taken by the VPD on the basis of statistical and other circumstantial evidence, rather than forensic evidence, and it is acknowledged that the situation was highly unusual in police work. However, the statistical evidence and circumstantial evidence was compelling. Because the VPD did not commit to a theory of a killer, the VPD allowed the investigation to proceed with inadequate

resources. This is particularly evident considering that operating literally next door to the MWRT was the VPD's Home Invasion Task Force. This unit was a fully resourced and effective unit investigating a rash of crimes wherein elderly citizens in Vancouver were being beaten and sometimes degraded in their own homes by a small group of suspects.

Second, despite the lack of commitment to a theory that the Missing Women were victims of a killer, any suspect-based investigation the size of the MWRT should have incorporated major case management principles (as set out in Chapter 6). If the major case management model had been required to have been followed, the deficiencies of the investigation would have been more evident to senior management. Furthermore, even if the investigation had remained under-resourced, it would have been more effective had it incorporated what major case management strategies were available to it (although employing the major case management model in the VPD would not have, in itself, reduced the obstacles presented by the inter-jurisdictional nature of the investigation and the difficulties that were experienced with the RCMP).

Finally, the investigation of the Missing Women suffered from significant jurisdictional problems that regularly arise from the patchwork of police forces in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. The lack of integration between police forces is revealed in the manner in which missing persons are reported and investigated in British Columbia, in the delays that were suffered during the formation of the JFO, and in the difficulties faced by the JFO in absorbing and continuing the investigative work already completed by the MWRT.

In the following Analysis section of the report, the key issues summarized in this introduction will be explored. In addition several other issues will

be commented on, including the impact on the investigation of alleged police bias against sex trade workers, and the impact of resource difficulties in the VPD. The analysis will conclude with a detailed review of the Pickton investigation prior to the execution of search warrants in February 2002, followed by conclusions and recommendations.

2. THE VPD'S LACK OF COMMITMENT TO THE SERIAL KILLER THEORY

A. INTRODUCTION

The VPD never fully accepted and committed itself to the theory that the Missing Women had been murdered by a serial killer. Instead, for a variety of reasons, the VPD discounted the serial killer theory as but one of a number of plausible explanations for the Missing Women. The reasons for discounting the serial killer theory included the failure of VPD management to understand that Downtown Eastside sex trade workers are generally not transient; a persistence of other flawed theories to explain why the women were missing; the belief that because Constable Dickson had been able to find a previous group of missing women, the new list could be located as well; the police practice that a murder investigation must be based on physical evidence; a reluctance to subscribe to sensational theories; personality conflicts; and because insufficient weight was given to Detective Inspector Rossmo's analysis.

The failure to commit to the serial killer theory caused the investigation to be inadequate from its outset in May 1999. Subsequently, the VPD's refusal to accept the serial killer theory became a kind of

institutional mindset, which was compounded by the belief that if there had been a killer at work, the crimes were historical and not ongoing. This mindset allowed the investigation to diminish in scale from the fall of 1999 until the formation of the JFO in 2001, even as the likelihood that there was a serial killer increased the longer the women remained missing.

The VPD's failure to fully commit to the theory of a serial killer was integral to the various deficiencies that can be identified in the investigation. In hindsight, clearly the investigation suffered from the lack of a full-time sergeant, too few investigators, little support and oversight from management, inadequate technical support, and, significantly, from the lack of a coordinated multi-jurisdictional investigation. Most of those problems, however, were within the VPD's capacity and expertise to cure, if there had been the urgency and priority given to the investigation that would have resulted if the VPD had recognized that there was a serial killer murdering perhaps dozens of Vancouver women.

This section will begin by discussing when it should have been clear to the VPD that a serial killer was the most likely explanation for the Missing Women. Then the difficult question of why the VPD did not accept the serial killer theory will be discussed, followed by a consideration of why the serial killer theory was not reconsidered and accepted by the VPD later on in the investigation.

B. WHEN SHOULD IT HAVE BEEN CLEAR THAT A SERIAL KILLER WAS LIKELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MISSING WOMEN?

In July 1998, Detective Constable Shenher was assigned to the Missing Persons Unit, where she worked alongside the existing Missing Persons investigator, Detective Al Howlett. Detective Constable Shenher's assignment was to investigate the increased number of women reported missing from the Downtown Eastside. At that time, it was reasonable for the VPD to first proceed on the assumption that the whereabouts of the Missing Women could and would be determined. Sex trade workers would often "disappear" for a variety of reasons that didn't involve foul play, as demonstrated by Constable Dickson's 1997 research, so it was not unreasonable to assume that if increased investigative effort was applied, beyond a basic missing persons investigation, the Missing Women might be located.

Within a relatively short period of time, however, Detective Constable Shenher had already raised concerns that the women were not simply "missing." In her report of August 27th, 1998, she advised that, "...the victims have gone missing under suspicious circumstances."²⁵² She pointed out that many of the women had children either living under the care of the ministry or with extended family and they had not lost contact with these children or other family members for more than very brief periods of time until they went missing. Further, Detective Constable Shenher advised there was no evidence that any of the women were at serious risk from drug dealers or intimates, two theories she had been pursuing. Detective Constable Shenher concluded her report by stating she was not yet in a position to say whether she believed one person was responsible for the Missing Women, but that she did "believe we're going to find these cases are related and should be treated as such."

Clearly, then, by the end of August 1998 there was cause for concern. While it would have been premature to conclude a serial killer was at work based on the information Detective Constable Shenher had gathered, it would have been prudent to have assigned another investigator to assist Detective Constable Shenher. This would have accelerated the "missing persons" investigation so that the possibilities of where the Missing Women "weren't" could have been exhausted earlier.

Between September 1998 and February 1999, Detective Constable Shenher continued to search for the Missing Women without success. On February 9th, 1999, at a public presentation at the Carnegie Centre, Detective Constable Shenher stated publicly: "I believe the majority of these women have met with violence – but not just from one source."²⁵³

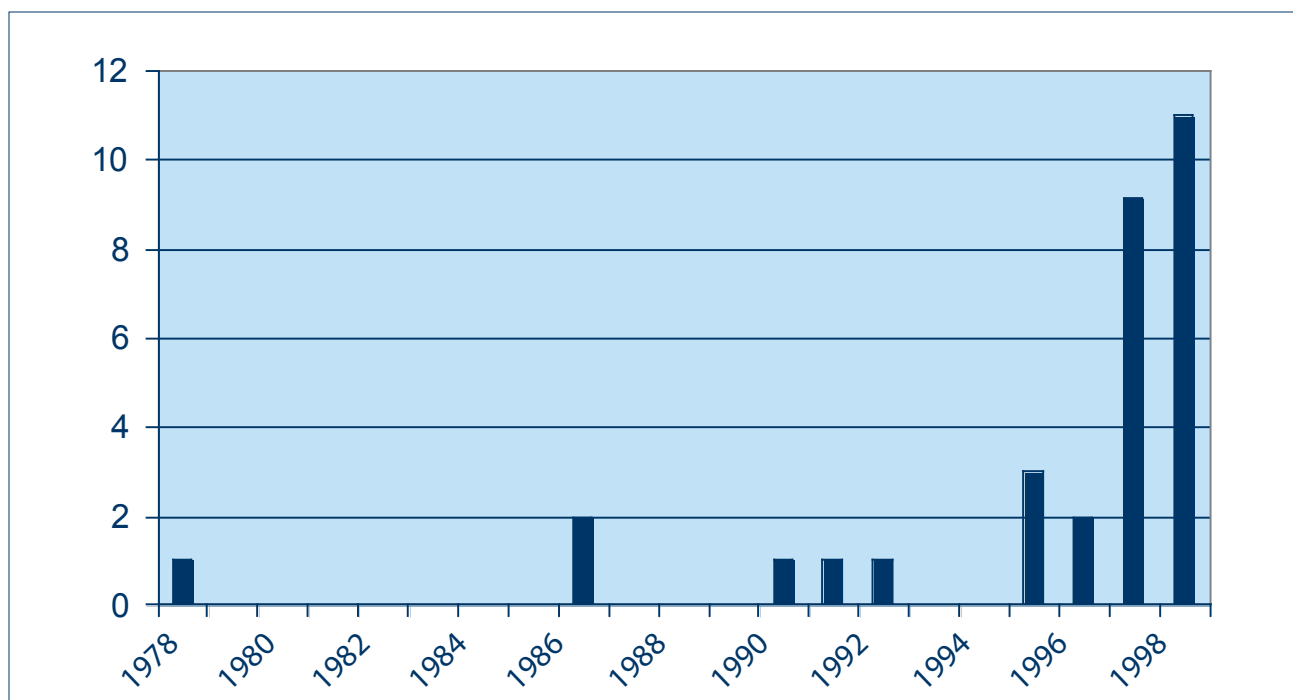
On November 5th, 1998, Constable Dickson wrote a memo to his managers in District 2, Staff Sergeant McKay-Dunn and Inspector Gary Greer, expressing his concern about "the growing number of women missing from the Downtown Eastside." He provided a list of 28 women he believed were missing, and stated he felt strongly that a large percentage of them had met foul play, noting that when sex trade workers went missing, they generally reappeared in a week or two. He explained that the majority of the women were on social assistance and had stopped picking up their cheques, there had been no family contact, street friends and associates had not seen them, and they were among the most vulnerable group that exists.²⁵⁴

On February 10th, 1999, Detective Inspector Rossmo provided Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness with a graph of the numbers of missing women from the Downtown Eastside "that fall into the category of concern" from 1978 to 1998. As shown following,

252 Binder 15, Tab 58.

253 Binder 3, Tab 93.

254 Binder 8, Tab 11.



this graph indicates that until 1996 very few women had been reported missing and not located. After 1996, the numbers suddenly spiked from an average of about one every two years between 1978 and 1996, to nine in 1997 and eleven in 1998.²⁵⁵

On February 18th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher submitted a report to Chief Constable Chambers. The report summarized the nature of the investigation into the Missing Women and detailed what had been accomplished. Detective Constable Shenher summarized the number and profile of the Missing Women, and that only six “street involved” women were missing from 1978 to 1992, but that 21 had gone missing between 1995 and February of 1999. Furthermore, she advised that none of the women had picked up their social assistance cheques, and most of the women had previously had regular contact with their families.

On February 24th, 1999, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness chaired a meeting to discuss the data presented by Detective Inspector Rossmo on February 10th. Inspector Biddlecombe suggested

that, given sufficient time, the women would be found. It was agreed that Detective Inspector Rossmo would conduct further analysis on the data to determine the validity of this theory.

In early April 1999, Detective Constable Shenher and Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness presented essentially the same information as was included in the briefing report to Chief Constable Chambers to the Attorney General, Ujjal Dosanjh, and other government officials. Regarding the possibility of a serial killer, Detective Constable Shenher stated there was no evidence of a person or persons preying on these women, but advised this did not mean it wasn’t considered a possibility. She also noted that the possibility the cases were linked was growing stronger as time passed.

On April 28th, 1999, at the Police Board meeting at which the \$100,000 reward was approved, Chief Constable Chambers reportedly said, “Some [of the Missing Women] may indeed have been the victims of homicide.”²⁵⁶ (Chief Constable Chambers later

255 Binder 3, Tab 90.

256 Maggie de Vries (2003). *Missing Sarah*, Penguin Canada, Toronto, Ontario, p. 229

recalled that, although he didn't remember making the statement, that is what he thought at the time.)

By May 1999, the alarm bells were ringing loudly: although the VPD was unaware of any "unsolved" reports of missing women from the Downtown Eastside since January 1999, women were known to have gone missing throughout 1998 and into the beginning of January 1999. Despite extraordinarily exhaustive and creative investigative efforts by Detective Constable Shenher, only one of the Missing Women had been found²⁵⁷ (although two would be confirmed by September 1999 as having died of non-criminal causes, and two more would be found alive after that²⁵⁸). Detective Constable Shenher had already come to the conclusion foul play was likely involved, and had written reports on May 13th and 14th recommending a detailed action plan to move to a "suspect-based" focus.²⁵⁹

On May 18th, 1999, Sergeant Field wrote a covering memo for Detective Constable Shenher's "action plan" of May 13th, and advised Inspector Biddlecombe that the investigators had "exhausted all victim-based enquiries." Sergeant Field concurred with Detective Constable Shenher's request for additional resources, and advised that a meeting had been held the previous week with members from the Homicide, Sexual Offence, and Vice squads as well as the RCMP Criminal Profiling Section. She reported that many in attendance believed that it was a strong possibility that one or more predators were responsible for the disappearance of many of the Missing Women. Sergeant Field warned that "delays in following up tips or investigating suspects could

result in...additional disappearances."²⁶⁰

A week later, on May 27th, 1999, Detective Inspector Rossmo submitted a report to Inspector Biddlecombe and sent copies to Deputy Chief McGuinness (although the report was initially received by Acting Deputy Chief Ken Doern) and Inspector Beach, as well as the MWRT. This report was a compelling statistical analysis of reports of missing women from the Downtown Eastside from 1978 to May 1999. Using a variety of sources of data, Detective Inspector Rossmo found that the number of women who had gone missing in the 30 months leading up to May 1999 was significantly higher than what could be expected by chance.

Further, Detective Inspector Rossmo determined it was statistically unlikely that any more than two of the Missing Women would be found. (In fact, four of the Missing Women were subsequently found; however, these were women who had gone missing prior to 1995, when the statistically significant increase began.) He reported that if the women met with foul play, the fact that none of their bodies had been found made the separate killer theory unlikely. He stated that "the rarity of serial murder, even in high risk population groups, makes the separate, multiple predator option improbable." He concluded that "the single serial murder hypothesis [which would include partner or team killers] was the most likely explanation for the majority of these incidents."²⁶¹

Finally, on June 16th, 1999, Staff Sergeant Keith Davidson, a criminal profiler with the Behavioural Science Group of the RCMP's "E" Division Major Crime Section, completed and submitted to Sergeant Field a "Case Assessment" of the Missing Women

257 Ada Prevost was reported missing in March 1998, and located by Detective Constable Shenher in March 1999 in a _____.

258 They were, respectively, Linda Coombes, Karen Smith, _____, and _____.

259 Binder 2, Tab 7.

260 Binder 3, Tab 70.

261 Binder 1, Tab 81.

investigation at Sergeant Field's request.²⁶² Staff Sergeant Davidson's report covered the time period from 1995 to 1999 and provided a profile of 21 Missing Women dating back to 1995, a possible profile of the suspect, and recommended investigative strategies. The report was entirely predicated on the assumption that all of the Missing Women "were the victims of a single sexually motivated offender" (possibly working in tandem with another offender).

Looking back, by June 1999 there was clear and convincing evidence (notwithstanding that it wasn't physical evidence) that a serial killer was the most likely explanation for the Missing Women of the Downtown Eastside. Detective Inspector Rossmo's statistical analysis was compelling and it was appreciated by Detective Constable Shenher and Sergeant Field that sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside were generally not transient, and were typically in regular contact with social agencies such as income assistance offices, child protection offices, police, courts, health authorities, or corrections services.²⁶³ Constable Dickson, who had considerable knowledge of the Downtown Eastside, had identified in his November 5th, 1998 report that when sex trade workers go missing, they typically reappeared within two weeks and that he believed the Missing Women had met foul play. Because of the exhaustive investigation, if these women had been alive, it was reasonable to expect that most would have been located by June 1999, particularly since there were no other compelling theories for their disappearances, and because of the ease with which Constable Dickson had accounted for the vast majority of women on the first list of 71 in 1997.

The fact that there was no physical evidence that the women had been killed made the investigation extremely difficult, but should not have prevented the investigation from being founded on the assumption that the women had been murdered. It was not alarmist to assume a killer was at work in Vancouver – in fact, it was already known that there was at least one such killer who was responsible for the three murders of Downtown Eastside sex trade workers Pipe, Younker and Olajide, whose bodies were discovered in the Agassiz/Chilliwack area in 1995.

Furthermore, even if the VPD had doubts, considering the magnitude of the potential crime to which the statistical evidence pointed, the VPD should have erred on the side of caution and assumed the women were being murdered. The worst that could have happened is that the police and the community activists would be proved wrong and the women would all be found somewhere.

When the MWRT was created in May 1999, the resources devoted to the investigation demonstrated real commitment to addressing the Missing Women problem. But considering the information available, the resources assigned also demonstrated that the VPD did not fully accept that there was a serial killer. Detective Constable Shenher's memo of May 18th, 1999 had advocated moving to a "suspect-based investigation". Clearly the concept of a suspect-based investigation was founded on the notion that one or more individuals were responsible for the disappearance of the women, and that this was a multiple murder case. What was created, however, was a "working group" or "review team." The concept of a review team suggests that the investigators were to review some evidence and then make some kind of recommendation for next steps. All the officers interviewed recalled that the distinction in terminology between "review

262 Binder 2, Tab 90.

263 Detective Constable Shenher later related to the author that when medical records were reviewed, some of the Missing Women had been accessing medical services up to three times a week prior to their disappearances.

team” as opposed to “task force” was deliberate and that Inspector Biddlecombe, and others in VPD management, specifically objected to calling the MWRT anything but a review team. There was, however, little evidence for the review team to review because by May 1999, a review had already been completed by Detective Constable Shenher over the course of her work in the Missing Persons Unit since August 1998.

In essence, the creation of the working Missing Women Working Group/Review Team rather than a murder task force signified that the VPD did not, at that time, fully accept that there was a killer, but recognized that the public, and the VPD’s own investigators, were growing alarmed such that the investigation had to be stepped up in some manner. Accordingly, a team of investigators was cobbled together, named a working group or review team, and the issue was temporarily taken care of from the VPD management perspective.

However, Inspector Biddlecombe later related his perspective that the team was a task force in everything but name, and was named a working group only because Acting Deputy Doern thought this would somehow prevent embarrassment to the VPD Executive and the Police Board, who had made statements at the April 1999 Police Board meeting denying there was any need for a task force. (Inspector Biddlecombe later agreed that not calling it a task force was a mistake, saying, “in hindsight, we should not have done that, it created an image that we weren’t doing something when we were.”) And in fact, when the investigation began, it was truly focused on possible suspects, including Pickton but also many others; the investigators were committed to solving a murder case, and followed up hundreds of tips and examined multiple suspects. While Inspector Biddlecombe clearly had not formed

a strong opinion that the Missing Women had been murdered, he was moving in that direction, later stating that he accepted that:

...this could be turning into a murder file...that we were dealing with a number of women who were probably the victims of homicides with one or more suspects...When we started in '98, I was convinced we would find all these women. But into '99 when we'd exhausted all these avenues, I was coming to believe that there was the potential some of them may have been murdered. I was keeping an open mind, otherwise, why would I create a task force?... If some people think I was ignoring the homicide end, they're terribly mistaken.

In addition, Inspector Biddlecombe later stated that he expected the investigation would grow:

As we got into the investigation, I don't want to say task force, a work group, by the meeting of June 27th, it became clear to me that this work group was going to have to expand. We had 8 individuals identified that had the potential to do harm to sex trade workers, and that list I thought would grow. I knew the resources would need to grow. I directed Sergeant Field to put together a report setting out the resources for an off site JFO. It was my intention that this work group would expand, and that by early 2000 would be part of a JFO throughout the Lower Mainland. I felt it was a task force, a mini task force, in everything but name. I felt like we had to take small steps. We started with what we had available. As we got into it, it appeared this was going to grow. To prepare for that, the sergeant was directed to prepare a report for a year long JFO. She asked for an extension to September, but by the time I left [in early October], she had not prepared that. My direction as of the end of June was that this was going to grow and we needed to prepare for that.

Inspector Biddlecombe's notes support his statement that he believed the investigation should expand to a JFO. On June 23rd, 1999, in his notes about a meeting with the investigative team that day, he wrote:

Report to be generated by Sergeant Field that will address the need for staff resources, equipment, JFO, work site, budget, etc., in order to provide all resources for at least 1 year. This report to be submitted to DCC and C/C.

But as described in the chronology, shortly after Inspector Biddlecombe left the VPD, the resources in the team started to be degraded, with Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff being drawn back into their regular Homicide Squad duties in November. And even at their fullest, the resourcing for the team was inadequate for a serial murder investigation in several aspects, as will be discussed more fully later in this analysis. With respect to Inspector Biddlecombe's request for a report from her on a JFO, Sergeant Field's notes indicate that Inspector Biddlecombe was going to approach Inspector Bass in the RCMP regarding assistance, but she later advised that nothing came of those discussions and she did not submit the requested report, although she put considerable effort into convincing the RCMP to agree to a JFO.

It is clear that if Inspector Biddlecombe intended the MWRT to be a task force "in everything but name," that intention was certainly not well communicated. Further, it was not the understanding of the members of the team, who understandably felt the VPD was not committed to the serial killer theory. With respect to the investigation expanding to a JFO, while Sergeant Field certainly pursued this objective, there was little management support, either before or after Inspector Biddlecombe retired.

C. WHY THE VPD DID NOT FULLY ACCEPT THE THEORY THAT THE MISSING WOMEN WERE BEING MURDERED AT THE TIME OF THE CREATION OF THE MWRT

Why the VPD did not fully accept that a serial killer was likely responsible for the Missing Women is a difficult question. Considering all of the interviews and the documentation, there were a number of interrelated factors that caused the VPD in May 1999 not to accept that a serial killer was the likely cause of the Missing Women. The factors that contributed to the VPD's assessment are identified as follows:

i. There was a failure of VPD management to appreciate that sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside are generally not transient.

One factor that contributed to the failure to recognize that there was a serial killer was the persistence of a belief that sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside are transient. The theory was that sex trade workers would travel on circuits from city to city, where they would work the streets for a period of time and then move on. The movements of the sex trade workers on these circuits were generally thought to be dictated by their respective pimps. As a result, there was a belief that each of the Missing Women may have simply been on such a circuit and at any time may have died or settled down in another city. There were also more bizarre theories that the Missing Women were on the carnival circuit, or had left on a ship from Vancouver's harbour.

Any police officer who worked regularly in the Downtown Eastside, however, knew that its sex trade workers were generally not transient and did not travel from city to city working the streets. While

such a lifestyle was certainly the case for some sex trade workers on the “high track,” the women of the Downtown Eastside rarely went anywhere.

Constable Clarke was well aware of this fact:

...a lot of the women from the Downtown Eastside I knew, and I'd worked in a women's prison before that....I had spent my entire service in District 2 and had worked in the community offices where the sex trade workers went... So I was doing Glenhaven, indigent burial searches, and all that, to try to prove that they had not for example moved to Calgary to start a new life. I never thought this was a viable theory. The sex trade workers, the hardcore ones like Angela Jardine, they're entrenched there. They're not going to pick up one day and say “hey, I'm going to Calgary.” They had kids, family. My experience working in prisons was that when they got cleaned up, their first priority was to make contact with families, kids.

Detective Constable James was also aware of this fact, having worked on patrol in the Downtown Eastside:

Every time I went to the jail there was a picture of another Missing Woman. From my perspective it didn't take much to figure out that someone was doing something to some of these of these girls. Angela Jardine's world was [contained within] about 12 blocks from Main and Hastings.

Shortly after beginning her work in the Missing Persons Unit, Detective Constable Shenher also became aware of the relative stability of the women of the Downtown Eastside and was vocal about her concerns, as evidenced by this statement on an April 1999 CKNW Radio talk show

I don't see this as having a positive outcome...when you have families that are in contact with their loved ones the way Sandy and Dot were, the way Maggie was...and all of a sudden that contact stops...And as Maggie said, you're not talking about women who can jump on a plane and you're not talking about women that are going to be recruited, if you will, to work in different areas. Many of these women were very sick either through their addictions or through HIV, some had AIDS. They were at points in their lives where they really needed the support systems that they had built here...they're not only imprisoned by their poverty and their social situation; they're imprisoned by their addictions, they're imprisoned by illness. That makes it highly unlikely that they would just up and go...my gut feeling is that some of them have met with foul play.²⁶⁴

In her reports to Sergeant Field and others, Detective Constable Shenher consistently pointed out that many of the Missing Women were in frequent contact with family members and government agencies prior to their disappearances, such as she noted in her report dated August 27th, 1998.

While it was true that sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside would sometimes return for periods of time to their home communities, such movements could not be considered “transient” in the sense of creating any real impediment to locating the women.

A distinction must also be drawn between short and long term movements. Sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside may not have a set daily routine in the same way that a person with a day job may have, but despite unpredictable movements on a day to day basis, they are still typically rooted

264 Maggie de Vries (2003). *Missing Sarah*, Penguin Canada, Toronto, Ontario, 2004, p. 217.

in the neighbourhood. Again, unpredictable daily movements do not present a significant impediment to locating the women within a reasonable time.

It must be noted, however, that many of the Missing Women, tragically, were reported missing months and sometimes years after they were last seen.²⁶⁵ This pattern was well known within the VPD and it was understood that missing sex trade workers were often difficult to find because missing persons reports were often made so long after the fact. Undoubtedly, in the minds of many, this knowledge supported the theory that sex trade workers were transient. While Detective Constable Shenher had recognized early on that the women were generally not transient, the theory persisted in the VPD. In interviews for this Review, several former members of the VPD Executive expressed the view that sex trade workers are difficult to locate because they are transient and that was one of the critical challenges for the MWRT.²⁶⁶ This was a belief also shared by Inspector Biddlecombe. This belief was not isolated to the VPD: RCMP Inspector Don Adam, the commanding officer of the JFO, acknowledged in a meeting with the author that when the JFO commenced, he too held the mistaken belief that Downtown Eastside sex trade workers were transient and were therefore inherently difficult to locate. He was later to state,

“It took a long time to come to grips with how vulnerable they were and how they couldn’t survive anywhere but in the Downtown Eastside.”²⁶⁷

ii. Persistence of other flawed theories to explain the Missing Women.

There were also several other theories that were flawed from the outset as to why so many women of the Downtown Eastside were missing, yet were taken seriously by the VPD. For example, it was suggested that the women could have died from AIDS or had overdosed due to a shipment of bad heroin being sold on the streets. It was suggested that the Missing Women could have been buried as indigents, explaining their disappearance. These theories were clearly misguided. If large numbers of women in the Downtown Eastside were dying of AIDS or overdoses, a corresponding number of men should also have been dying, as neither disease nor drug use is gender specific. There was no comparable list of missing men of the Downtown Eastside to lend any credence to these theories and the notion that so many women could have been buried as indigents was not plausible. In fact, not a single one of the Missing Women was located as a result of an extensive search of indigent burial records.

265 For example, ————— was reported missing in 1996, but hadn’t been seen by her family since 1978. She was located alive in Ontario in 1999, and was purposely estranged from her family. Cindy Beck was reported missing in 1998, but hadn’t been seen since 1977.

266 However, Deputy Chief Constable Greer recalled the Executive did think something was wrong, because it was known that some of the women who had gone missing were “so mentally deficient that even if they left the city, they would have come to the attention of authorities wherever they went. They weren’t, so they knew there was something wrong...The problem was there were no witnesses, no crime scene, no body, so we didn’t know where or how it was happening.”

267 Comments made at the 2004 VPD Homicide Conference during an Evenhanded presentation, on September 23, 2004.

It was Inspector Biddlecombe's idea to pursue the indigent burial angle. He later responded to questions about his thinking on the issue:

Regarding the indigent burials, and the issue of ODs and AIDs not being gender specific, that's a good question. I never thought of that. I guess I was grasping at straws. I never put it in context as to why we didn't have a similar increase in men missing. I was looking at what else we could do and that was something I thought we should explore but I just didn't think about the issue of why men wouldn't be missing in the same numbers. But I knew there were other explanations for why women could be missing and we couldn't put blinders on that there weren't other explanations.

Nevertheless, when the VPD asserted that a serial killer was only one possible explanation for the Missing Women, other theories cropped up as possible alternative explanations. In retrospect, there were no other compelling theories as to why the women had disappeared, such that the serial killer theory was much more than just one theory among reasonable alternatives.

iii. The belief that Constable Dickson had investigated a similar list of missing women of the Downtown Eastside and located them all.

As detailed in Part I of this Review, in 1997 Constable Dickson was given a list of 71 allegedly murdered and/or missing women to investigate. Fifty-five of the names on the list were derived from a list that the First Nations Summit delivered to the Attorney General, citing the women on the list as aboriginal women who had been "brutally murdered" in the last five years. Constable Dickson

remembered that these kind of allegations had been regularly made over the years:

There were always rumours going around of women that were missing. The women's centre would put out lists of names saying these women had been murdered and nothing had been done and that's been going on as long as I can remember.

In response to the First Nations Summit list, the list was combined with 16 further police reports of missing women and then forwarded to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit for investigation. The Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit seconded Constable Dickson to search for the women on the list of 71. Remarkably, Constable Dickson was able to locate or account for the vast majority of the women on the list, some of whom were dead, others who had moved away from the Downtown Eastside. While 15 of the women on the list, had, in fact, been murdered, the majority had not. Most of the Vancouver murders had been solved, while none of those outside Vancouver had been. In the case of the solved murders, each one involved a different offender.

Constable Dickson's success resonated through the Major Crime Section, and most of the VPD Executive was aware of it. The effect of Constable Dickson's success, however, was to cast some doubt on the credibility of the community organizations alleging that women were being murdered, and to foster in the VPD a level of disbelief in serial murder as a theory for disappearances of women in the Downtown Eastside (despite the fact that it was known in the Major Crime Section that three Downtown Eastside sex trade workers had been murdered by a serial killer in 1995).

As a result, the 1998 allegations of missing women were taken less seriously and many in the VPD expected the women would be found. What was less well known, however, was that during and after his search for the 71 women, Constable Dickson had compiled his own list of women that he realized had been missing for some time. That list contained many of the Missing Women. While it was appropriate to discredit the first list of 71, Constable Dickson's subsequent list was highly credible, but the VPD did not appreciate the gravity of the fact that Constable Dickson could not locate these women.

iv. The police practice that a murder investigation must begin with a corpse or some physical forensic evidence of a homicide.

Another factor that contributed to the failure of the VPD to accept the theory of serial murder was the reluctance of the police to commence a murder investigation without some physical forensic evidence that a murder had been committed. This reluctance was based on a convention of police practice to treat missing persons investigations as separate and distinct from murder investigations.

This convention was reflected in the practice of the Missing Persons Unit of the VPD. When a person is reported as missing, they are generally investigated as a missing person, with the presumption that they can be found and that no foul play has taken place. In the course of the missing persons investigation, if forensic evidence is discovered that suggests that the disappearance is the result of foul play, then the investigation will be turned over to a homicide investigator. However, if no such evidence is located, in most circumstances the investigation remains a missing persons investigation. This would not be

the case with a person who has a highly regular daily schedule, and a low likelihood of departing from it. For example, an inference of foul play would clearly be more readily drawn where a child had disappeared. In respect of most individuals, however, a missing persons investigation does not normally become a murder investigation solely because the person cannot be located.

The practice of not commencing a murder investigation without positive evidence of a murder is also reflected in the response of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit to the MWRT's requests for assistance. The Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit responded on several occasions that they would only get involved when the VPD could show them that a crime had been committed. Until there was forensic evidence of an unsolved homicide, the unit would not assist. As Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness recalled, the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit's response in February 1999 was "show us a body." (In February 1999, Corporal Connor made similar notes about the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit's response to a request for assistance regarding the Pickton information to that date, noting their comment was, "the information is interesting but the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit would not be in a position to assist until there is no doubt this individual was involved in a specific homicide or group of homicides.")

The traditional policing approach that statistical, circumstantial evidence was not enough to justify a murder investigation was evident in many of the VPD's statements to the media. For example the VPD response in March 1999 to a suggestion that a serial killer was at work was, "there is a cause for real concern...[but] there is not a single piece of evidence to suggest a serial killer."²⁶⁸

268 Lindsay Kines and David Hogben, "20 outstanding files: A group of prostitutes is convinced a serial killer is responsible for disappearances in Vancouver, but the police disagree," National Post Online, March 3, 1999. (Binder 3, Tab 85)

v. A reluctance to subscribe to sensational theories.

Serial killers are the subject of a great deal of attention in our popular culture and the innumerable movies, television shows and popular books involving serial killers create the impression that serial murder is a relatively common occurrence in police work. From a police perspective, however, serial murder investigations are rare. Furthermore, it is rare that one person can successfully kill several people without leaving behind evidence of the crime, and it is even rarer for such murders to occur without at least some of the victims' bodies being discovered within a relatively short period of time following their disposal.

Accordingly, seasoned officers were skeptical of a theory that scores of women from the Downtown Eastside were being murdered without other individuals reporting suspicious activity and without bodies or any sign of foul play being discovered. In the mind of a police officer considering the theory of serial murder, it was an unbelievable story: surely in one instance a woman would escape, someone would observe a struggle, or an acquaintance of the killer would report their suspicions. (In fact, these things did occur: [Anderson](#) escaped from Pickton in 1997, and informants did provide information about him.)

As a result, in order to preserve credibility with the skeptics, some VPD officers were cautious about advocating for the sensational theory of a serial killer who was capable of secretly disposing of so many

bodies without a trace. As Detective Constable Shenher explained:

I just felt that the climate at the time was that I was viewed as alarmist, that I'd seen too many movies, that I was trying to balance my perceived credibility with how far I should push this. Now I wouldn't give a shit, I'd say it. But back then, I was very aware that I was this piss kid [junior officer] and who was I to say that there was a serial killer and that I found out about him the first week I was there. I never felt like it would be that well received.

vi. Personality conflicts affected the assessment of some opinions.

Personality conflicts within the VPD also played a role in the investigative approach taken by the VPD. Until October 1999, Inspector Biddlecombe was in charge of the Major Crime Section and therefore responsible for the Missing Persons Unit and the MWRT. There was a strong belief by Detective Inspector Rossmo and others in the VPD that Inspector Biddlecombe did not have a great deal of faith in the geographic profiling work of Detective Inspector Rossmo.²⁶⁹ As a result, it is likely that Detective Inspector Rossmo's May 1999 memorandum was not given full and proper consideration by Inspector Biddlecombe. What is unfortunate is that the May 1999 memorandum was not a work of geographic profiling. Rather it was

269 In fairness to Inspector Biddlecombe, when he revamped the VPD response to homicides, he directed that Detective Inspector Rossmo be called out when appropriate. He also included him as a resource to the MWRT in May of 1999 (although Detective Inspector Rossmo later said he didn't even know this). But there was a negative attitude in MCS toward Detective Inspector Rossmo, and it would be fair to say that while Inspector Biddlecombe didn't prevent investigators from using Detective Inspector Rossmo's services, he certainly didn't champion them, and officers in MCS related that Inspector Biddlecombe was contemptuous of Detective Inspector Rossmo's abilities.

an impressive but straightforward epidemiological-style statistical analysis of information generated by Detective Constable Shenher during her work in the Missing Person's Unit, and then compared to national missing persons data; the results were compelling, to say the least. Had Inspector Biddlecombe doubted the validity of Detective Inspector Rossmo's conclusions, there were others with expertise in statistical analysis available to give him a second opinion. Unfortunately, he did not take advantage of that opportunity, and simply discounted the report as "intelligence" but not evidence. (The issue of statistical evidence will be discussed further later in this section of the Analysis.)

There was also an unfortunate conflict between Constable Dickson and Inspector Biddlecombe prior to the final meeting of the Missing Women Working Group chaired by Inspector Greer and Detective Inspector Rossmo. Inspector Biddlecombe suspected that Constable Dickson had leaked his list of missing women to the media, and as a result the media were pushing for information as to how the VPD was responding to the fact that there were a large number of women missing. Inspector Biddlecombe reacted by refusing to effectively co-operate with the Working Group and Constable Dickson. Unfortunately, Constable Dickson had a perspective of the Downtown Eastside that could have dispelled many of the incorrect assumptions that were preventing the VPD from coming to grips with the reality of the situation. While these personality conflicts were in no way determinative, they were a factor, although in the case of Constable Dickson, he was eventually brought into the MWRT and the team then benefited from his knowledge.

vii. Detective Inspector Rossmo's report was not given sufficient weight

Detective Inspector Rossmo's statistical/epidemiological-style report of May 1999 was compelling, provided an explanation for the Missing Women that best fit the circumstances, and was not rebutted by any other credible information, as he described later:

What I did get was a list of 28 I believe, and the approximate dates they went missing. What I did then was an approach like an epidemiologist with spatial temporal clustering; there were too many incidents happening in too short a time period in too small an area. If you see a group of cases of TB in a small neighbourhood, you know you have an outbreak and the CDC responds to it. To do this, you need to know a baseline – what is normal...

...I got data from Ottawa, and it allowed me to calculate how long a missing person would stay missing: the decay rate or half life if you will. The data showed that people don't stay missing for very long, after 2 weeks 90% of people are found, after 22 weeks, 99%. So then I could apply that data to the date the women went missing, to calculate the probability that we would find the women in the future. So if a woman had been missing for 22 weeks, there was only a 1% chance they would be found. I aggregated the data, and predicted that we would only find 2 more, which left 26, which was way too many...

One of the problems was there was a misperception that Skid Road is transient. For some groups that's true, but other groups were there for years. Dickson pointed out that apparently many of these women

would have difficulty travelling across town, so the idea that they were going to go to Edmonton or Seattle was not likely, and there was no way they wouldn't pick up their welfare cheques, so that was a huge red flag. I went back to 1978. Basically up until 1995 we were dealing with 0, 1 or 2 missings [per year], and then in 1995 you've got this big jump, a spatial temporal cluster, and it was statistically significant.

One thing I said in my report was that any theory to explain the Missing Women had to account for the fact that it wasn't happening in other cities, which we'd already established, and why now, not before '95, why women and not men, and why bodies were not being found. I heard theories put forward that couldn't answer that, like drugs, pimps. If a pimp wants to make a message, he leaves the body. And that's not the pimp structure there [in the Downtown Eastside] anyway. There, a pimp is the boyfriend. Then later they said maybe there were multiple killers, which was ridiculous, to have more than one serial killer in the small time frame who were all getting rid of bodies. The only explanation I could come up with was a serial killer.

A well-known concept in science is "Occam's razor" (also known as the law of economy or the law of parsimony). Simply, it states that where there are competing theories to explain an outcome, the simplest explanation is most likely to be correct. "If two theories account for a phenomenon equally well, then the one that does so more simply (i.e., using fewer variables and positing less complex relations) should prevail."²⁷⁰

In the Missing Women case, Detective/Inspector Rossmo's theory of a single serial killer fit the known facts much better than any of the other theories

considered. If one applies deductive logic, when all the other explanations have been eliminated, the remaining explanation, however unlikely, is the correct one. This was certainly true in the Missing Women investigation.

But at the management level, the serial killer theory was given insufficient weight because of the combination of an apparent lack of understanding of the importance of his analysis, and, to some extent, Detective/Inspector Rossmo's lack of credibility in some areas of the VPD, including the Major Crime Section.

Detective Inspector Rossmo felt that he was personally held in contempt by Inspector Biddlecombe during the Missing Women investigation, something Inspector Biddlecombe disputes. In fact, to his credit, Inspector Biddlecombe had personally requested expert assistance from Detective Inspector Rossmo in February of 1998 regarding homicide victim/suspect/location profiles.²⁷¹ He later related that he felt he had a "good professional relationship" with Detective Inspector Rossmo.²⁷²

While Detective Inspector Rossmo had reason to believe that he was not respected by Inspector Biddlecombe, and other officers reported during this review that Inspector Biddlecombe did not think highly of him, he also may have been over-sensitive to Inspector Biddlecombe's well-known somewhat aloof demeanour generally, which was not limited to Detective Inspector Rossmo. It also appears that the lack of credence assigned to Detective Inspector Rossmo's analysis was at least as likely to be attributable to Inspector Biddlecombe's lack of

270 Ted Palys (1997). *Research Decisions – Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives*, 2nd Edition, Harcourt Brace Canada, p. 13.

271 Binder 3, Tab 30.

272 Inspector Biddlecombe also noted that after he wrote a February 1998 report directing that Detective Inspector Rossmo be called out to any homicide scene where it was appropriate, Detective Inspector Rossmo phoned him to thank him for being so progressive.

understanding of the power of statistical prediction, as described by Inspector Biddlecombe later in describing Detective Inspector Rossmo's report:

I don't consider an analytical report to be evidence. Evidence is a crime scene, a body, blood. I think the same thing to this day. Until we had more than a best estimate, I wasn't going to say that this was a murder. I didn't consider it evidence. It's intelligence. We had to rule out the missing aspect, the indigent situation, I wasn't going to hang my hat on one specialist's report.

Unfortunately, Inspector Biddlecombe's belief that the analysis was "intelligence," not evidence, meant that his growing acceptance that some of the Missing Women might have been murdered was not solidified. But even considering the enmity that apparently existed (and Detective Inspector Rossmo was not the only one who perceived it), it seems that Inspector Biddlecombe and others did not understand the power of statistical evidence. Instead, they preferred other, more complicated and less credible theories to explain the Missing Women that were less horrible than accepting that there was a serial killer, even when the evidence contradicted these theories. It should, however, be said that the assessment of the statistical evidence by Inspector Biddlecombe (and others) was not unexpected. Research in the field of intelligence analysis has demonstrated that abstract aggregate or statistical data is less influential than easier-to-grasp but less compelling information:

...certain kinds of very valuable evidence will have little influence simply because they are abstract. Statistical data, in particular, lack the rich and concrete detail to evoke vivid images, and they are often overlooked, ignored, or minimized...we seldom take the absence of evidence into account.²⁷³

Inspector Biddlecombe should not be centred out as the only one responsible for the VPD's failure to accept and appropriately act on Detective Inspector Rossmo's analysis. By all accounts, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness and Chief Constable Chambers were both fully supportive of Detective Inspector Rossmo. However, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness, who received the analysis, later stated he never came to the conclusion that there was a serial killer in Vancouver or he would have responded differently. But importantly, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness and Inspector Ken Doern, who was the acting Deputy Chief substituting for Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness when the analysis was submitted, both insisted they knew the analysis was an important report, and that although they had no independent recollection of doing so, absolutely "would have" circulated it to the rest of the Executive Committee as "new business."

Unfortunately, the minutes for the two Executive Committee meetings following May 27th, 1999 (when the Rossmo analysis was submitted) were missing in the archived records examined for this review (despite the minutes for the weekly meetings preceding and following the first two weeks of June being available). Deputy Chief Constable Blythe and Inspector Unger (as they were in early June 1999) both later stated they hadn't seen the Rossmo analysis until 2001, and then in the context of Detective Inspector Rossmo's civil trial. Deputy Chief Constable Greer recalled reading the analysis, but couldn't say whether it was contemporaneous with its original release, or for the Rossmo trial. However, whether or not it was circulated to the Executive, Chief Constable Chambers clearly recalled reading the analysis in 1999: "I thought it was quite compelling. But it was like out of a text book. There was not a lot of quantitative information supporting

273 Richards J. Heuer, Jr. (1999). *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, Chapter 10: Biases in Evaluation of Evidence, History Staff, Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, p. 115.

the report.” (His assessment, however, is somewhat difficult to understand, since the report was, in fact, centered around a quantitative analysis.)

Chief Constable Chambers’ view of what evidence was necessary to support a murder investigation was consistent with others at the management level:

There was never evidence to suggest a serial killer or foul play. Suspicious, yes. I know I did and others held the view that if a killer was a likelihood, we should have some indication that something was going on, a body being found, an attack where someone escaped. In my 31 years of policing at the time, these were things that drove an investigation or an investigative course of action. My recollection was that there was nothing like that, other than a volume of missing persons. We had missing people that turned up in other places, that we found, so the question was, what was really going on? I believe there was a spike around that time in 1998 or 1999. I know that concerned me and others, but there was again nothing that would drive an investigation. That was another concern, should we do a public relations exercise, and the opinion was that if we did an expanded task force with nothing to work with, it would be nothing more than a public relations exercise.

By this time, Chief Constable Chambers was weeks away from leaving the VPD. At the June 23rd, 1999 management meeting, the minutes show Chief Constable Chambers was still in charge, but by June 28th, Deputy Chief Constable Blythe had taken over as the Acting Chief, and Inspector Unger was an acting Deputy Chief Constable. Inspector Unger was the acting Deputy Chief Constable in Operations from September 1998 until April 1999, and then did not take over again from Deputy Chief Constable

Blythe until June 28th 1999. Therefore, it is quite possible he didn’t attend the Executive meetings in early June, but there has been no explanation for why Deputy Chief Constable Blythe wouldn’t have received the analysis. And, despite Chief Constable Chambers having received the analysis, it is curious that in the management meeting minutes from mid-June onwards, there is no reference to Detective Inspector Rossmo’s report, such as it being an item in “old business.”

Whatever the case, Detective Inspector Rossmo agreed that he did not “make waves” about his findings to ensure the Executive were all aware of them, and explained his thinking at the time:

I have thought about whether I could have done more after my report by trying to convince Brian we should have done more. I needed to work with MCS, I was hoping to improve relationships with them. I was at least having some influence with them. Maybe I would have turned them off. Maybe I thought there was more happening [in the investigation] than there actually was...I know it was a little chaotic, lack of resources, computer problems, it was so much better than it was 3 months [previously], it was a positive step [having the team]. I think I didn’t realize at least then that the issues in the group were as bad as they were.

...After Fred left, I didn’t really know what was going on. I was talking to Geramy, and I thought she would be talking to Dan. It wasn’t like I felt that I had that much influence or power within the VPD.

It’s about probabilities. If I was 100% certain instead of 95%, maybe I would have done more. A 98% certainty is a lot different than a 100% certainty. I could have leaked it to the media, talked to Patrol. I guess I thought a small amount of influence was better than an all-or-nothing strategy. I didn’t have anything more to say other than what

was in my report. I wasn't 100% certain, but even if I only thought it was a 25% probability, from a risk management perspective, that is still really high...

I made it a public issue during my trial, because the City wanted to make the argument that [my work] wasn't good value for the money; no kidding, because MCS wouldn't use me in 5 years! So you know how strongly I felt that I was willing to state publicly, because what if I was wrong?

There has, unfortunately, been at least one other extraordinary case where the failure to explore or understand the power of statistical evidence in a serial murder case had tragic results. Britain's "Shipman Inquiry" found that Dr. Harold Shipman "was a serial murderer who, over the course of 23 years, killed at least 215 patients."²⁷⁴ The original police investigation into suspicions raised about Shipman did not consider the importance of the fact that "the death rate for Shipman's practice might be as much as eight or nine times higher than that of the Brooke Practice."²⁷⁵ In addition, the deaths were disproportionately of female patients. As in the Missing Women case, there were other theories given for the high death rate, such as that Shipman had a high number of elderly patients or female patients, compared to other medical practices, although neither theory was borne out by the statistical information available. But because the power of the statistical evidence was not understood, the original police investigation was closed and Shipman tragically killed three more of his patients before he was stopped.

The failure to give appropriate weight to Detective Inspector Rossmo's report certainly contributed

to the failings in the Missing Women investigation generally, but it would be difficult to attribute in any way the deaths of the Missing Women murdered after he provided his analysis; those deaths can be attributed to the failings in the Pickton investigation, which are described in Chapter 7 of this analysis. Nevertheless, the lack of credibility assigned to the statistical evidence – or, in some cases, the lack of any apparent knowledge of Detective Inspector Rossmo's report – was part of the reason that VPD management did not fully accept that there was a serial killer. This indirectly contributed to a failure to champion a more thorough investigation into Pickton specifically, and to advocate earlier and more strenuously for a JFO generally.

D. WHY THE SERIAL KILLER THEORY WASN'T REASSESSED OVER THE COURSE OF THE INVESTIGATION

The combination of the above noted factors lay the foundation for the inability of key VPD managers to accept the theory that a serial killer was the likely cause of the Missing Women. However, throughout the course of the investigation, VPD management had the opportunity to revisit the decisions previously made and to reconfigure and expand the investigation into a hunt for a serial killer. This, of course, did not happen with any real commitment, and for a number of interrelated reasons the VPD persisted with the theory that a serial killer was only one of many possibilities that were being considered.

Following the formation of the MWRT in May 1999, and particularly by the fall of 1999, a kind of institutional mindset developed within the upper echelon of the VPD that propagated and supported the position that a serial killer was but one of many

274 Shipman Inquiry, Second Report, "The Police Investigation of 1998," published June 14, 2003, © Crown Copyright 2001, p. 14. The entire report can be found at www.the-shipman-inquiry.org.uk/images/secondreport/SHIP02_COMPLETE.pdf

275 *ibid.*, at p. 22

possible explanations for the Missing Women and therefore a larger investigation was unjustified. Inspector Matthews, who took over command of the Major Crime Section in October 1999 when Inspector Biddlecombe retired, explained how he subscribed to that view without any clear sense of the rationale behind it:

In October 1999, my understanding was the MWRT was looking for the women, dead or alive. Until Cruz and James got there, I had no sense they were focusing on suspects. Cruz and James were focused on one suspect. My sense of what Lori and the others were doing was focusing on where the ladies had gone, and they had some success at that. They were slogging through reports and records trying to find them. I recall Chernoff and Lepine [who had essentially left the MWRT by this time] having some input but I don't really remember what they were doing...I wasn't familiar at all with the Pickton investigation in the summer of 1999. It wasn't until way after the fact that I became aware of it, not until they went out and executed the search warrants out there.

Regarding the theory of what was causing the Missing Women, my recollection of what they were doing was records searches...I hadn't read Rossmo's report of May 1999 and so had no knowledge of his assessment and I hadn't been briefed on it. When I saw the comment about Pickton in the December 1999 report, it didn't mean anything to me because I had never been briefed on that investigation. So seeing that a suspect wasn't a high priority for [Coquitlam RCMP] didn't twig anything for me.

While there certainly had been a suspect-focused investigation from May to October 1999, once Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff were brought back into regular Homicide Squad

duties, the investigation reverted for the most part back to a hunt for "missing" women (with the exception of Detective Constables Cruz and James, who were focused on McCartney). From the perspective of VPD management, the MWRT became a kind of institution in itself, and it was not questioned why the review team was still a review team, or at least why it had reverted from a suspect-focused investigation back into a review team. Would the "review" ever be completed?

The mindset of VPD management was evident in the statements the VPD made to the public over the course of the investigation, consistently refusing to acknowledge that a killer was likely the cause of the Missing Women. Constable Anne Drennan was reciting these statements to the media apparently on the instructions of Inspector Biddlecombe and his successors, even though over time she doubted in her own mind whether there could be any other explanation for the Missing Women.

The mindset was also evident in the confused notion that if the VPD announced that a serial killer was likely responsible, the residents of the city would panic. First, implicit in this suggestion is that the VPD believed that a serial killer was the likely cause, yet was proceeding on this basis only internally. Yet internally the VPD was not proceeding in any committed way on the basis that there was a serial killer. Secondly, the killer was targeting sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside, not the general public, so there was no basis to think that there would be general panic. The sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside were also not going to panic, because among the sex trade workers, there was already a widely held belief that the Missing Women had been killed, and in any event it was common knowledge that there were always numerous violent

men preying upon sex trade workers in the area. The weekly Bad Date Sheets produced by DEYAS are a testament to that fact.

The presence of the institutional mindset was further evident in the “softening” of the information that was coming out of the front lines of the investigation so that it was less confrontational with what appeared to be VPD management’s view of the investigation. The reports of Detective Constable Shenher and Sergeant Field transmitted all the relevant information, but the reports were written in a way that did not highlight their private belief that this was an investigation into the largest case of serial murder in Canadian history and should be recognized as such. Instead, rather than drive VPD management out of their mindset, the reports allowed management to maintain the standard view that a killer was only one possibility to be considered because there was no evidence of a crime.

Similarly, the conduct of the MWRT investigators suggests that to some degree they doubted their own convictions that the Missing Women had been murdered, or at least did not have the confidence to state them strongly. This is evident in the fact that none of these dedicated investigators or their supervisor took the unequivocal position with management that a killer had to be the reason the women were going missing. Although there were requests for more resources, there was no pounding of tables and demanding of immediate action; it seems they were worn out just trying to make do with what they had. (This does not apply to Detective Constables Cruz and James, who were entirely convinced that there was a serial killer. Unfortunately, however, their interest was in catching

the killer single-handedly, rather than as part of a team, and they were convinced the killer was McCartney.)

There were two other contributing factors to the failure of the VPD to reconfigure the MWRT into an investigation of a killer. First, when Inspector Biddlecombe retired in the fall of 1999 and Acting Inspector Matthews took over, it appears there was very little transfer of information between them respecting the MWRT. According to Acting Inspector Matthews, he did not have any appreciation for what had transpired in the Pickton investigation, nor had he read Detective Inspector Rossmo’s analysis. He did not conduct a proactive file review to explore and consider the status of the investigation (a process that he, in retrospect, agreed would have been appropriate). What Acting Inspector Matthews had absorbed, however, was the management mindset of the VPD as to the function of the MWRT:

Regarding the review team, that was pounded into us, it was Fred and Brian that said it. It was over and over again, this is not a task force, this is a review team. It was an age of no body, no crime, right or wrong. It was very much no body no crime. It was, we react to a dead body. When you’re entrenched in your historical view that no body no crime, and when you found several women, it supported that this was a review team, that we would find them.

It should be noted, however, that Inspector Biddlecombe felt that Acting Inspector Matthews was fully aware, when he took over command of the Major Crime Section, of at least as much information as Inspector Biddlecombe knew and had been fully briefed, i.e., he knew that the team was focused on

solving probable – or at least possible – murders. Inspector Biddlecombe further advised that he kept binders on all the significant investigations in his office, and that Acting Inspector Matthews confirmed he had reviewed them. Inspector Matthews later said he knew “absolutely there could be a killer or killers out there,” but explained his thinking that “...the process of looking for these women was part of the process of tracking back and looking for where we might be looking for a suspect.”

Inspector Matthews’s understanding of the case and the purpose of the MWRT was also reflected in Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness’ assessment of the situation during 1999:

We had one side saying we have no bodies, no evidence of a homicide, that’s [the Homicide Squad]; then we’ve got Kim and Lori saying the other side... These people in MCS were under incredible pressure to deal with all the murders and everything that they had smoking guns on. I think they were saying, “we don’t have a murder or body that we can go with. If they find something out, we’ve got Lepine and Chernoff and they’ll be on top of it.”...I don’t think we can pile this all on Fred. There were incredible pressures on these people. At that time, we had an Indo guy who blew his girlfriend’s head off and then fled to Seattle.²⁷⁶ We had real live things to deal with...I don’t think we believed we had a killer in the Downtown Eastside, but if we had, we would have gone to the City, to the AG at the time, get some money, go after this guy...I don’t clearly remember whether I accepted Kim’s report completely, or whether I got information from others...I know that if we had had conclusive evidence that we had murders, we absolutely would have found the resources to put into it. But everything was influencing what we did, budget, everything. It’s

complicated. The thought process that we had missing women, not homicides, was influencing things...During my time, I never made a decision that there was a serial killer, and if I had come to that conclusion I would have done things differently.

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The knowledge of VPD management also did not improve in 2000, when Inspector Spencer took over from Acting Inspector Matthews, and Deputy Chief Constable Unger took over from Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness. (Deputy Chief Constable Unger later advised that he did not read Detective Inspector Rossmo’s May 1999 analysis until 2001, and only read it then because he and the VPD were being sued by Detective Inspector Rossmo. In any case, Deputy Chief Constable Unger dismissed the Rossmo report as “somewhat groundless, based on a lot of conjecture.” He later clarified his statement to advise that he believed this was the opinion of the Missing Women investigators, and that he didn’t have an opinion about the Rossmo report. —————

————— With respect, it is clear that this was Deputy Chief Constable Unger’s opinion, and it was not shared by the VPD investigators.)

276 Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness was referring to the tragic murder of 18-year-old Poonam Randhawa on September 26th, 1999.

277 Inspector Biddlecombe later agreed that he had never gone to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness “to say we had a serial killer. We had Rossmo’s report, but we didn’t have anything to substantiate it.”

Between April 2000 and January 2001, Inspector Spencer did not conduct an extensive file review except to agree with Sergeant Field that the matter should be transferred to a JFO with the RCMP, and support her in that regard.²⁷⁸

In short, there was no bona fide inquiry made at the management level as to why the MWRT as an investigative unit was under-performing and deteriorating, even as the likelihood for a killer to be the cause of the Missing Women was increasing.

Finally, from January 1999, prior to the MWRT investigation beginning, there was a lull in the known number of new disappearances and it appeared as if the phenomenon was historical. As a result, the VPD was not faced with the urgency that might have been generated by more women going missing in 1999 and 2000. Nor were there any “fresh” incidents that might have provided evidence to follow up, or to support the serial killer theory. Instead, the VPD became more complacent and the investigative unit deteriorated throughout 2000.

Deputy Chief Constable Unger took over command of the Investigation Division in April 2000, and his knowledge of the case was limited. He did not believe in the serial killer theory until at least

mid-2001.²⁷⁹ He later said that when he came to the Investigation Division, he instructed Inspector Spencer to “take a hard look at what was going on there and either fold it or expand it, not just let it languish,” and later reported for this review that he thought the wrong investigators were assigned to the investigation. But Inspector Spencer came to the Major Crime Section in April 2000, and in fact, the investigation deteriorated throughout 2000, until the end of 2000 when there was no active investigation at all, despite the JFO with the RCMP being only beginning its formative “review” stages in January 2001.

By the time another flurry of disappearances was reported in December 2000 and following, only Sergeant Field remained assigned to the investigation and the VPD was in no position to deal with the new evidence.

E. CONCLUSION

By the summer of 1999, there was ample evidence, albeit statistical and circumstantial, and therefore somewhat abstract, to believe that a serial killer was most likely responsible for the Missing Women. Not only that, there was compelling evidence pointing to Pickton as the killer – as described in Chapter 7 of this analysis – which could only add to the credibility of the serial killer theory. The longer the Missing

278 It should be noted, however, that Detective Constable Shenher described Inspector Spencer as the most approachable of the managers she’d dealt with, and that he demonstrated the most willingness to “make this thing work, make the best of something he had inherited. [He] didn’t run away from issues...[he] had a fairly good sense of taking care of his people a little more, that Geramy and I had been placed in a tough spot.”

279 As late as November 2001, Sergeant Jim McKnight, then one of the Evenhanded lead investigators seconded from the VPD, advised that Deputy Unger was angry at him for suggesting to the media that there might be a serial killer – despite that being the focus of the JFO – and, according to the emphatic statement of Sergeant McKnight, wanted him disciplined, although that didn’t occur.

Women remained missing despite exhaustive efforts to find them – and despite their historically frequent contact with society in various ways – the more compelling was this evidence. Further, it was already known that an unidentified serial killer had murdered sex trade workers Pipe, Olajide and Younker in 1995, all of whom were associated to the Downtown Eastside.

The theory that a serial killer was behind the disappearances was always present in the investigation, but senior police officers in charge of overseeing the Missing Women investigation didn't commit to the serial killer theory for several reasons. These included an erroneous belief that the Missing Women were transient, and that other theories could explain their absence. There was a reluctance to believe that a serial killer could be the explanation. More significantly, Inspector Biddlecombe and others failed to understand the importance of the statistical evidence (notwithstanding that prior to the statistical analysis, he did throw his support behind a somewhat more suspect-focused investigation). Inspector Biddlecombe's opinion of the analysis was influenced by his opinion of Detective Inspector Rossmo. In contrast, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness fully supported Detective Inspector Rossmo and was provided his report, but he never came to the conclusion that a serial killer was responsible for the Missing Women. And unfortunately, it appears that Acting Inspector Matthews never even read Detective Inspector Rossmo's report (nor did Deputy Chief Constable Unger or any other member of the Executive until 2001, when it was raised in the course of litigation against the VPD).

There were other reasons in 1999 that the serial killer theory wasn't fully accepted. These included a belief that Constable Dickson had "found" 71

previous missing women, so the "new" Missing Women probably weren't really missing. This belief was misguided: the fact that Constable Dickson was so quickly able to account for the majority of the names on the first list (15 of whom, had in fact, been murdered), should have accentuated how unlikely it was that the Missing Women could disappear without a trace. In addition, there was an attitude that every murder investigation began with the discovery of a body; this attitude infused the thinking in the Major Crime Section and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit. It allowed a mindset that required irrefutable proof of a murder before a genuine murder investigation would be launched, meaning that a crafty killer who could dispose of bodies could proceed unchecked. Finally, by the time the MWRT got underway, and throughout the rest of 1999 and most of 2000, it appeared that no new women had gone missing from the Downtown Eastside. This lessened the perceived urgency of the problem: if there really was a killer, it was a historical problem.

Following the problems in the investigation in 1999 when Inspector Biddlecombe and, to a lesser extent, his immediate subordinate, Staff Sergeant Giles, were in charge, moving into 2000, there was no proper management assessment of the investigation; it was simply allowed to founder and deteriorate, with no real understanding of what the problems were, and what was necessary to fix them. At the middle-management level, Acting Inspector Matthews had some background in serious crime investigation, but took a hands-off approach and made incorrect assumptions about the nature of the investigation. He knew almost nothing of the Pickton investigation. Although an experienced manager, Inspector Spencer had no experience in serious crime investigation, so was not qualified to conduct a critical review of the MWRT and made no such attempt. He put his energy into supporting Sergeant Field's efforts to involve the RCMP in a JFO.

At the Executive level, in his time in command, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness had the support of Chief Constable Chambers, but neither of them gave the investigation the Department-wide priority it required. Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness was then replaced by Deputy Chief Constable Unger, who did not believe in the serial killer theory and did not familiarize himself with the key documentation on the case, nor did he request a briefing by any of the investigators, relying on Inspector Spencer to brief him. Chief Constable Blythe, who had replaced Chief Constable Chambers, took a hands-off approach to the investigation, relying on Deputy Chief Constable Unger. There was a resulting lack of Executive level attention to the most serious problem that was, in fact, facing the VPD: a serial killer was, or had been, on the loose.

There was a lack of leadership demonstrated at both the middle management and executive levels. It was the responsibility of middle managers in the Major Crime Section to be fully apprised of such a serious matter as the Missing Women investigation. Further, they were responsible to alert those at the Executive level of the resources needed to address these issues, with the clear analysis necessary to allow an informed decision. It was the responsibility of those at the Executive level to ensure that adequate resources were made available to address such a serious issue, even if it meant re-allocating significant resources from other areas in the VPD. In these respects, and while admittedly there were very significant investigative and resource challenges, there were failures of leadership where the Missing Women investigation was concerned.

3. THE ISSUE OF BIAS AGAINST SEX TRADE WORKERS

A. INTRODUCTION

Bias against sex trade workers by the investigative team was not the cause of the deficiencies in the investigation of the Missing Women. In other words, this review has not found that the investigation into the Missing Women was deficient because the VPD viewed the Missing Women as “just prostitutes” whose murders did not warrant full investigation. While that allegation has often been voiced in the media and elsewhere,²⁸⁰ it is an inaccurate conclusion as to the reason that the investigation was inadequate.

This review has, however, noted that there were incidents where alleged prejudice on the part of certain individual staff members of the VPD, most notably Ms. [Parker](#), resulted in inappropriate conduct toward the families of marginalized persons (and others). These incidents were regrettable and unacceptable, but they do not sustain an inference of systemic bias within the VPD.

Nor can the allegation be sustained that systemic bias was at the root of the VPD’s decision not to support the issuance of a stronger and more explicit public warning that a serial killer was on the loose.

In fact, isolated incidents aside, on the whole the record is clear that the VPD has taken crimes against sex trade workers very seriously, and has committed extraordinary resources to investigating these crimes.

This chapter will discuss the allegations of prejudice against sex trade workers and their families. In addition, the chapter will discuss the issue of a public

280 See, for example, documents in Binder 21, Tab 50, Binder 10, Tab 61, and Binder 21, Tab 51.

warning about a serial killer, and provide evidence demonstrating that the VPD fully commits itself to the investigation of offences against sex trade workers. Finally, this chapter will discuss VPD relations with sex trade workers generally.

B. INCIDENTS OF PREJUDICE

To the detriment of the VPD as a whole, there were several reported instances where families of sex trade workers attempted to report their daughters as missing and were treated badly. For example, in 1998, Homicide Sergeant Bob Cooper submitted a report identifying how police and the Police/Native Liaison Unit had received complaints from “people who have been rebuffed by staff at both the Public Information Counter and [the Communications Centre] when attempting to file missing persons reports.”²⁸¹ Sergeant Cooper noted that this had caused “great frustration...and has reinforced the impression that because they are Native or residents of the Downtown Eastside, the police don’t care... and apply a different standard....If they care enough to contact the police they should be listened to and taken seriously in the first instance.” Sgt. Cooper requested a review of the Missing Persons policy by the VPD’s Planning & Research Section.

In addition, information obtained in this review suggested there were inconsistencies in the application of the VPD’s missing persons policy in the VPD Communications Centre (later replaced by E-Comm, the regional communications centre) that resulted in a failure to take missing persons reports when it was appropriate to do so, and this lack of reporting appeared to be the result of a dismissive attitude toward missing sex trade workers.

In addition, and more significantly, a frequent complaint made to the VPD, to the JFO and to the media during the Missing Women investigation was about the conduct of a civilian member of the VPD’s Missing Persons Unit, Ms. Parker. Ms. Parker worked in the Missing Person’s Unit from 1979 until late 2001. Ms. Parker was accused by some family members of the Missing Women of being racist, of ignoring complaints from the families of sex trade workers, and of misrepresenting herself as a police officer. Every police officer interviewed for this review who had worked with Ms. Parker in the Missing Persons Unit from 1995 until she left in late 2001 gave statements that corroborated some or all of these complaints. She was described as providing excellent service to some, but not to others, and the witnesses said that the race and life circumstances of the victims and reportees played a role in her conduct. One experienced detective reported having to “leave the room” sometimes when Ms. Parker dealt with people on the phone. Others reported confronting her on her behaviour, but with limited success. When interviewed for this review, Ms. Parker responded to the allegations by saying that:

Anybody can report a missing person. I know that the Com Centre, sometimes they would refuse to take a report and refer them to me, or put them on hold and talk to me and I would ask them to take the report. We took everything. I had to fight a lot with — and —, the com op supervisors, because they wouldn’t take reports. I’d tell them just take the reports. Even after the 24-hour policy was abolished, they kept it in their procedure manual.

I was an easy one to take a shot at because I was the only one in the office, it was always “that Missing Women’s clerk.” One of them was on the radio saying they were successful in having me removed from Missing Persons but I left on my own accord.

281 Binder 14, Tab 21.

I wasn't giving them the answers that they wanted because I didn't have them and they thought we were doing nothing. It was understandable that they were frustrated, this was all pre-1997 that I dealt with them.

...I don't know why some of the family members were critical of me. You'd have to talk to — and ask her how I treated her. Or —. They can get together and say this, but what's rude to someone might not be rude to someone else. I think their frustration level was high and I was the prime target...I have a loud voice. People could interpret that as being rude. My frustration level was rising. I felt like here's the limb and I'm on the end of it.

Sure people complained, but I could also complain about people being rude to me. If you're rude to me, I might get defensive, but in no way would that affect the investigation into the missing person. I would take it. There might have been times I was rude.

...Not everyone we deal with is happy. I heard a lot from staff that I was loud, and I had a tendency to cut people off, so I tried to deal with that. There might have been some problems with [Missing Persons detectives, who] would say I shouldn't say this or that, nothing of an important nature.

Ms. Parker's responsibilities since joining the Missing Persons Unit in 1979 had evolved to the point where she was the key employee with significant investigative responsibilities. This occurred because the VPD had a history of either not having a full time investigator, or assigning detectives with health limitations resulting in frequent absences. Ironically, as far back as 1991, then-Staff Sergeant Biddlecombe had raised concerns about the level of responsibility

Ms. Parker had in the Missing Persons Unit. In one report, he requested that a senior constable position be added to the Missing Persons Unit. He appended a report authored by Sergeant Ted McLellan on October 31, 1990 making the same recommendation. The 1990 report includes the following:

The Clerk...is proficient and performs effectively in this position. I do, however, have concerns with the practice of allowing a civilian member to manage an investigative function such as Missing Persons. It is not in the Department's best interest due to the potential for criticism should an initial Missing Persons investigation become a politically sensitive issue as we have experienced recently in several prostitute homicides.²⁸²

Several supervisors had raised concerns about Ms. Parker over the years, but despite taking steps to address her behaviour, and/or have her removed from her assignment, had not been successful at either. This was unfortunate; even though Detective Constable Shenher took over all dealings with family members of the Missing Women when she came to the Missing Persons Unit in 1998, the relationship between the VPD and many family members had been terribly and apparently irrevocably poisoned.

Even years after Ms. Parker had any direct contact with the family members of the Missing Women, her alleged conduct was a significant issue for the JFO to deal with.²⁸³

While it appears that Ms. Parker's behaviour was in some instances inappropriate and prejudicial, and that this was particularly detrimental to the reputation and relationship with the families of the Missing Women, the allegations do not sustain an inference of systemic bias throughout the VPD organization.

282 Binder 11, Tab 8.

283 Binder 10, Tab 20.

It should be noted that one of the first organizational problems identified in this review was the need for a dedicated supervisor to be placed in charge of the Missing Persons Unit. In 2002, a full time sergeant was approved for the Missing Persons Unit, and put in place in 2003. In addition, the job descriptions and qualifications of Missing Persons Unit staff are key issues examined in a comprehensive audit of the Missing Persons Unit completed in 2004.²⁸⁴ Hopefully, the increased supervision and accountability resulting from the implementation of the audit recommendations will prevent a situation similar to that which occurred with Ms. Parker from recurring.

C. LACK OF A PUBLIC WARNING OF A SERIAL KILLER

Another allegation that has been made by some individuals is that the VPD demonstrated a lack of concern for sex trade workers by not issuing a warning that there was a serial killer operating in the Downtown Eastside. There have been suggestions that if the police had provided a stronger warning that a serial killer was at work, sex trade workers might have taken precautions.²⁸⁵ This allegation is not supported by the evidence. First, even though the VPD as a whole had not committed itself to the serial killer theory, VPD investigators did make efforts to warn sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside about the possibility that there was a killer at large.

Advocates who worked in the Downtown Eastside noted this fact:

“There was a unit set up and a number of officers worked incredibly diligently,” said Judy McGuire, chairwoman of Women’s Information Safe House [WISH], a drop-in centre for sex trade workers. “The police obviously took [the investigation] very seriously and acted on it on a lot of fronts.” McGuire said it was “common knowledge” that sexual predators were operating in the area and that police tried to ensure the prostitutes knew that. “A lot of officers were getting the word out that women were going missing [and] that sexual predators were out there.” John Turvey, director of the Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society, agreed. “I’m not criticizing the Vancouver police department’s handling of the situation. The whole profile of their investigation was a public warning.”²⁸⁶

Second, it was already widely suspected among the sex trade workers themselves that there was a killer at large, and in any event, their jobs were fraught with danger whether from Pickton or another of the many other violent criminals seeking to pick them up any given night.

284 In early 2004, the author contracted a highly experienced retired police Inspector to conduct a comprehensive audit of its Missing Persons Unit. This audit resulted in numerous recommendations that are currently (as of early 2005) being implemented, and will result in the VPD establishing new procedures that will address a variety of concerns raised in this review.

285 For example, Deborah Jardine, mother of Angela Jardine, testified at the civil trial of Kim Rossmo that a warning “might have made a difference...The women would have taken extra precautions, including my daughter,” as reported in the Vancouver Sun on June 22nd, 2001, p. B1.

286 Brian Morton, “Serial killer warning ‘could have saved my daughter’: Police take exception to criticism at Kim Rossmo’s wrongful dismissal trial,” in the Vancouver Sun, June 22nd, 2001, p. B1.

To understand why the sex trade workers of the Downtown Eastside continue to work under these dangerous conditions, it is important to understand that their lives are completely driven by their drug addictions. Constable Dave Dickson, who has earned the respect of the sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside as much as any police officer, described the situation:

We've tried to initiate things in the past about the girls working in couples, having a paper and pencil to write down licence numbers, but the girls are addicts and they're not going to wait for someone else to go with. When your number one priority is to get ten bucks for your next fix they don't think about their safety...If we told the sex trade workers that it was absolutely confirmed that there was a serial killer killing women on the Downtown Eastside, they wouldn't have stopped for a second; their addiction is just too strong. I could drive up to a girl with a gun on my dashboard, but if I had drugs and cash on the passenger seat they would jump in and not even see the gun. Their addiction is just too strong. Short of assigning someone 24 hours a day to every sex trade worker I don't think there was anything that could be done to protect them. Even that, I don't know if it would work. Nancy Bob went to work with two friends who spotted for her, and she jumped in a car and they found her body in Abbotsford the next day. You can't keep them safe.

In summary, while the VPD investigators made efforts to warn the sex trade workers of a serial predator, and the VPD always publicly acknowledged the possibility that a serial killer was responsible, it is naive to expect that severely drug addicted sex trade workers would have changed their behaviour in

response to a general public warning about a serial killer. The failure to issue a strong warning about a serial killer was rooted in the VPD's own difficulties in coming to terms with the evidence of a serial killer. However, it was neither a factor affecting the safety of sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside, nor evidence of a lack of VPD concern for their welfare.

D. INVESTIGATION OF OTHER ASSAULTS OR MURDERS OF SEX TRADE WORKERS

The strongest evidence against the allegations of bias is the VPD's record of investigating and solving crimes against sex trade workers. In the course of the research for this report, the author conducted a review of VPD investigations into homicides and serious assaults between 1987 and 2004 where the victims were sex trade workers. This Review considered the VPD's handling of the following cases:

1. 2003/2004 investigation of Donald Bakker – sexual assaults and torture of sex trade workers;
2. 2003 investigation of Ronald Miljure (the “Wonky Eyed Rapist”) – sexual assaults of sex trade workers;
3. 2003 investigation of a 1991 rape of a sex trade worker by —;
4. 2002 investigation into a series of rapes of sex trade workers;
5. 2000 investigation into the murder of sex trade worker April Reoch;
6. 2000 investigation into the murder of sex trade worker Lisa Graveline;
7. 1999 beating and sexual torture of a sex trade worker;
8. 1996 investigation of violent assault on a sex trade worker by —;
9. 1996 investigation into the murder of sex trade worker Michelle Fiddick;
10. 1992 investigation into the murder of sex trade worker Sheryl Ann Joe; and
11. 1987 investigation into the murder of sex trade worker Vanessa Lee Buckner.

While it is not necessary to recite the details of each of these cases here, the VPD conducted extensive investigations into each of them, and often displayed extraordinary efforts in solving these cases.²⁸⁷ In fact, with respect to homicide investigations, between 1992 and April of 1999 there had been ten known murders of sex trade workers in Vancouver, and in eight of them the cases were solved and charges laid.²⁸⁸ This is a high success rate by any measure and particularly in the context of the challenges posed by the murder of sex trade workers. (These challenges include the fact that, in contrast to most murders, the murders of sex trade workers often involve a suspect not known to be associated to the victim, the difficulty of finding credible witnesses willing to cooperate with the police, and so on.) In contrast, a February 1997 Statistics Canada report noted that, of 63 sex trade workers known to have been murdered in Canada over a 5-year period, 54% remained unsolved.²⁸⁹ The intensive manner in which these VPD investigations were pursued demonstrates that there is no systemic bias in the VPD such that the VPD fails to fully investigate known crimes against sex trade workers.

E. POLICE RELATIONS WITH SEX TRADE WORKERS GENERALLY

The relationship between police and sex trade workers is complicated. The sex trade creates significant community problems for the police, and at the same time sex trade workers are regular victims of sexual predators. It is clear that the police need to be constantly working on improving their relationship with the sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside so that sex trade workers

are safer and violent predators are apprehended. Cooperation of sex trade workers with police investigations continues to be problematic, as described by the Inspector currently in charge of policing in the Downtown Eastside:

The sex workers in the Downtown Eastside are for the most part severely addicted to crack cocaine and for many reasons live lives of isolation from their families, isolation from positive support and become victims of violent sexual predators. These women are often the victims of rape, serious assault and sometimes murder. To make ends meet even the women who are not addicted are engaged in what is known as “survival sex.” This term means that prostitution is not a choice made for romantic or rebellious reasons; the choice is made in order to put food on the table. The sex workers do not report violent assaults on them beyond getting immediate police/medical assistance and generally will refuse to follow up with detectives assigned to their cases. Going to court to testify against someone is simply not done and the rule of the street is that you don’t call the cops.²⁹⁰

Consistent with this assessment, a disturbing fact of the investigation into the Missing Women is that many sex trade workers were shown Pickton’s picture by VPD investigators, but Pickton was not identified by any of the women. This strategy was pursued in the hopes of developing information that would advance the investigation by corroborating the information from the Pickton informants so that other investigative techniques could be employed. But as Constable Dickson described:

When Lori took a picture to WISH of Pickton, I was the liaison and I took her there. Not one of them

287 A summary of each of these cases is included in Appendix A.

288 Report to Police Board, April 22, 1999: Binder 2, Tab 6

289 Doreen Duchesne (1997). *Street Prostitution in Canada*. Juristat Vol. 17, no. 2, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, p. 8.

290 Inspector John McKay, *Women’s Issues in the Downtown Eastside*, Report to the Chief Constable, February 2004.

picked his picture, but probably because he was an excellent money and drugs source. I spoke to one of the girls, —, and she didn't pick him, and I found out [after Pickton's arrest] she'd been there hundreds of times. She'd call him, she'd go out and he'd give her all the drugs she wanted and money. No sex...I think she was very credible. Another girl, —, who I've known since she was a kid, was very upset that we'd accused Pickton of anything, because "he would never do anything." I don't know if she saw the picture. When you've got a girl who's got a regular source of money for their addiction, they'll never give him up and will pound any girl who gave information about someone who's a source [of money and drugs].

Thus, it appears that until Pickton decided to kill, he was a "good date" and this was likely the foremost reason that sex trade workers who knew him did not come forward with information, rather than mistrust of police.

Nevertheless, it is important that the VPD work to increase trust between police and sex trade workers. The VPD has, in fact, made considerable strides in recent years to improve the relationship and information exchange between police and sex trade workers and their advocacy groups. Building on the work of officers like Constable Dickson, Inspector John McKay has had considerable success at improving the situation:

With the support of then [District Commander] Rich, I met with Cst. Houchen and Cst. Dickson of District 2 with the idea that the police needed the support of the sex workers in this important goal of obtaining suspect DNA from a violent encounter. As a result of these respected police officers being

involved, a series of meetings were held with PACE, WISH and PEERS to obtain their cooperation in getting the sex workers to assist with investigations where they were assaulted by so-called bad dates.

After some initial scepticism these groups became very supportive and it became obvious that the main issue of both the police and the advocacy groups was to change the culture between the police and sex-workers. This did not mean that we would no longer enforce the law on this issue but it meant that we were more interested in working with them to stop the violent predators. We recognized that communication between the sex workers and the police was the key to that change of culture.

In 2002, Ms. Marike Sandrelli began to lecture to Block 2 recruits on the issues and histories of those who were providing "survival sex" to feed themselves. These lectures were well presented and engendered much interest by these new police recruits who were about to begin their street careers. PACE staff later reported that suddenly the police were actually asking about the health of the sex worker instead of harassing them.

Cst. Dickson and myself lectured at all District 2 parades on the priority of getting the victims of violent assaults immediate medical help, obtaining suspect DNA and providing the victim with support in terms of shelter and advocacy services. This new tact assisted greatly in the arrest of two violent sexual predators that were crossing all Lower Mainland geographic boundaries, one of whom had no previous record.

These initiatives would not have been successful without the input and cooperation of the Vice Section and the Sexual Offence Squad who

recognized the important role that the Patrol units played in the early stages of contact with this unique type of victim.

One of the many questions that arose in the discussion with the advocacy groups was what type of training could be provided up front to the women to keep them safe during encounters with violent clients or other violent people they met on the street.

Violence in the Workplace training especially shaped to meet the needs of the sex worker was determined to be the best avenue to provide up front safety to this community. During the summer of 2003 I conducted two such seminars for sex workers through PACE and PEERS. Due to the popularity of the workshops and time constraints Ms. Sandrelli and I determined that we should develop a “Train the Trainers” Program where we would train sex workers to teach a philosophy that was not only safe and effective, it was legally and socially acceptable.

This model was based on the fact that the first goal was to Prevent assaults from taking place. The second goal was to Defuse angry clients. The third goal was to physically Disengage from the violent client and the fourth goal was to learn to Defend along safe, effective and legally acceptable guidelines.

In November of 2003 Ms. Sandrelli, Cst. Dickson and I trained eleven sex workers in a two day “Train the Trainers” course entitled Confrontation Management for Women at High Risk.

Certificates were presented to the participants and they have gone on to conduct training themselves. Due to the overwhelming success and interest we will be conducting more “Train the Trainers” seminars for this community.

In February 2004 PACE and WISH obtained funding to start the Mobile Access Van which is an outreach program that will be used throughout Vancouver City. The goal is to provide care, information and refuge to sex workers on a twenty-four hour basis. Ms. Sandrelli, Cst. Dickson and I will be conducting the training for the eleven staff members.

We have received interest in our initiatives from Sarnia Ontario Police as well as from the Northwest Territories. These places have also seen an increase in violent sexual predators and their victims. It is our goal to share our successes with as many organizations as necessary to protect vulnerable women everywhere from violent predators.

In Vancouver we must also continue to ensure a cultural shift, so that we do not lose sight of our mission of “Safety for All.”

Recently we have been asked to speak at the Canadian Police College as well as the Ontario Police College on our initiatives with sex workers in the Downtown Eastside.²⁹¹

In June 2004, because of the work of Constable Dickson, Inspector McKay and others, the VPD was recognized with a national award for its contribution to increasing safety for sex trade workers. An independent international jury composed of experts in the field selected the best programs in Canada in 5 categories, including “*municipal gender-based policies in crime prevention and community safety*.” The VPD received the award for a program entitled “*Confrontation Management for Women at High Risk*.” This is a train-the-trainers program that teaches sex trade workers to handle violent and aggressive clients on the street. Thirty-two sex trade workers were trained at three 2-day sessions.

291 Inspector John McKay, *Women's Issues in the Downtown Eastside*, Report to the Chief Constable, February 9, 2004

Certificates of completion were awarded to each successful graduate.

This program is part of a VPD initiative to find common ground with sex trade workers so that the police can obtain the type of cooperation needed to solve crimes involving violent serial predators. This initiative has already paid benefits to all concerned with recent serial predators receiving substantial jail sentences because of overwhelming cooperation between sex trade workers and the police. Other police agencies in Canada and the U.S. and Africa have become interested in this initiative. In 2004, Constable Dickson also received an “honorable mention” award from the federal Minister of Justice National Youth Justice Policing Award program for his work with youth in the Downtown Eastside.

The VPD has also been active in working to prevent youth from being recruited into prostitution, and much of the work of Vice detectives is focused on that objective as opposed to arresting sex trade workers. For example, the Vice Squad runs a program called “DISC” (Deter and Identify Sex Trade Consumers), which began in 1998. Prevention and intervention are the two critical elements of the program. Core functions of the unit include: maintaining a database of individuals participating in sex trade activities; protecting at-risk youth from sex trade recruitment; and identifying and tracking pimps, recruiters, consumers, workers and others of special interest.²⁹²

Clearly it is important for the VPD to continue improving its relationship with sex trade workers

in the Downtown Eastside so that the VDP can be as effective as possible in investigating and apprehending the dangerous offenders that prey upon these vulnerable individuals.

F. CONCLUSION

Allegations have been made against the VPD that the problems with the investigation were the result of an institutional bias against sex trade workers: that if the women were from higher income neighborhoods in Vancouver, the investigation would have received a different priority. Some critics have also suggested that the failure of the VPD to post a warning to sex trade workers that a serial killer was operating in the Downtown Eastside is evidence of this institutional bias against sex trade workers.

There is no doubt that the disappearance of a large number of women with more conventional lives than sex trade workers would have been greeted with greater concern than the disappearance of the Missing Women. This is not because the sex trade workers are “second class” citizens, but because the nature of their lives is much more unpredictable and risky than more conventional lifestyles. Sex trade workers normally have little day to day accountability to employers, nuclear families, schools and the like, and are constantly exposed to risk of death by disease, drug overdose or at the hands of any one of the numerous violent men who seek to pick up sex trade workers on any given day. While there was a significant misconception prevalent in the VPD as to the transience of “low track” sex trade workers beyond a day to day transience, it is

292 Since the development of the program, DISC has continued to expand throughout BC, and is now also used by twenty-three police agencies from various jurisdictions including Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan and the United States. International interest has recently been expressed by the office of the Ministry of the Attorney General of Costa Rica and by Interpol. In 1999, the two officers who created the DISC program received the Lieutenant Governor’s Meritorious Service award.

also the case that the Missing Women were often reported missing long after last being seen, which lent credence to the theory that they were transient and that long absences were not unexpected by those who knew them.

Some of the allegations of bias were likely fuelled by administrative delays and difficulties faced by families and friends when reporting sex trade workers as missing. It also appears the conduct of one civilian VPD staff member, who was working in the Missing Persons Unit prior to the Missing Women investigation, poisoned relations with the families of some of the Missing Women. These factors compromised the investigation by creating, at the least, a lack of trust in the VPD by some of the families of the Missing Women. This problem underscores the importance of certain skills necessary in the Missing Persons Unit (which was one of the subjects of a detailed audit of the Unit in late 2004). In addition, had there been a victim liaison in the MWRT – as set out in the Major Case Management model – rather than Detective Constable Shenher trying to juggle this responsibility with many others, some of the damage done to the VPD’s relationship with family members of the Missing Women may have been mitigated.

The evidence demonstrates that the VPD commits extraordinary resources to the investigation of known serious offences against sex trade workers, and considering the challenges of these investigations, has had remarkable results. In addition, while there are inherent challenges to effective communication between police and sex trade workers, there is evidence that the police officers who work in the Downtown Eastside know many of the women who work the streets, look out for them, and understand

the realities of street life. This was independently established by the recently completed evaluation of the VPD’s “City-wide Enforcement Team” initiative that did not find an anti-police sentiment among sex trade workers, the majority of whom supported the activities of the police in the Downtown Eastside.²⁹³ While ignorance of certain issues around the characteristics of Downtown Eastside sex trade workers, such as the belief that they were transient, affected management decisions, bias against sex trade workers was not the reason for the deficiencies in the Missing Women investigation.

However, certain procedural barriers to reporting missing persons (such as not taking reports from non-relatives), and the alleged conduct of Ms. Parker prior to the Missing Women investigation, did poison relations with the families of some of the Missing Women. Those factors must have negatively impacted the investigation to some degree by fostering mistrust of the VPD. This problem underscores the importance of ensuring VPD staff in the Missing Persons Unit have an understanding and sensitivity to the lives of the sex trade workers and their families.²⁹⁴

293 Yvon Dandurand, Curt Griffiths, Vivienne Chin & Joseph Chan (2004). *Confident Policing in a Troubled Community – Evaluation of the Vancouver Police Department’s City-Wide Enforcement Team*, University College of the Fraser Valley.

294 Some of the problems created may have been ameliorated if a member of the MWRT had been dedicated to liaise with the victims’ families, as occurred later in the JFO, rather than adding this duty to Detective Constable Shenher’s overwhelming responsibilities. However, it should be noted that some of the Missing Women family members created challenges for the most dedicated investigators. Even with the assignment of dedicated victim services personnel in the JFO, some Missing Women family members have been extremely critical of the service they’ve been provided.

The lack of a formal, unequivocal warning that a serial killer had been operating was misguided, but was not motivated by a lack of concern for sex trade workers. While making a strong public warning might have been useful as a catalyst to improve the investigation, it would not have resulted in changes to the high-risk behaviours of the sex trade workers of the Downtown Eastside.

Finally, the VPD has taken positive steps in recent years to improve communications with sex trade workers and to reduce their victimization, and there is evidence that these efforts are bearing fruit; they should continue.

4. THE IMPACT OF RESOURCE SHORTAGES ON THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION.

A. INTRODUCTION

All the officers interviewed for this Review reflected on the difficulty each had coping with the amount of investigative work that had to be done with the available resources. This chapter of the Review will consider the resource problems in the VPD during the investigation of the Missing Women and will determine what affect the lack of resources may have had on the investigation.

B. RESOURCES ISSUES IN THE VPD MAJOR CRIME SECTION

During the Missing Women investigation, the VPD was already faced with a very serious predatory crime wave. Between October 1998 and February 1999, there were 13 violent home invasions of very elderly people in Vancouver in which they were assaulted and sometimes degraded. These incidents were not only traumatic to the victims, but also to the entire community. There was extreme public concern and attention to the case. As a result, an existing six-officer Home Invasion Task Force was reorganized and refocused in February of 1999. It was increased to ten police officers drawn from a variety of squads including Robbery, Criminal Harassment, Sexual Offences, and General Investigation.

While this investigation was occurring, a series of armed robberies of Asian citizens on the west side of Vancouver began and was also generating considerable public concern, and resources were applied to that investigation as well. The homicide rate increased over 50% from 1998 to 1999 (from 18 to 28), with several extraordinary murders, including gangland slayings (a cycle that is being repeated in 2003/2004), and all the other serious crimes that occur in a major city, that required investigation.

Inspector Biddlecombe recalled the pressure he was under in the Major Crime Section:

In '95 and '96 we were getting budget cutbacks. I remember going to a meeting with Chief Canuel and both years the budgets had to be cut. The first year I don't know how much, but we were asked how we could cut a certain percentage. I think by the second year we were cutting positions. We had actually drawn up a list of positions that would be eliminated... Then Chambers comes in and brings

in his restructuring and goes from 6 to 3 Deputy Chiefs, but the workload didn't change. We went from 30 Inspectors to 18, but the workload didn't change. All of a sudden I've got a job that two Inspectors had. The 18 Inspectors who remained, their workload basically doubled.

We had no money to do anything...We had disagreements around budgeting decisions around homicides. I recall one case around [a gangster murderer]. Ditchfield and I and Brock worked out a budget, a lot was for surveillance, and the budget was for about 750,000 and [Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness] basically laughed and said "there's the door." That's when Ted left with Geramy to do the JFO up in CLEU. They did it for less, it was a useless investigation because they did it with an inadequate budget with a lack of surveillance, and as a result there were three more homicides...

Chambers' commitment to the city was uniformed patrol and so all the new members were going to Patrol and none were coming to [the Investigation Division]...None of the positions that I had approval to increase were filled...we were told that we wouldn't get any positions filled even if people retired or were promoted, so that the uniform positions could be filled. Most of our members were dramatically overworked...All of my squads were running short, I think Homicide was running about four short. Robbery at its peak was down three positions, SOS was down positions. Homicide [detectives] don't just investigate homicides, they do kidnappings and other things...You're operating at half strength often, and there were no bodies anywhere. Chambers and McGuinness made it very clear that no bodies were coming from outside our division to help us out. The VPD throughout the mid and late 90s was in utter turmoil because of these issues, resource problems. Morale was low. I wouldn't have changed anything back in '99. We had a limited budget, limited resources. We had

nothing to work with. I would take whatever I was offered even if they had shortcomings. They were warm bodies. There was no money or bodies to do anything. I couldn't rob from squads that already didn't have enough resources. I had to rob from another project's resources to keep this one going. In a perfect world it would be nice to have specially trained members to bring in when needed. In a perfect world you'd have an operational budget to bring the resources you need in, desks, up to date computers, telephones. Vancouver is a first-rate city but was running a third-rate police department.

...We just didn't have the resources to do these investigations, which is why we had to go cap in hand to the AG or RCMP. You look at the equipment that Special O has to do surveillance, the undercover operations they can put together, we always had to go cap in hand, if we wanted to run wire, we had to go to them, and being a muni we were always last in line. We should have better equipment. The biggest thing would have been a pool of staff to bring in when you had a major investigation, we didn't have that. We had to use what we had in MCS. We should have been able to draw from Patrol people with extra training but they just weren't there. We were doing homicides with one two-officer team, interviewing all witnesses, searches, going to the autopsy. When I went in there we changed that so that the Sergeant could call out as many investigators as he needed and the OT budget would eat it. It was the only way we could do things.

And as Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness recalled:

Areas like Homicide in the late 90s were having like 30 homicides a year, with major investigations like the Dosanjhs. My thinking is that Fred and Brock, their time was all taken up with cases in their faces,

and were they in the mood of looking for cases there was no evidence for?

...[but] at some point I said to Fred we needed to have a hard look at this [the Missing Women case] and he said we needed staff. At the same time this was going on we had a problem with Home Invasions of the elderly. So we set up a task force to deal with the home invasions because we were dealing with massive public pressure regarding old people being brutalized and they were set up out of Robbery/Homicide.

As the Deputy Chief Constable, this wasn't the only thing cooking on the stove at the time, we had homicides, bank robberies.... the Strike Force was dedicating almost all their work to Homicide because of the changes in law made it so difficult to make a case. A confession wasn't enough; we'd spend a lot of staff time on forensics, we didn't have enough Ident people to do the job. It was just ongoing things like that.

The Major Crime Section (and other investigative sections) had been significantly affected not only by the severity and number of crime problems they were dealing with, but also because of the influence of a series of court decisions that increased the complexity and time requirements of their work. And as shown in the organizational chart below, the total number of investigators available in the entire section was relatively small.

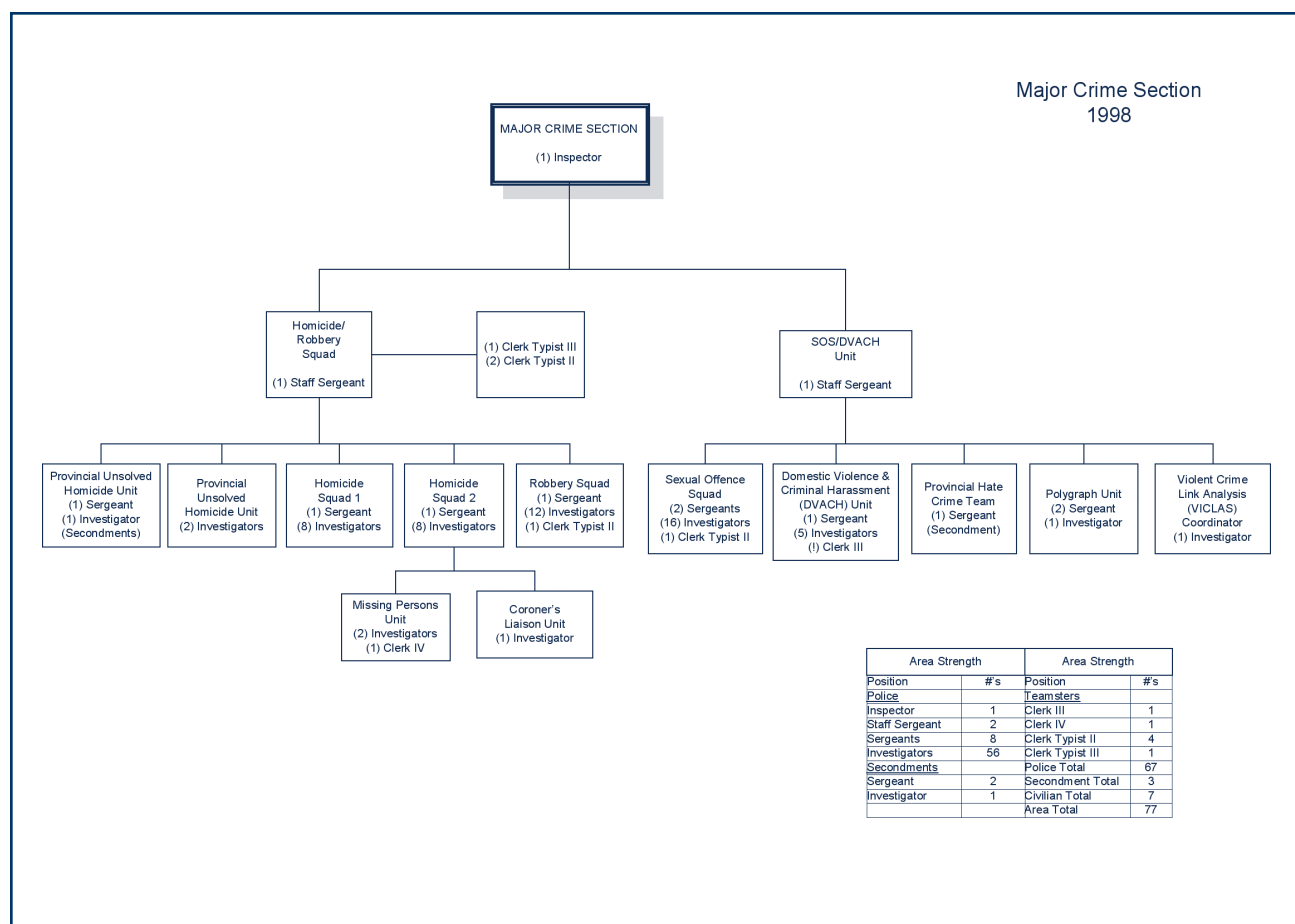
With an entire staff of 67 police officers in the Major Crime Section, and with the demands it was facing, there clearly was insufficient capacity to staff the MWRT adequately. This begs the questions of whether resources could be shifted from other areas of the Investigation Division or the entire VPD.

C. RESOURCE SHORTAGES IN THE VPD GENERALLY

The lack of resources experienced in the VPD's Major Crime Section was common to the VPD as a whole throughout 1997-2000 when the Missing Women investigation occurred. Between 1993 and 2000, the City of Vancouver cut 42 police positions from the VPD to achieve budget reduction program goals. Despite information to the contrary later provided to the media, the 42 positions cut did not include additional reductions resulting from civilianization of police positions or transfer of responsibilities (e.g., the elimination of the VPD's jail and the VPD's Communications Centre that occurred in the late 1990s). Rather, existing services were cut to meet budget reduction targets.

These cuts occurred during an era when the population of the City of Vancouver increased by almost 16% percent, or 74,000 citizens, from 471,844 to 545,671,²⁹⁵ much of it concentrated in emerging densely populated downtown communities like Yaletown, driving up demand on police services. Had the authorized strength of the VPD kept up with Vancouver's percentage population growth, it would have needed to increase by about 170 police officers. Instead, there was a net decrease in size from 1993 to 2000 by 42 officers (about 4%). A further important factor to consider in this analysis is that unlike other major cities in Canada, Vancouver does not have a police service whose jurisdiction covers the majority of the population of the metropolitan area (the "Census Metropolitan Area" or "CMA"). Instead, the City of Vancouver is the core of a patchwork of municipal jurisdictions with separate

295 Statistics Canada census data 1991 and 2001.



police forces. By contrast, Toronto and Montreal have metropolitan police services, and Calgary and Edmonton have municipal police services whose jurisdiction comprises the majority of their CMA populations. (According to Statistics Canada, the city limits of Edmonton and Calgary include over 70% and 90% of their CMA populations, respectively. The City of Vancouver's population includes only about 27% of the CMA population.)

The effect of Vancouver's CMA ratio is that the population living in the CMA outside Vancouver's city limits is drawn to the City of Vancouver because it is the business, entertainment, and tourism hub of the Lower Mainland. The VPD is therefore responsible for policing a much larger population

than is reflected in the statistics for residents of Vancouver. For example, 30% of individuals arrested by the VPD reside outside the city, and 40% of driving incidents the VPD attends or investigates involve citizens of other municipalities.²⁹⁶

Factoring the CMA population into the VPD's workload, the population increase of the CMA must also be considered. During the same period that Vancouver's population increased by almost 16%, the CMA population grew even faster, by over 20%, from 1.65 million people to almost 2 million people, exacerbating the increasing demands on police services.²⁹⁷

296 Source data from VPD PRIME-BC Records Management System.

297 Statistics Canada Census Data.

Concurrent with the pressures of the increasing population, police work was made more difficult in the 1990s as a result of Supreme Court of Canada decisions and new legislation which dramatically increased the complexity of investigations and, accordingly, the workload of the VPD.²⁹⁸ The increased burden on policing was reported on in 2001 by Statistics Canada, which noted that criminal cases had become much more complex since 1994/1995.²⁹⁹

There are many examples of changes in the legal environment that affected police workload and complexity. For example, disclosure requirements became much more onerous with the 1991 Stinchcombe decision.³⁰⁰ Robert Prior, Director of the Federal Prosecution Service, Department of Justice, Canada, described Stinchcombe as having a “revolutionary impact on the way police conduct investigations, the way prosecutors conduct prosecutions and the way defence counsel fashion their defence.”³⁰¹

The 1997 Feeney decision caused search warrants to become necessary in situations where none were required before.³⁰² DNA technology and legislation created a powerful but highly complex investigative technique, requiring considerable resources. The 1993 criminal harassment legislation created a tool for police to address stalking situations, but also

created a demand for police resources to focus on this serious matter. British Columbia’s new Police Act also added considerably to the complexity and workload of Internal Investigation investigators and government policies further impacted on police workload in the area of Mental Health Act arrests and the investigation of domestic violence incidents, for example.

To compensate for the external influences on police workload, 89 police positions were reassigned from within existing resources in the VPD between 1993 and 2000 to respond to court decisions, legislation, and government policy. These 89 positions responded to new or increasing demands around sex offences, stalking, domestic violence, witness protection, and other new challenges. This meant that existing units, such as front-line patrol and traffic squads, were depleted to effect the reorganization. And as this reorganization took place over the same time period that 42 police positions were being cut, the net effect of workload increases and cuts to the police force was equivalent to a reduction of well over one hundred officers.³⁰³ This drove up overtime, delayed response times to emergency calls, and reduced service to the public. (It should be noted that the VPD failed to forcefully articulate to Council the increasing pressure that it was under, and did not submit compelling information until late 2000.)

In mid-1997, Chief Constable Chambers joined the VPD. The authorized strength of the VPD at that time was 1060 police officers. Authorized strength was (and is again now) defined as the number of police officers authorized by Council to deliver service in the City. City budget staff ensured

298 For a detailed discussion of the impact of court decisions and new legislation, and comparison to other police departments, see the VPD’s 2000 Status Report – Workload Changes 1993 to 2000.

299 Lisa Pent (2001). Adult Criminal Court Statistics, 1999/00. Juristat Vol. 21, no. 2, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.

300 R. v. Stinchcombe (1991), 68 C.C.C. (3d) 1 (S.C.C.)

301 Robert Prior, Director, Federal Prosecution Service, Department of Justice, Canada and Martha Devlin, Deputy Director (2004). *The Law of Disclosure in Canada: The Crown’s Obligation to Disclose*. Unpublished paper, p. 1.

302 R. v. Feeney (1997), 115 C.C.C. (3d) 129 (S.C.C.)

303 For a detailed discussion of the impact on the VPD of court decisions, new legislation, and other external influences on workload, as well as comparisons to other police departments and the history of changes in VPD staffing levels, see the VPD’s year 2000 analysis, “Status Report – Workload Changes 1993 to 2000.”

every filled, authorized position was funded. The authorized strength did not include recruits in training, who were funded separately. It also did not include officers seconded to other agencies (such as the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit, the Organized Crime Agency of B.C., or the Justice Institute of B.C.); those officers were replaced because their salaries were paid by the seconding agency. In addition, officers who appeared on the nominal employment roll of the VPD, but who weren't being paid (for example, because they were on a leave of absence) were also not included in the authorized strength because they could be replaced; their positions were funded. In short, only positions funded by the City to deliver policing service to the City were included in the authorized strength, which remained constant until either increased or reduced by Council.

When Chief Constable Chambers joined the VPD after leaving the Thunder Bay police, rather than championing a badly needed increase in resources, he asked that instead of continuing with the system of having all Council-authorized positions funded, he be given an “envelope budget.” That is, he would hire as many staff as he could within the budget envelope, and he would determine what his authorized strength was. The City agreed, but no increase in funding was provided (other than for inflation). Chief Constable Chambers then cut three of the six Deputy Chief Constables and eight Inspector positions. (This was despite already having a leaner management team with fewer “layers” than any comparable police department in Canada, and one that, on a percentage of total staff basis, was significantly less than the management strength of his previous police department.³⁰⁴) Chief Chambers then declared that recruits in training, officers seconded to other agencies and officers on leave were to be counted as authorized strength. Without

having a single dollar added to the budget for staff, Chief Constable Chambers thereby claimed to have increased the number of constables for front line service by 100. He trumpeted a new authorized strength of 1149, made possible by his reorganization and elimination of management positions with “no net cost implications.”³⁰⁵

(Former Chief Constable Chambers was interviewed for this Review, and conceded that the elimination of management positions did not net many new positions. He agreed that he had included recruits in training within his authorized strength and represented those positions on the organization chart, despite the fact that the recruits were in training and so unavailable to deploy in the “new” positions, but denied he included any other non-recruit positions. He could not explain where the balance came from. He explained that he wanted to bring the funding for the recruits into the base budget. His theory was that when the VPD reached a point where no recruits in training were required, the VPD would have the benefit of the recruit training salary dollars, which otherwise would have disappeared from the budget in the previous model. Unfortunately, in the late 1990s, the leading edge of rapidly escalating attrition caused by the baby boomers beginning to retire had already started. For the VPD to have benefited from Chief Constable Chambers' financial planning, attrition would have to decrease, not increase, but this was unlikely to occur for many years.)

304 The 1997 Thunder Bay Police 1997 Statistical Report shows that 6% of the Thunder Bay police authorized strength was in management positions, compared to less than 4% in the VPD.

305 Bruce Chambers, Reorganization '97...Shaping the Future, Vancouver Police Department, p. 31.

On the VPD's organizational chart, Chief Constable Chambers distributed the new authorized strength into a host of new units that were associated with districts of the city, such as district-based property crime and drug enforcement teams. Despite wide support for the new units in the VPD, the staff that were required to fill the positions did not exist, so perpetual vacancies were created throughout the organization in order to staff the new positions.³⁰⁶

Chief Constable Chambers' "new" method of calculating authorized strength hurt the VPD in other ways. Not only did it create the illusion that there were more officers per citizen and less crimes per officer than there were, it allowed the City Manager at the time to demand a bigger reduction in police strength than the VPD had ever faced.

In December 1998, then-City Manager Ken Dobell wrote a memo to Council regarding the police budget. In his memo he recommended that "Council urge the Police Board to accelerate its consideration of measures necessary to achieve budget limitations, and further urge that the Board give positive consideration to accepting its \$1.2 million share of responsibility for the tax limitation program."

³⁰⁷ Mr. Dobell noted in his memo, in reference to information from the VPD documenting reductions in authorized strength, that the material:

does not reflect the Board's 1997 restructuring, which (according to Police submissions) increased the authorized strength to 1149, higher than the 1992 figure...the effective policing capacity of the Department should be higher than in 1992.

_____the VPD was further unable to articulate a compelling case as to the increased demands on the police. (What was available to Council was a poorly researched report by a City Budget Office employee that demonstrated no understanding of the rapidly changing legal environment in which police worked. The report suggested that an increase in police officers was unjustified and would just result in more "police officers driving around in cars."³⁰⁸) As a result, the VPD had its authorized strength cut by 15 police officers in 1999, the largest single-year cut the VPD had ever taken. Chief Constable Chambers made the reductions by eliminating a ten-officer "Strike Force" surveillance team in the Investigation Division. This severely reduced the VPD's ability to follow and arrest violent and predatory offenders, and drove up overtime dramatically in the remaining two Strike Force squads every time it was necessary to follow an offender around the clock. (The other five positions eliminated were administrative sergeant positions. A further cut of 3.5 police positions followed in 2000.)

At the same time as the 15-officer cut was approved, Council approved a Downtown Eastside policing plan negotiated between the City Manager and Chief Constable Chambers. It would increase the police budget by approximately the same amount it had just cut in order to fund 20 additional police officers in the Downtown Eastside for three years only. The deal came with a condition that an equal

306 For example, during the Missing Women investigation, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness noted that he had 40 vacancies in his Division.

307 Dobell, Ken, 1999 *Police Budget Submission*, memo to Standing Committee on Civic Services and Budgets, December 9, 1998.

308 Aileen McKeown, City of Vancouver Office of Budgets & Research. Discussion Paper on Current Crime and Policing Trends in the City of Vancouver, July 28, 1998, p. 7.

number of police officers would also be diverted to the Downtown Eastside (although it's not clear that occurred). There was also an additional condition that these resources wouldn't be diverted elsewhere. In other words, the City Manager and Council had achieved unprecedented control over where resources would be deployed in the VPD, contrary to the clear authority of the Chief Constable to allocate resources within the police department according to operational needs.³⁰⁹

The VPD had just suffered a permanent cut to its budget and authorized strength, in exchange for a roughly equal increase that was approved for only three years. Former Chief Constable Chambers later characterized this as a "good deal" for the VPD, because it protected its budget, and he felt that the 1.2 million dollar budget cut would have occurred anyway with the Downtown Eastside agreement.³¹⁰ As Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness recalled:

This was an Executive that thought that we thought we were talking to a wall, that there was no use in asking, because the City Manager was asking for budget cuts every year, and we had Chiefs who were giving that direction. The City Manager, Ken Dobell, would have loved to have had control of the police department like he had of the Fire Department... But the City Manager had a council that didn't want to raise taxes. We had a Finance Department at the City trying to put in place SAP

that was way over budget so it was a very frustrating time in the police department.

Everybody was asked to cut back on their budgets. It got to the point of having budget requests for dog food for our dogs, it was that tough in the organization. The Dog Squad sergeant would be justifying having dog food by advising in the budget form that the consequence of not buying it would be that "dogs will starve." Every area of the Department was running well below what they needed to be effective.

With respect to the attitude of Chief Constable Chambers, Deputy Chief McGuinness (who was a strong and loyal supporter of Chief Chambers while he was the chief) agreed Chief Chambers had created an environment in which requesting additional resources was discouraged:

Chambers came in and thought he had the right figures and drew up a plan without any input from anybody. He definitely was sending the message that we had enough resources and don't ask for any more. There was such incredible frustration over lack of resources. If resources weren't an issue, there were things we could have done differently.

By mid-1999, Chief Constable Chambers had left the VPD under less than amicable circumstances, leaving Deputy Chief Constable Terry Blythe as the Acting Chief Constable. In 2000, Deputy Chief Constable Blythe was appointed Chief Constable, and he directed that a comprehensive report to Council be prepared describing staffing needs. He later described his perspective on the resource issue and

309 See Paul Ceyssens' reference *Legal Aspects of Policing* (2003, Earls Court Legal Press, Inc.) 1-29 to 1-31 and 4-22, as well as sections 26(2) and 26(5) of the Police Act.

310 Chief Constable Chambers apparently did not understand that the City had demanded cuts almost every year back to 1993, that there was room to negotiate the size of the cut, and that a strong case could be made that the cuts shouldn't occur. In 2001, the same Council, in response to the year 2000 "Workload Report", reversed this trend, authorizing the 20 temporary positions to become permanent and 30 new police positions to be added, with an additional 30 approved in 2002, effective 2003.

When I was in the Implementation Work Group in '98 that Chambers started, Chris Beach was there, he was a good numbers guy, and he took Chambers to task at a meeting. He was in HR and knew the numbers better than anyone. _____

So we were in a pretty unbelievable state in terms of our resources. Then Chambers went to Council and the community and brought us to community meetings and he wouldn't even sit with us. We got tired of that. But anyway, there were a lot of pressures around resources, and Chambers' misleading numbers. But before I became chief, there were some efforts to get more resources but we always got shot down. But when I became Chief, we did have some success. [A VPD Inspector] did some amazing work to make a case they couldn't deny. I told the board if the City denied our request, we were going to get the report out to the community what our issues were.

in increases of 30 new police positions in 2001 and another 30 approved in 2002, to be effective in 2003. This accounted for less than half of a minimum of 123 police positions requested to restore front line strength to the equivalent of 1993 levels. Reports to Council since that time have been unsuccessful in generating further increases in police staffing levels. Requests for significant increases in civilian staffing levels have achieved only very modest success,³¹¹ despite the VPD having only one civilian VPD member for every five police officers, compared to the national average of one per 2.7 officers,³¹² and a detailed case submitted justifying increases in support staff. (For example, civilians with specialized technical and analytical skills capable of the type of analysis desperately needed in the Missing Women investigation were requested but not approved, due to a lack of support from City staff.)

The other Divisions were under huge demands and didn't have the staff and so the other Deputies didn't want to give up any staffing to help us. They would say they had no one to spare. Then you'd go to the Executive meeting asking for staff, and a lot of times, you'd get light duties people who couldn't go on the road so you'd have to find things that they could do...

311 For further details, see VPD Planning & Research reports and reports to Council under VPD files 2000-72, 2001-31, 2002-50, 2002-68, 2003-15, and 2003-65.

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When I became the interim chief, it wasn't long after that we decided we really had something, that there was some legitimacy around these reports about the Missing Women. There was lots of discussion around the Executive table about them needing more help. But Brian was really adamant about not asking for help and I think he was really strong on leaving people in Patrol, where I think his heart was, and he wanted to deal with things in his Division. So as much as we wanted to help, we had reduced numbers in the field, we were really understaffed. We did what we could with what we had.

...There may have been a meeting, actually I do recall...a meeting with Brian, that they would handle it within their own division, that they wouldn't ask for people. There was a bit of a controversy that every time they needed someone for a project they would go to [the Operations Division]. So we kind of had an agreement that we wouldn't keep loaning bodies everywhere and depleting frontline resources so I can recall them saying they wouldn't even ask for anybody so I was happy about that. But if they had said they had a serial killer, of course everyone would have jumped in to help.

Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness refused to attribute the failure of the other Deputies and the Chief Constable to the well-known tension between he and the rest of the Executive during and after Chief Constable Chambers' time in the VPD:

Regarding the tension between Deputy Chief Constables around getting staff to [the Investigation Division], there was, but you've got to remember

the incredible pressure on the Operations Deputy as well by all the people who want something in their community. There used to be power plays at the Executive level about which Sections you could get in your Division so you'd have more people that you'd have to work with, like 70 in Traffic. So I want to be clear that I don't think it was a personal thing with Blythe saying "it's McGuinness, so screw him." It was about the incredible pressures he had on him from the community and from his own staff.

Clearly resources were extremely low in the VPD at the time of the MWRT due to an unfortunate set of circumstances, and leadership that did not effectively advocate on the VPD's behalf.³¹³ The effect of this shortage was that once the MWRT was cobbled together, so long as management received no compelling case to increase the scale of the investigation, management was satisfied to maintain the status quo.

However, despite the pressures, if, for whatever reason (a file review, new evidence, demands by the investigators etc.), VPD management had accepted the theory that a serial killer was responsible for the Missing Women, the VPD would have found the necessary resources to facilitate an improved investigation. The VPD has demonstrated the ability to do so on a number of occasions.

For example, shortly before the MWRT was formed the VPD showed it was able to pull resources

313 The VPD has provided highly persuasive information regarding the increasing complexity of workload to the City since 2000, but until recently has had only limited success in achieving staffing increases. So it is somewhat ironic that other police departments in BC, such as Port Moody and Abbotsford (according to Deputy Chief Constable Pat Fitzgerald and Chief Constable Ian Mackenzie, respectively, at a meeting with the author in October 2004) have achieved significant increases based partly on the workload analysis conducted by the VPD. However, in March 2005, Vancouver Council approved 50 new police positions for 2005 and 57 civilians, and tentatively approved more positions for 2006, subject to reporting back on a variety of issues.

together when it restructured the Home Invasion Task Force consistent with major case management best practices. The team was increased from six to ten police officers. A full time sergeant trained in major case management was put in charge, and he brought in an experienced primary investigator, a file coordinator, an analyst and other staff, including a clerk to take minutes at daily briefings.

More recently, when the Pickton case broke in February 2002 and it became crystal clear that it was a homicide case, the VPD provided 29 investigators to the JFO. This created an enormous hardship in the VPD but it was possible.

In 2003, the VPD again demonstrated its ability to move resources to new priorities when a decision was made to dismantle the open drug market in the Downtown Eastside and address a serious disorder problem. Forty officers were added to twenty existing beat officers to create a new unit – the Citywide Enforcement Team (CET) – to address the problem, creating unmet needs throughout the organization in order to address what the VPD had determined to be a priority in responding to a community in distress.³¹⁴ (A concurrent report to Council requesting permanent staff to add to the Downtown Eastside was submitted but withdrawn due to Council's complete lack of support.)

As a final example, in late 2003, the VPD was unexpectedly faced with massive retirements because of a change to the provincial pension plan. The VPD was forced to re-prioritize services to ensure adequate front-line staffing. The Executive approved

a plan that involved dramatic reductions in proactive services such as School Liaison, the Youth Squad, and many other areas, to accommodate over 140 retirements. (It should be noted, however, that by 2003, the VPD was in somewhat better shape with staff, having achieved an increase of 60 officers between 2001 and 2003.) This demonstrated that with strong leadership, it was possible to accommodate the need to make significant shifts in resources to meet an emergent need.

D. CONCLUSION

In summary, although it would have been difficult, it was within the VPD's capacity to re-prioritize work and reassign staff to create a task force to investigate the Missing Women as victims of multiple homicides (notwithstanding that a multi-jurisdictional team was necessary to give the investigation a chance of success). None of the officers interviewed for this report suggested otherwise, although it was clear that the resource pressures were extreme and did influence decision making. The VPD did receive advice from other police departments with experience in serial killer investigations that the investigation needed additional resources. But if it proved to be impossible for the VPD to resource the full investigation, more pressure could have been applied to the RCMP, other municipal police departments, and to the Attorney General (and later, with the re-creation of a separate ministry, to the Solicitor General) to assist.

314 An independent review found that "CET was successful in disrupting the open drug market, reducing the general levels of social disorder, and enhancing the general feelings of safety and security among persons who live and work in the DTES": Yvon Dandurand; Curt Griffiths; Vivienne Chin & Joseph Chan (2004). *Confident Policing in a Troubled Community – Evaluation of the Vancouver Police Department's City-Wide Enforcement Team*, University College of the Fraser Valley, p. vi.

As discussed above, the VPD's willingness and ability to resource priority investigations, whatever the cost to the VPD as a whole, has been demonstrated on several occasions, particularly since 2003. Inadequate resources contributed to the problems by encouraging the status quo, and meant that VPD management was certainly not going to lightly establish a new task force. However, while insufficient resources were a significant contributing factor to the problems in the Missing Women investigation, they were not the primary cause of the root deficiencies.

It should be said, however, that the VPD's challenges have dramatically increased in the last decade. As summarized earlier, the reasons include significant increases in the city and region's population, and a dramatic increase in the complexity of criminal investigations, amongst other factors. Unfortunately, the VPD's staffing levels have remained essentially unchanged over the last decade. The mantra of some senior staff at the City of Vancouver that the VPD could continue with roughly the same staff it had a decade ago by simply becoming more efficient is specious. It does not consider the impact of an increase in population over the last decade that is equal to that of the city of Delta, the challenges that are created by the core city phenomena, and the well-documented issue of the increasing complexity of police work, an issue that has had resonance in other cities. As stated in an internal analysis in 2000, the VPD concluded that:

[O]ne of the greatest stresses in an investigation is attempting to acquire and maintaining enough human resources...Whenever there is an extraordinary investigation such as that into the missing women in the Downtown Eastside or the

home invasions of the elderly, investigators are borrowed from other squads whose workload is such that they can't be spared...This creates stress for the investigators, stress in the organization, and increased overtime whenever staff shortages are created. There are not enough investigators available to provide the flexibility to create short- and medium-term task forces when an extraordinary need arises.³¹⁵

Without significant increases in both sworn and civilian staffing in the VPD, the lack of resources will continue to be a significant obstacle to effectively investigating serious crimes in Vancouver,³¹⁶ as well as addressing the many other demands on police services. (In 2005, in response to an independent consultant's report that determined the VPD needed an immediate increase of 92 police officers, Council acknowledged staffing shortages and approved 50 police officers and 57 civilian positions for 2005 and tentatively approved additional positions for 2006, subject to a report back on a variety of issues.)

5. THE NEED FOR A MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL INVESTIGATION FROM THE OUTSET

A. FACTORS SUPPORTING A JOINT FORCE OPERATION

There clearly was a need demonstrated in the Missing Women investigation for a protocol for multi-jurisdictional serious investigations, particularly

315 Inspector D. LePard (2000), *Status Report – Workload Changes 1993 to 2000*, p. 19.

316 In 2005, the RCMP formally advised the VPD that if it wanted to join the "Integrated Homicide Investigation Unit", it would have to contribute 28 investigators (letter to author from Inspector Wayne Rideout, Officer in Charge, IHIT). The VPD's Homicide Unit totals 18 members.

when RCMP and municipal police jurisdictions are involved. A JFO was the most logical way to proceed (and the RCMP/VPD JFO created in 2001 has by all accounts been highly effective), but took far too long to be created.

If the VPD and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit had accepted in the Spring of 1999 the theory that a serial killer was responsible for the Missing Women, the investigation would likely have been a joint forces operation with the RCMP from the outset. There were three primary reasons why this was necessary. First, it was highly likely that the investigation of the murder of over twenty sex trade workers was going to involve multiple jurisdictions, and therefore it was appropriate for multiple police forces to be involved in the investigation. As RCMP Staff Sergeant Davidson had pointed out to Sergeant Field, the RCMP was bound to be involved at some point because historically the bodies of murdered sex trade workers in the Lower Mainland showed up in RCMP jurisdictions, typically dumped in some rural location. This was a particularly reasonable conclusion given that the bodies of sex trade workers Younker, Pipe and Olajide had been discovered in 1995 in the Agassiz/Chilliwack area, and a prevailing (but incorrect) theory throughout the Missing Women investigation was that if a killer was responsible for the Missing Women, then the individual responsible for the 1995 murders was also likely the killer responsible for the Missing Women.

Second, a joint forces operation was essential to enable an unrestricted flow of information regarding cases and evidence from the various different police forces in the Lower Mainland. The primary obstacle to the investigation was the absence of forensic evidence, and therefore, it was fundamentally important for investigators to be able to identify and follow up on any new missing persons reports

that fit the profile of the Missing Women, whether those women were reported missing in Vancouver or elsewhere. An example of the barriers faced by the VPD's investigation occurred in 1999 when Detective Constable Shenher attempted to get copies of the investigative files from the RCMP for the Whalen, Pipe, Olajide, Antone, Lidguerre and Gordon homicides. The request was made in May of 1999 and it appears she did not receive the files from the RCMP until February 2000. Such barriers to access of critical information would not have existed within a joint forces operation.

Third, and perhaps most important, the magnitude and the urgency of the crimes clearly placed a strain on a single police agency to provide the necessary resources for a full investigation. While the lack of evidence contributed to the reluctance of the VPD to accept the theory of a serial killer, if that theory had been accepted, the lack of physical evidence would have supported the need for a much larger investigation to pursue broader strategies that could generate leads in the case. The strategy that was eventually developed by the JFO and put into place in 2001 was an example of the kind of investigative strategy that was appropriate in this case.

The JFO's strategy began with an examination of historical cases throughout BC involving the murder or sexual assault of sex trade workers. The JFO hoped to obtain DNA evidence from those files and then attempt to match that DNA to the DNA of suspects who had been identified by the JFO as potential suspects in the Missing Women Investigation. The theory behind this investigative strategy was that the predator responsible for the Missing Women would have a history of assaulting

sex trade workers before he began to kill them.³¹⁷ Any identified suspects would then be targeted with focused investigative strategies such as surveillance or an undercover operation.

An investigation of this scale would have been very difficult for the VPD to resource on its own, particularly when combined with the JFO's proactive strategy of placing an additional 12 officers on full time semi-covert surveillance in the Downtown Eastside. (By January 2002, Evenhanded had a staff of 34³¹⁸). And to have mounted an investigation of the scale that was eventually required at the Pickton property would have been impossible. As Inspector Don Adam later said:

The RCMP could have gotten involved much earlier and didn't...The [Vancouver] investigators were good cops wrestling with an insurmountable problem. Evenhanded had at one point over 200 investigators. You have no idea of the depth of admiration I have for [Lori Shenher and Geramy Field]. I had 100 million dollars and 180 staff,³¹⁹ so imagine their frustration with their eight people...[When we created Evenhanded] Vancouver couldn't get a red cent from the City. The VPD showed true leadership by giving up resources despite a lack of support from

the City.³²⁰

B. INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER POLICE AGENCIES IN THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

Although a multi-jurisdictional approach was not employed from the outset, the VPD consulted and involved other police agencies throughout the investigation, and the need for a multi-jurisdictional operation was regularly discussed among investigators working in the VPD and in the RCMP. The issue of the timing of a multi-jurisdictional JFO eventually became the subject of media scrutiny.

For example, on September 21st, 2001, the *Vancouver Sun* published a major article on the Missing Women investigation.³²¹ Chief Constable Blythe was interviewed regarding the timing of the JFO:

Blythe refrained from criticizing another police agency, but the RCMP only became directly involved in the case earlier this year. RCMP media relations Constable Danielle Efford said the Mounties formed the review team as soon as they were asked, arguing it was a file that fell under Vancouver's jurisdiction until that point.

Constable Efford's statement that the RCMP became involved as soon as requested was incorrect. In fact, in addition to consulting frequently with the RCMP, the VPD had made several attempts at various levels to formally bring the RCMP (which is BC's provincial police force) generally, and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit specifically, into the Missing Women investigation. The VPD also consistently

317 According to JFO member Jim McKnight, however, in a conversation with the author on March 1, 2004, this approach would not have identified Pickton, as he has to date not been linked by DNA to a single unsolved offence other than those related to the Pickton property. However, Inspector Adam believed that Pickton would have eventually come to the attention of Evenhanded through the work of the proactive team, and certainly would have surfaced in the investigation into the 2002 disappearance of Andrea Joesbury.

318 See organizational chart in Appendix E showing the resource commitment at this stage of the investigation.

319 A copy of the organizational chart for Project Evenhanded showing its massive scope after the Pickton warrants were executed is included in Appendix E.

320 Comments made at the 2004 VPD Homicide Conference during an Evenhanded presentation, on September 23, 2004.

321 Lori Culbert; Lindsay Kines and Kim Bolan, "Investigation turns up startling new numbers: Police to announce expanded probe; Women have history of drugs, prostitution and links to Downtown Eastside," in the *Vancouver Sun*, September 21, 2001, p. A1.

made efforts to consult with other agencies with relevant experience. A summary of these efforts is set out below.

- On April 9th, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher, Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness, and Staff Sergeant Boyd met with the Attorney General and other public officials. Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness recalled that:

The purpose of that meeting was to try to get the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit involved in the case. It was very shortly before the AG got involved in offering the increased reward. The RCMP didn't want to get involved because they said it wasn't historical, and there was no evidence of a homicide. Everyone was looking saying this would be intensive, and no one had the resources. The AG didn't want to throw any money in except for the reward. At that time I think there were 31 women on the list. All that came out of that meeting was the AG came up with \$70,000 for the reward. The RCMP said if we got anything hard, or if we wanted them to review the file, they would. But that's all that came out of that. I think it was the AG that called the meeting. We said we wanted the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, but they said "show us a body, you don't have a homicide." I'm sure they saw it as Vancouver trying to dump it on them and that they were missing from Vancouver, not the RCMP [jurisdiction].

- On May 18, 1999, Detective Constable Shenher wrote to the RCMP's Staff Sergeant Doug Henderson of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit requesting copies of the files regarding the Whalen, Pipe, Olajide, Antone, Lidguerre, and Gordon homicides. She advised that the Vancouver had 28 street-

involved women missing, that the cases were possibly related, and that the homicide files may provide information suggesting links.³²² (She eventually received copies of the files with assistance from Superintendent Gary Bass on February 10th, 2000.)

- On May 19th, 1999 Sergeant Field arranged for a brainstorming meeting to determine new ideas or directions. Present were Staff Sergeant Keith Davidson, a criminal profiler with the Behavioural Science Group of the RCMP's "E" Division Major Crime Section; Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo; Neil Traynor, a British police officer understudying with Detective Inspector Rossmo; Detective Howlett; Detective Constable Shenher; Constable Dickson; and other Lower Mainland investigators.³²³

- In May of 1999, Detective Constable Shenher consulted with the Poughkeepsie (New York) Police Department, which was the only police department known to have dealt with a case similar to the Missing Women case (i.e., missing sex trade workers who were believed to have been murdered). As a result of this consultation, Detective Constable Shenher developed a questionnaire that was administered to numerous sex trade workers in June 1999.

- On June 15th, 1999, the Missing Women investigators met with Spokane homicide investigators for two days to learn from their task force into prostitute murders. (This task force eventually charged Robert Yates, Jr. with multiple counts of murder). The Spokane investigators felt the VPD members were going in the right direction and had no other suggestions "except for lots of manpower."³²⁴ Sergeant Field reported that:

322 Binder 1, Tab 26.

323 Binder 15, Tab 50.

324 Binder 15, Tab 50.

We met with them for two days, and they thought we'd done everything we could without adding 100 people to the investigation...We met with Spokane mostly because we wanted them to audit our investigation, not because of Yates, because we were pretty sure there wasn't a link. They spent a couple of days with us and said we were doing it right, and doing the best we could with what we had and didn't have any suggestions. They said we were actually ahead of them because we keep track of our hookers. Davidson and others from the RCMP were also there, Scott Filer...we tried to get as many people as we could there.

- On June 16th, 1999, Staff Sergeant Davidson, at the request of Sergeant Field, completed and submitted to Sergeant Field a "Case Assessment" of the Missing Women investigation.³²⁵ His report covered the time period from 1995 to 1999 and provided a profile of 21 missing women, a possible profile of the suspect, and recommended investigative strategies. The report was prepared on the assumptions that all of the missing women were the victims of a single sexually motivated offender (possibly working in tandem with another offender), that all of the women were successfully transported out of the Downtown Eastside in a vehicle, and that all of the women's bodies were disposed of with the express purpose of preventing discovery.
- Also on June 23rd, 1999, Sergeant Field met with various investigators involved in the Missing Women case, as well as Inspector Biddlecombe and Staff Sergeant Giles. There was discussion of an off-site JFO, and Sergeant Field noted that assistance had been obtained from the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, and that Inspector Biddlecombe would be speaking to [Superintendent] Bass of the RCMP.³²⁶ (Inspector Biddlecombe could not

recall anything of substance that came out of this consultation.)

- On October 27th, 1999, Sergeant Field and other MWRT members met at the Surrey RCMP offices to discuss the case with them. Present from the RCMP were Superintendent Gary Bass, Sergeants Bill Thordarson and Bob Paulson, Corporals Nicole St. Mars and Marg Kingsbury, and Constable Paul McCarl.³²⁷
- On January 13th, 2000, Sergeant Field met again with Staff Sergeant Keith Davidson, and Corporal Scott Filer, an RCMP geographic profiler, to discuss obtaining a suspect profile in the Missing Women case. Specific suspects were discussed, including Pickton, and "it became apparent that there was a need to have another look at some of the previously unsolved hooker homicides, the more recent unsolved homicides and our current missing prostitutes and see if there are any common threads or connection between them."³²⁸
- On February 10th, 2000, Detective Constable Shenher, Detective Lepine, and Detective Constable Chernoff attended a meeting called by Keith Davidson and Scott Filer of the RCMP Criminal/Geographical Profiling Unit.³²⁹ The meeting was held at RCMP "E" Division Headquarters, and the purpose was for the VPD members to liaise with RCMP members investigating the unsolved homicides of the three women – Pipe, Olajide, and Younker – found in the Agassiz area in 1995. All were drug addicted sex trade workers last seen in the Downtown Eastside. Detective Constable Shenher's report about the meeting noted that Staff Sergeant Davidson and Corporal Filer were going to submit

325 Binder 2, Tab 90.

326 Binder 2, Tab 18.

327 Binder 32, Tab 1.

328 Binder 15, Tab 52.

329 Binder 1, Tab 28.

a proposal to Assistant Commissioner Gary Bass asking for funding and resources to:

- profile suspect(s);
 - re-open the Pickton file;
 - assist with SIUSS (case management/ analytical database) data entry and analysis;
 - improve coordination between the unsolved prostitute homicide investigation and the Missing Women investigation;
 - propose a Joint Forces Operation; and
 - that failing funding from the RCMP, Davidson and Filer were prepared to seek funding from the Attorney General.
- By May of 2000, it appeared the various efforts to bring the RCMP into the investigation were finally going to bear fruit. On May 9th Sergeant Field sent a message to her Inspector advising that she believed

that the RCMP's Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit or a task force would be looking at unsolved sex trade worker homicides, Vancouver's Missing Women cases, and persons of interest. She advised that she had spoken to Staff Sergeant Davidson that morning, and that he was going to "more formally re-approach Assistant Commissioner Gary Bass." She also advised that there was a meeting with Staff Sergeant Doug Henderson, the RCMP officer in charge of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, the next day.

• Sergeant Field later recalled that, "May of 2000 was the first time Doug Henderson said there was a possibility the RCMP would take this over because Davidson and Filer have convinced him that this was going to be their file, that the Missing Women would turn up in RCMP territory."

• On May 23rd, 2000, Sergeant Field attended a major homicide conference in Toronto and canvassed the delegates for any similar cases in North America. ³³⁰

• On May 29th, 2000, Sergeant Field attended the Major Case Management course at the Justice Institute of British Columbia and presented the Missing Women case to the attendees. (Presenting unsolved cases for input is part of the normal curriculum.) There were no suggestions other than to initiate a JFO. ³³¹

• On June 29th, 2000, Sergeant Field consulted with the FBI to determine if they had any similar investigations or advice they could give. They had no similar investigations and no investigative advice for her. ³³²

• On August 10th, 2000, Acting Deputy Chief Constable Spencer wrote to Acting Inspector Henderson and formally requested that the RCMP "review" the Missing Women investigation. ³³³ There was a delay while the VPD dealt with some data entry problems in SIUSS because, as Inspector Spencer later wrote, "the RCMP had been helpful, but asked that "all avenues of investigation and case preparation be exhausted prior to them taking on the review," and that work had now been completed. ³³⁴

330 Binder 10, Tab 38.

331 Binder 10, Tab 38.

332 Binder 10, Tab 38.

333 Binder 1, Tab 9.

334 Binder 1, Tab 37.

- On October 10th, 2000, Detective Constables Shenher and Dickhout attended a presentation of the Spokane Homicide Task Force following the arrest of Robert Lee Yates, Jr. the previous April for a series of murders of sex trade workers.³³⁵ Detective Constable Shenher subsequently wrote a memo to Sergeant Field summarizing what they learned, and advised that the investigators involved were the same ones they consulted with in the summer of 1999 regarding the Missing Women case.³³⁶

- In November 2000, Sergeant Field presented the Missing Women case at a conference attended by homicide investigators from throughout BC, seeking their advice. The unanimous consensus reached was that the case could likely only be solved with a investigative model that ensured that information regarding murders and serious assaults of sex trade workers in BC could be accessed without impediment, and that a Joint Forces Operation with the RCMP was necessary. There was concern expressed that a JFO should have been created earlier.³³⁷ (Coquitlam RCMP members were present and advised they were still working on Pickton.)

- Sergeant Field wrote a report to Inspector Spencer about the conference, and advised that the seminar attendees agreed a “joint request would be made by the VPD and RCMP to create a properly funded and staffed task force, with a long term mandate to solve these homicides.” She finished her report with specific recommendations to form a task force coordinated by the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, using the Major Case Management model, to be located out of the Surrey Satellite Serious Crimes premises for its central location.³³⁸ (Inspector Spencer later recalled that Sergeant Field

was relentless in her pursuit of an RCMP review and a JFO: “It was Geramy that kept pushing and pushing, very adamant that there should be a JFO.”)

- On November 21st, 2000, Inspector Spencer met with Staff Sergeant Doug Henderson from the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit (and others) and they agreed a joint task force led by the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit was in order. Then-Sergeant Don Adam was assigned as the team commander.

- On January 17th, 2001, the task force to investigate the Missing Women first met, and the Joint Force Operation began the first phase of its investigation.

Clearly, there were extensive efforts made by the VPD to convince the RCMP to get involved in the Missing Women case. Understanding the RCMP’s reluctance to get involved, despite the advocacy of some of their own members (e.g., Staff Sergeant Davidson) is an issue beyond the scope of this review. However, it should be underscored that the RCMP’s own expert, Staff Sergeant Davidson, believed that the RCMP needed to become involved because of the likelihood that the victims’ bodies would be found in rural RCMP jurisdictions. In addition, there was never any evidence to suggest that the Missing Women had been the victim of any crimes in the City of Vancouver relating to their disappearance, despite their connection to the Downtown Eastside. What is now known is that Pickton’s victims allegedly willingly visited his property, and were only victimized once there.

335 Binder 1, Tab 19.

336 Binder 18, Tab 6.

337 Binder 1, Tab 35.

338 Binder 5, Tab 49.

C. INTER-JURISDICTIONAL COOPERATION

There is considerable literature around the issue of conflict between police departments of different jurisdictions and the refusal of police agencies to work cooperatively and share information. For example, in Ontario in 1996, Justice Archie Campbell conducted a major inquiry ordered by the Ontario Provincial Government into the notorious Paul Bernardo/Karla Homolka serial rape and murder case. (Paul Bernardo was a serial rapist who was assisted in the homicides of three young women by his wife, Karla Homolka, one of them Homolka's own younger sister.) Justice Campbell determined that the failure of the two police agencies involved in the Bernardo investigation to work cooperatively severely hampered the investigation, noting:

There were times during the separate investigations of the Scarborough rapes and the St. Catherines rapes and murders that the different police forces might as well have been operating in different countries.³³⁹

Justice Campbell attributed the turf problem to, “ego clashes, turf competition, and inherent rivalry between police forces, a natural everyday fact of police life...”³⁴⁰

Inspector Rod Gehl, who was the Team Commander for the “Abbotsford Killer” investigation that resulted in the arrest and conviction of Terry Driver, wrote a master's thesis on the subject of multi-agency investigations. His research indicated that “turf issues are more frequently encountered in present day policing with mobile criminals crossing jurisdictional boundaries and drawing the attention

of neighbouring police agencies.”³⁴¹

In the Missing Women investigation, however, there were no problems with the VPD not sharing information or “guarding turf”; in fact, the opposite was true. The VPD consulted frequently with the RCMP, and a constant theme of those consultations was that successfully resolving the case would require the RCMP's assistance. The assistance requested was both in terms of resources, but also in taking advantage of potential evidence to identify a suspect, much of which was located in the files of RCMP investigations. In addition, the VPD on several occasions attempted to put pressure on the RCMP to revisit the stalled Pickton investigation in Port Coquitlam, but those efforts were unsuccessful; they should have been made at a much higher level by VPD management.

D. CREATION OF THE JOINT FORCES OPERATION

Eventually a JFO was formed in late 2000, but the information supporting the creation of a JFO existed long before. The VPD must take its share of the blame for not more forcefully pursuing a JFO with the RCMP. For the most part, Sergeant Field drove the JFO agenda, with little support from her management team (i.e., her Inspector and Deputy Chief) until late 2000.³⁴² Yet, as she later stated:

341 Rod Gehl (2001). *The Dynamics of Police Cooperation in Multi-Agency Investigations: Finding Common Ground*. Masters Thesis, Royal Roads University, p. 44.

342 For example, in December 1999, Sergeant Field wrote a report to Acting Inspector Matthews advising that she was pursuing a province-wide review of sex trade worker homicides, similar to “Project Eclipse” in 1991. As Inspector Matthews later described, his response was not proactive: “I would have said ‘sure, you go do that, tell me where we go from here.’” This comment, and the fact that he did not recall the initiative or take any further action, was not indicative of a willingness to take on some responsibility for this effort, considering the roles of a supervisor and a manager.

339 Justice Archie Campbell (1996). *Bernardo Investigation Review*, Government of Ontario, p. 42.

340 *Ibid.*, at p. 206.

I think there is an important question about did the Chief go to the mayor for more resources, or was there a high level request to get the RCMP to assist with resources. Because it's easy for [the RCMP] Inspector to say no to a lowly sergeant. It would have been different from our Chief to their top person.

Because there was a reluctance to accept the serial killer theory at the Executive level of the VPD, pressure was not brought to bear on the RCMP (or, failing that, on to the Attorney General) as to the urgent need to create a task force. For example, even in September 2001, well after the JFO was created, Deputy Chief Unger still characterized the Missing Women case as a Vancouver case:

It cannot be over-stressed that this is a Vancouver Police case and that the RCMP have willingly joined with us as a result of our close working relationship.”³⁴³

This comment was perhaps reasonable if the Missing Women were simply “missing,” but is inconsistent with an investigative strategy for a serial murderer which clearly required a multi-jurisdictional response.

As stated earlier, questions around the length of time it took the RCMP to become involved in the Missing Women investigation are beyond the scope of this review, particularly since interviewing RCMP members with decision-making authority was not practicable for this review. However, the factors that influenced the RCMP's approach would be interesting to compare with the VPD's experience. As Inspector Don Adam has commented:

The VPD investigation had to fail before there was going to be a JFO. All the work that had been done, the traditional process of trying to eliminate suspects, the failure of that was the catalyst to justify a JFO. No one police department can afford to put this kind of resources [the JFO operation] into an investigation, and no one can put in the kind of resources needed unless you're really sure what the problem is.

What the Missing Women case highlights is how important it is that there be a mechanism or process to “trigger” a multi-agency response to a serious crime problem in BC, such as an active serial killer. It is commendable that there has been considerable leadership and cooperation shown amongst the BC Chiefs with respect to integration of police agencies. However, where police leaders are unable to come to agreement on the appropriate response to a serious problem, there is also a need to have an “oversight” mechanism to serve the interests of public safety in extraordinary situations.

In the Bernardo Investigation Review, Justice Campbell recommended an approach he believed would preserve the autonomy of individual police agencies, but would be centrally mandated. In summary, Justice Campbell found that a major case management system is required for major and inter-jurisdictional serial predator investigations, based on:

- co-operation rather than rivalry
- specialized training for senior officers in charge, senior investigators, and inter-disciplinary support teams
- early recognition of linked offences
- co-ordination of inter-disciplinary and forensic resources
- simple mechanisms to ensure unified

343 Binder 10, Tab 13.

management, accountability and co-ordination among police forces and law enforcement agencies

About this approach, Justice Campbell stated:

The approach recommended in this review preserves local autonomy but supplements it with a co-operative system among police forces to ensure that local autonomy does not dilute public protection against mobile serial predators who use police boundaries to avoid detection and capture.³⁴⁴

Whether or not there needs to be a “centrally mandated” approach is an issue that requires further study. Inspector Gehl’s research indicated that “things work better if they can be done by mutual agreement” (a philosophy endorsed by the VPD and Assistant Commissioner Bass of the RCMP).³⁴⁵ Anecdotal evidence from Ontario is that there has been “resistance” to some of the government-mandated responses to the Bernardo inquiry (such as the choice of case management software). It is preferable that the police community is provided support and resources from the government to cooperatively develop the necessary infrastructure to address the systemic issues raised in the Missing Women case. Whatever the approach, there must be an infrastructure and protocols in place to allow for the rapid creation of multi-agency investigations when an emergent situation arises, and to minimize individual poor decision-making.

E. INTEGRATION AND AMALGAMATION

In the course of this review, investigators from both the VPD and the RCMP commented that many barriers to an effective Missing Women investigation would have been minimized or eliminated had there been a regional force. For example, there wouldn’t have been competing priorities between organizations, there would have been a bigger pool of resources to efficiently draw upon, and communication difficulties between organizations would have been reduced.

It is not within the scope of this Review to conduct a detailed review of the merits of integration and amalgamation of police agencies, but the issue does deserve at least being flagged for further study, and some basic background information provided.

Amalgamation of police forces has been studied in Canada since the 1930s³⁴⁶ and in BC since at least 1978.³⁴⁷ In Ontario, in 1957, 13 municipal forces were consolidated into the Toronto Metropolitan Police.³⁴⁸ Since then, every major metropolitan region in Canada but Vancouver has either amalgamated police agencies into a metropolitan or regional police service, or the majority of the population is included within the municipal force’s jurisdiction. For example, Montreal, Ottawa, Halton, and Peel all have metropolitan or regional police forces. In Edmonton and Calgary, over 70% and 90% of the metropolitan populations,

344 Justice Archie Campbell (1996). *Bernardo Investigation Review*, Government of Ontario, p. 335.

345 Unfortunately, Inspector Gehl’s recommendations, published in 2001, have not been acted on. He reported that the recommendations directed toward the JIBC were not supported by the JIBC, which felt that the Ministry of Solicitor General should have the responsibility for their implementation.

346 Greg Marquis (1993). *Policing Canada’s Century: A History of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, p. 192.

347 British Columbia (1978). *Task Force on Municipal Policing Costs in British Columbia: Preliminary Report for Discussion Purposes*, Vancouver, BC.

348 Ibid, p. 164.

respectively, are included in the city limits,³⁴⁹ creating metropolitan police forces for all intents and purposes.

In contrast, the Lower Mainland is served by a patchwork of five independent municipal police departments³⁵⁰ and several RCMP detachments, which function for the most part as separate police departments. The VPD is the largest municipal department in BC, and it serves the city proper of Vancouver. But less than 30% of the Vancouver “Census Metropolitan Area” population is included within the city limits. This creates huge workload issues for the VPD (which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4). In terms of the Missing Women investigation, what this situation means is that many investigations have regional implications, but are not policed on a regional basis, creating constant challenges for all agencies involved.

Had there been a regional police force in place at the time of the Missing Women investigation, some of the problems associated with both the Pickton investigation, and with convincing the RCMP to participate in a JFO, would have been much less of an issue.

For example, in the case of Pickton, with a regional force, the same agency responsible for the Missing Women case would likely have had jurisdiction in Port Coquitlam (depending on how large an area the agency covered). With respect to the JFO, the resource implications for the RCMP would have been less onerous had a regional force been able to apply its greater resources to the investigation. Finally, with respect to ensuring sufficient resources were applied to the investigation, it would have been easier to divert resources from within a regional service

than an under-resourced core city police department like the VPD. And many systemic issues such as different labour agreements, computer systems, and policies (all issues Evenhanded had to deal with) are eliminated when a single agency employs all staff.³⁵¹

On a related topic, Solicitor General Coleman has been active in championing the PRIME records management system first implemented in BC by the VPD, to ensure there is the capacity to efficiently share information amongst all police agencies. And Minister Coleman has also made clear his belief in integration of police services (such as the RCMP’s Integrated Homicide Investigation Team). Integration is a good first step, but integration will not solve all the problems created by a lack of a regional or metropolitan police force, and the Missing Women investigation is a good illustration of the problem.

Even if all homicide squads in the Lower Mainland had been integrated during the Missing Women investigation, this would not have addressed many of the challenges that existed. An investigation into a serial predator is not limited to the “crime solving” efforts of the detectives. A successful investigation relies on the effective and efficient exchange of information from street police officers and other investigative units, and the application of a variety of resources outside the investigative team.

For example, during the investigation of the home invasions of the elderly in Vancouver in 1999, Patrol officers were deployed to saturate the areas where another home invasion was thought to be most likely to occur. They were directed to “check everything that moves” in order both to generate suspect information, and also to suppress the crimes. This was an investigation in which different managers

349 Statistics Canada “community profiles” data.

350 There are 5 municipalities with independent municipal police departments in the Lower Mainland: Vancouver, West Vancouver, Delta, New Westminster and Port Moody.

351 The issues of inter-agency cooperation are discussed in considerable detail in Justice Campbell’s Bernardo Investigation Review and provide an excellence analysis.

in the same police department applied resources based on coordinated strategies developed across the organization.

Similarly, in the Missing Women investigation, although extra resources weren't applied, Patrol and Vice Squad members were tasked with attempting to develop useful intelligence, and the Sexual Offence Squad was involved in trying to identify likely suspects based on sexual assaults on sex trade workers (although these efforts could have been improved with a better structured investigation). Ensuring this sort of complementary investigation occurs is very difficult if the investigative body making the request doesn't have the same "master" as the one who controls the resources in the jurisdiction in question; competing priorities will always come into play.

That was certainly the case in the Pickton investigation, where the VPD investigators (and some RCMP investigators) strongly believed there needed to be further investigation into Pickton. But the MWRT had to rely on the RCMP, because the alleged crime scene was in Port Coquitlam; the VPD had no control over the RCMP investigation. And the Port Coquitlam RCMP's Serious Crime Unit was too small to handle such an investigation so turned to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit – an integrated team – for help. The Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, which had no vested interest in the investigation like the VPD or the Coquitlam RCMP, wouldn't agree to continue the investigation because they did not believe the informant information, so the investigation was derailed. As Constable York later explained, "I don't think IHIT would have changed anything, because you needed someone to recognize that the file needed to be worked on."

Had the Coquitlam RCMP and the VPD been part of a regional force, it is conceivable that many of the jurisdictional obstacles to a successful investigation would have been reduced or eliminated.

The Missing Women investigation generated considerable interest around the issue of regionalization of police services. On September 26th, 2001, the *Vancouver Sun* published a major story focusing on the negative impact of "the patchwork quilt of municipal police forces and RCMP detachments across the Province..." One of the issues discussed was regionalization. Serious crime investigators from around the Lower Mainland, from both RCMP detachments and municipal departments, were in agreement that a regionalized police force was needed in the Lower Mainland (amongst other resources to attack predatory crime), and that the impetus must come from the Provincial Government.³⁵²

The issue of regionalization will not be resolved in this report, but it remains an important consideration in examining the best way to address crime and policing issues in the Lower Mainland. In the meantime, there clearly were problems with bringing the RCMP into the investigation soon enough, as described earlier in this chapter.

F. THE NEED FOR A COORDINATED REGIONAL APPROACH TO MISSING PERSONS CASES

The investigation of the Missing Women has exposed the deficiencies in the way that missing persons reports are investigated in British Columbia. Currently, missing persons reports are investigated by the police agency to whom the reports are submitted.

352 Lindsay Kines; Lori Culbert and Kim Bolan, "B.C. slow to adopt lessons of Bernardo: Police face obstacles tracking down serial predators," in the *Vancouver Sun*, September 26, 2001, p. A1.

An individual reported missing by her family in Chilliwack might be investigated by the Chilliwack RCMP, despite information being received that the missing woman is a resident of Vancouver. Normally this is not a problem because police agencies co-operate extensively with each other to assist with missing persons investigations. However, when a missing person is not located, the file containing the unsuccessful investigation remains with the original investigating agency. As a result, the system is vulnerable to a killer who successfully disposes of the bodies of his victims, because the victims remain as unsolved missing persons files in the police detachments to whom the missing person report was made.

In the Missing Women investigation, MWRT investigators located additional reports of women missing from the Downtown Eastside by canvassing other agencies in the Lower Mainland, an inefficient process. In some cases, though, despite inquiries, the VPD was not initially advised of relevant cases reported to other police agencies. The lack of an easily accessible centralized registry for missing persons hampered the investigation. Although all missing persons reports are entered on CPIC (the Canadian Police Information Centre database administered by the RCMP), searches of CPIC – other than by name – are cumbersome and require expert assistance. (For example, the JFO had to conduct “off-line” searches to determine how many women were actually reported missing.)

When the PRIME-BC Records Management System is eventually implemented Province-wide, access to

and sharing of missing persons information will be greatly enhanced, but a better mechanism is needed now.

As discussed previously, there is the additional problem that in Vancouver, at least, there is no procedure by which an unsolved missing persons case automatically becomes a homicide case without some forensic evidence of a crime being discovered or highly suspicious circumstances. Again, this practice is vulnerable to a killer who can successfully dispose of the bodies of his victims. The victim’s file simply remains with the Missing Persons Unit indefinitely, unless some event triggers a different approach. While it would be completely impracticable to treat all unsolved missing persons cases as homicides, there needs to be better analysis to determine those cases deserving of additional attention.

As a result, what is needed is a provincial database and analysis capacity for unsolved missing persons cases. It is appropriate that each police agency have a missing persons capacity of their own to investigate the routine missing persons reports that are received and are best handled by a police agency that has knowledge and familiarity of the immediate locale. Thresholds should be established, however, for missing persons reports that remain unsolved for a period of time that suggests that foul play could be involved. The RCMP in BC have now instituted a policy that all missing persons case are to be presumed suspicious – and investigated as such – unless there is evidence to the contrary.³⁵³ Improvements have also been made to the VPD’s

353 At the time of writing, the “E” Division policy manual states, ‘Missing persons investigations are to be considered “high risk” investigations that require close supervision and detailed documentation...ensure that the file is investigated under the presumption that foul play is involved until the facts demonstrate otherwise.’

Missing Persons policy since 2001,³⁵⁴ but during the Missing Women investigation, the common practice was that a missing person case remained a missing person case unless there was evidence to the contrary. In addition, there is a lack of harmonization of missing persons policies and practices in Lower Mainland police agencies and at E-COMM that has resulted in disagreements at times over which agency is responsible for a particular case. In response, the VPD amended its policy in 2001 to state that:

The police agency in which the missing person normally resides shall generally be responsible for the investigation, including entering or amending CPIC records. This does not prevent a police agency from requesting assistance from other agencies or jurisdictions that may be linked to the missing person's movements.

If the missing person was last seen (i.e. confirmed by an identifiable witness) in another jurisdiction, the police agency having jurisdiction where the last sighting took place is responsible for the investigation. However, if that jurisdiction fails to investigate, members are again advised that the safety and welfare of the missing person shall be the paramount consideration.³⁵⁵

The combination of a provincial database and a practice of escalating the investigation of missing persons files until they are resolved can prevent missing persons from slipping through the cracks of the investigative processes conducted by the police. Furthermore, the provincial analysis unit would allow investigative analysis to identify patterns of missing persons so that circumstances that suggest multiple homicides can be more quickly identified.

The creation of an integrated provincial data base with staff assigned to an analysis function was committed to in 2004 by the BC Association of Chiefs of Police and implemented in 2005. The new unit is staffed by an RCMP officer, a civilian analyst employed by the RCMP, and a municipal police officer. In addition, in 2003, the VPD assigned a full time sergeant to the Missing Persons Unit in recognition of the close supervision required in missing persons files. As well, in early 2004, the author contracted a highly experienced retired police Inspector to conduct a comprehensive audit of its Missing Persons Unit. This audit has resulted in the VPD establishing new procedures and policies that will address a variety of concerns raised in this Review.

G. CONCLUSION

It is clear that once it was recognized (or should have been recognized) that the Missing Women were likely victims of a serial killer, a multi-jurisdictional JFO should have been created. Sergeant Field made repeated efforts to involve the RCMP in the investigation, but was unsuccessful for too long. The RCMP should have become involved much earlier, as the case had little chance of being solved without its involvement, due to the volume of potential evidence located in RCMP jurisdictions, and the likelihood that a serial killer would dispose of victims' bodies in a rural location. (There were at the time 52 unsolved sex trade worker homicides in BC, and 31 unsolved female "hitchhiker" murders; the greatest potential to solve the case of the Missing Women was through examination of these cases.) In addition, the RCMP had (and has) a much greater capacity to marshal extraordinary resources, as it demonstrated with Evenhanded. As Inspector Don Adam would later

354 Copies of the current and previous policies are attached as Appendix C.

355 VPD Regulations and Procedures Manual, s. 34.06

say, “The RCMP could have gotten involved much earlier and didn’t...I had 100 million dollars and 180 staff, so imagine [the VPD’s] frustration with eight people.”³⁵⁶

More attention needs to be paid to the issues of integration and amalgamation of resources if serial offender investigations are to be successful. At the least, there needs to be a mechanism to rapidly create (and fund) multi-agency responses to urgent problems such as an active serial killer. Problems in the Missing Women investigation generally, and the Pickton investigation specifically, could have been mitigated had there been better such systems in place. In addition, there needs to be a regional approach to analysis of missing persons cases (which the RCMP, with the support of the BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police, have now created).

6. HOW THE VPD INVESTIGATION COULD HAVE BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE

A. INTRODUCTION

A multi-jurisdictional approach to the Missing Women investigation was required far sooner than 2001. Notwithstanding that issue, the VPD’s own investigation certainly could have been better resourced and organized so as to be more effective. The question of what level of resources was appropriate for the investigation of the Missing Women case, however, is integrally related to what the VPD believed the investigation was trying to achieve. The reality was, there was a disconnect between the line-level investigators and VPD managers, and this disconnect contributed to the problems in the investigation.

As a missing persons investigation, the MWRT suffered from some organizational problems and personnel issues, but was not necessarily understaffed, and in fact, conducted some extraordinary work that resulted in finding several missing women. Although there were certainly problems in the MWRT, as a missing persons investigation, it was second to none (when including the work done by Detective Constable Shenher prior to the creation of the MWRT). The analysis changes radically if the resources allocated to the MWRT are considered in the context of an investigation into the serial murder of dozens of women. Given the findings of this report, the resources and management of the MWRT will be considered from the latter perspective.

This chapter will first discuss major case management theory which had, by 1994, been standardized to form a “best practices” model for Canadian police forces engaged in major investigations. With that context in place, an array of deficiencies in the VPD’s investigation of the Missing Women will be discussed and consideration will be made as to how the investigation could have proceeded differently. It is recognized that it isn’t particularly useful to simply look back and speculate about what the investigation could have been if it had unlimited resources. Instead, this Review will focus on how the problems experienced in the investigation could have been mitigated within the means of the VPD at the time, and will be in the future.

³⁵⁶ Comments made at the 2004 VPD Homicide Conference during an Evenhanded presentation, on September 23, 2004.

B. THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE MAJOR CASE MANAGEMENT

Serial murder investigations present numerous challenges to police departments and major case managers who undertake them. In the Missing Women case, the investigative challenges were extreme, because of the lack of clarity and what the investigators were facing, as the result of the absence of bodies, physical evidence, or witnesses, for example. However, during the Missing Women investigation, there were (and are now) experienced, competent officers within the VPD capable of directing effective major investigations. Furthermore, the officers who were engaged in the investigation of the Missing Women were, for the most part, highly competent, dedicated police officers who are to be commended for their efforts, which in some cases were exceptional. Unfortunately, their skills and dedication were not employed in a manner that maximized their collective abilities or on a scale befitting the scope of the task that was before them. The Canadian Police College's major case management model, developed in 1994, is the accepted "best practice" for managing serious investigations. Justice Archie Campbell cited it in his review of the Bernardo investigation as "a well-thought out approach to the problems of major serial predator investigations, solidly grounded in Canadian investigative experience and the lessons learned from failures and successes."³⁵⁷ He went on to say:

The Canadian Police College Course deals in a highly organized and systematic manner with issues such as the accountability of the senior officer in charge, the organization of the major investigative functions such as liaison with victims and their families, team building, financial administration,

file organization, scene examination, profiling of victims and suspects, computerized investigative techniques, preparing for Crown disclosure, processing tips, planning the arrest and the interview, handling inter-jurisdictional issues, public appeals and planning for the deluge of information that results from them, dealing with the inevitable stress inflicted on the investigators and the victims and their families, establishment and management of the command post, and dozens of other issues faced daily by the officer in charge of a major serial predator investigation.³⁵⁸

(The following summary is an edited excerpt from the major case management manual published by the Canadian Police College prior to the Missing Women investigation.)

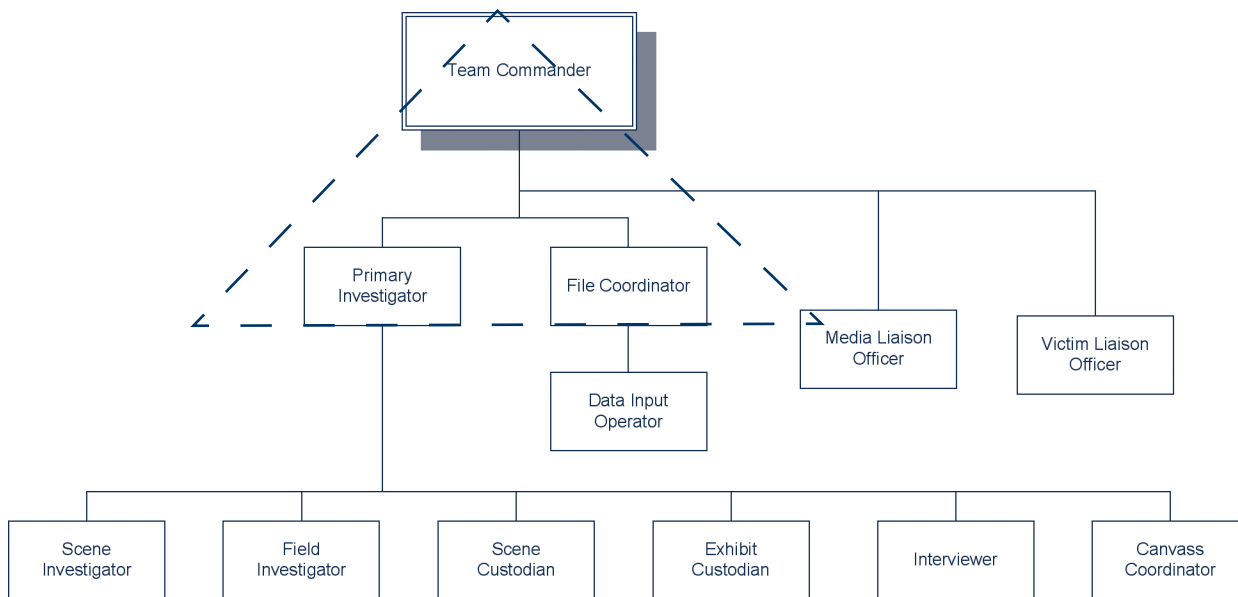
The major case management model training prepares candidates to assume and retain effective command of co-ordinated investigation teams by providing the wherewithal to recognize, understand and deal with a variety of critical management issues inherent to such investigations. The major case management model repackages the cumulative skills, knowledge and experience derived from the successes and failures of Canadian law enforcement and organizes them in a manageable format, which makes them more effective and easily applied.

Major cases are defined as those cases which necessitate a police response that falls outside the parameters of normal, substantive policing services. Most, not all, major cases involve the following situations:

- multi-victim accidents or disasters;
- serial crimes against persons, including stalking;

357 Justice Archie Campbell (1996). *Bernardo Investigation Review*, Government of Ontario, p. 271.

358 Ibid., at p. 324.



- high profile single victim or multi-victim homicides;
- multi-victim sexual assaults;
- institutional abuse of children;
- high profile and multi-victim white collar crime;
- major administrative investigations or public inquiries; and
- officer involved deaths (i.e., deaths that occurred as a result of police actions such as a police shooting or an in-custody death)

Fundamental to the major case management model is the “command triangle,” as shown in the sample diagram above. The Team Commander is at the top of the triangle, and the File Coordinator and Lead Investigator report to him or her. Data entry

staff report to the File Coordinator, and all field investigators report to the Primary Investigator.

The qualifications and responsibilities of the three positions in the command triangle are summarized below: ³⁵⁹

The Team Commander must be:

- an effective communicator, both orally and in writing;
- an experienced investigator with a proven ability to delegate, co-ordinate and control a complex, multi-faceted investigation;
- a capable decisive leader, able to evaluate large quantities of information and to deploy resources accordingly; and

³⁵⁹ See the Canadian Police College’s Major Case Management Manual for a much fuller description of the selection criteria and duties of the various positions in the Major Case Management model.

- an above average leader and team builder.

Duties of the Team Commander include:

- in consultation with the Command Triangle, determine and implement the investigative strategy;
- liaise with the Crown Prosecutor and other key agencies as required;
- establish formal and effective scheduling of human and material resources;
- ensure that the prescribed reporting and communication procedures are adhered to;
- ensure formal management and administrative systems are in use;
- ensure effective interrelationships and co-operation within the Team, acting as the first level arbitrator in matters which cannot be resolved;
- monitor the impact of stress on the Team;
- initiate and actively support team-building among members of the Team; and
- release from the Team any member whose spirit, co-operation, production, attitude or performance is counter-productive to the investigation.

The Primary Investigator:

- reports directly to the Team Commander;

- must be an experienced investigator with proven ability to co-ordinate, organize and control a complex, multi-faceted investigation; and
- his/her experience must be directly or indirectly related to the nature of the crimes under investigation.

Duties of the Primary Investigator include:

- maintain a close and continuous reporting relationship with the Team Commander;
- identify the human and material resources required to conduct the type of investigation established by the Team Commander;
- ensure that formal, effective scheduling of human resources is established within the Investigation Team;
- assign duties, authorities and responsibilities to personnel in the Team commensurate with their skills and experience;
- in consultation with the Team Commander, control the direction, speed and flow of the investigation;
- provide clear, concise instructions on job duties to all personnel; and
- ensure that all relevant information is reviewed and acted on in a timely fashion.

The File Coordinator must:

- have a comprehensive knowledge of the law affecting disclosure and criminal procedure;
- have the skills necessary to ensure quality control of all information obtained in the investigation; and
- have a thorough knowledge of the case management software used in the investigation.

The File Coordinator's duties include:

- scrutinizing every document received in the investigation;
- indexing and organizing all documents;
- implementing standards and controls for the file coordination system used by the team including a format for a daily report outlining investigative results, deployment of human resources and proposed investigative activities;
- in conjunction with the Primary Investigator, ensuring that each tip is thoroughly investigated until it is eliminated; and
- ensuring the classification and appropriate security of all records and information.

These principles and others were taught prior to and during the Missing Women investigation in courses on major case management offered by the Canadian Police College. The course included an extensive consideration of common problems to major case investigations, such as:

- underestimation of investigation complexity;
- snowballing without planning and control;
- incorrect assumptions about roles and assignments; and
- inappropriate shifting of priorities.

The course also examined and developed solutions to common obstacles, such as:

- multitude of victims & acquaintances of victims;
- multitude or complete absence of suspects;
- absence of physical evidence;
- absence or inordinate numbers of tips;
- multi-jurisdictional accountability;
- pride of authorship, defensiveness;
- inadequacy of investigator co-operation;
- absence of experienced supervisors;
- shortage of experienced investigators;
- interference from non-team personnel;

- ignorance of duties and responsibilities;
- conflicting priorities for lead follow-up;
- investigative-Team information leaks;
- unsuitable file management;
- lack of familiarity of investigative supports;
- absence of investigative innovation;
- failure to ask for appropriate help when needed;
- absence of team cohesion / harmony of purpose;
- tangential investigations and swarming;
- team stress;
- unproductive media relations;
- absence of public support or co-operation;
- community pressure; and
- deficiencies in finances and resources.

C. MAJOR CASE MANAGEMENT IN THE VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Many of the common obstacles to an effective investigation identified by the Canadian Police College when it created the Major Management

Program were evident in the Missing Women investigation, but none of the staff involved had received the MCM program at the time the MWRT was created. This resulted in a failure to address problems known to be common to major investigations. In fact, when the Missing Women investigation began in 1998, and when the MWRT was formed in 1999, only two VPD members – Inspector Ted McClellan and then-Sergeant Doug LePard (the author) – had received major case management training at the Canadian Police College.

On January 13th, 1998, Sergeant LePard submitted a memo to Inspector Biddlecombe and provided a detailed summary of the major case management program that he had previously received.³⁶⁰ He strongly supported other [Major Crime Section] supervisors receiving the training, and concluded his memo with the following recommendations:

1. THAT a commitment be made by this Department to have all [Major Crime Section] supervisors receive major case management training;
2. THAT, in the short term, extraordinary efforts be made to send as many [Major Crime Section] supervisors to the Canadian Police College's major case management course as is possible; and
3. THAT the possibility of the following be explored:
 - (a) bringing the Canadian Police College's major case management course to Vancouver to reduce the cost of sending our members to Ottawa; and

360 Sgt. D. LePard, *Major Case Management Training*, Internal VPD memo, January 13, 1998.

- (b) having the Justice Institute of B.C. develop a “made-in-B.C.” major case management program in consultation with the Canadian Police College and the Ministry of Solicitor General and Correctional Services in Ontario.

On February 16th, 1998, Inspector Biddlecombe submitted a comprehensive report to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness on the issue of enhancing VPD homicide investigation practices.³⁶¹ In his report, he noted that he had interviewed homicide squad supervisors and managers from across Canada, and also that he had reviewed the Canadian Police College’s major case management manual, Justice Archie Campbell’s review of the Bernardo investigation, and other documents relevant to homicide case management.

In his report, Inspector Biddlecombe supported recommendations “1” and “2” from Sergeant LePard’s report (above), and also made a number of other recommendations consistent with moving the Homicide Squad’s practices more in line with the major case management model. In 1998, one additional VPD member received the major case management program. There were none trained in 1999, but several in 2000, both locally and at the

Canadian Police College.³⁶² The lack of experienced investigative supervisors trained in Major Case Management, and the failure to assign an appropriate supervisor trained in major case management, was a factor in the Missing Women investigation. As Inspector Biddlecombe later explained:

When I left in ’99, you and Ted were the only members who’d had the Major Case Management course, even though I asked for it every year. Out of the \$50,000 for travel and training every year, you

362 Inspector Bob Huston has been the Inspector in charge of the VPD’s Training Section since 2001. He recalled that when he arrived in the Training Section he had numerous requests for the Major Case Management course, but his budget could not accommodate the expense of sending a police officer to Ottawa for the three-week course. He was unaware of either Sgt. LePard’s or Inspector Biddlecombe’s 1998 memos regarding the major case management course, but independently pursued the issue with the Justice Institute of B.C. and was successful in having the course delivered there on several occasions. Since then, over 50 VPD members have received the major case management course.

With respect to major case management training, the author received recent anecdotal reports that the major case management program had become degraded from its original high-level management focus, and had become more of an investigators’ course. The Canadian Police College recognized that the major case management course needed upgrading, stating in a recent discussion paper that “changes to the course over the years diluted its effectiveness, and instead focused on techniques”, i.e., it had become an investigators’ course. As a result of concerns with the program, in 2004, the RCMP took a lead role in developing an accreditation program for high level major case managers so that a pool of highly qualified candidates are available, assessed by an accreditation committee composed of experienced major case managers. Municipal police agencies have been invited to participate in this process and so far both the VPD and the Delta Police Dept. are doing so. (The author sits on this committee as an ex officio) member. In addition, the accreditation committee participated in the development of a new MCM curriculum, which was piloted at the Canadian Police College in November 2004. RCMP Inspector Bob Paulson has been spearheading this initiative, supported by Assistant Commissioner Bass. The RCMP should be commended for their leadership role in this matter.

361 Inspector Fred Biddlecombe, “Research & Recommendations – Homicide Squad.” February 16, 1998, Vancouver Police Department.

had to take the \$30,000 for certification training, leaving only \$20,000, so if you were lucky you could get away with about \$4,000 for a course in Ottawa, so out of one year you could get 4 or 5 members trained...The training budget was pitiful. To get around that, even to do the RCMP Major Crimes course, to bring it here in the VPD, Bass agreed with me and we tried to bring it here but they said the course wasn't available. I know I had a Major Case Management course binder on disc and I had Pat reproduce them on WordPerfect and Word and give them to every member of MCS. Training was useless back then. There was a lack of training for people to do their jobs.

Notwithstanding the lack of appropriate training, there were several VPD members with the right experience and training to provide, at the least, advice regarding major case management. So with this context of major case management in mind, specific resource-related problems in the MWRT will now be discussed.

D. THE INVESTIGATION REQUIRED AN APPROPRIATE COMMAND STRUCTURE

As discussed, major investigations should be directed by a command triangle consisting of a Team Commander, Primary Investigator and File Coordinator. The delineation of these functions provides a basis for the investigation to both pursue investigative strategies in an organized manner and to receive, filter and organize large amounts of information that may be generated or received in the course of the investigation. To its detriment, the MWRT was organized in such a way that none of these roles were adequately filled.

First, there was no Team Commander, a fatal flaw in the investigation (the reasons for which are described later). The Team Commander must be an experienced investigator who also has the supervisory experience and credibility to lead a team of investigators. Most importantly, for an investigation of a serial murder case, the Team Commander has to be assigned to the investigation full time. Although Sergeant Geramy Field did not receive major case management training until mid-2000, she had many of the other attributes necessary to run the MWRT effectively, and she generally understood the major case management model, having employed it for "Project Hope" (as summarized in the "Biographies" in Appendix B). However, Sergeant Field was also supervising a busy homicide team as well as the Missing Persons Unit. She was the least experienced Sergeant in the Homicide Squad, assigned to the Missing Women investigation only because she was responsible for supervision of the Missing Persons Unit. She certainly could not effectively fill the role of team commander of the Missing Women investigation on a part-time basis and maintain overall control and supervision of the direction, speed, and flow of the investigation; in effect, she was set up for failure.

As Sergeant Field would later say,

I should have been in that room full time working on this, fighting for more resources, taking care of things. Maybe if I'd had the major case management course earlier it would have just given me more ammunition to argue for the resources that were needed...I shouldn't have been doing this off the side of my desk...When I took the major case management course I remembered thinking, oh, I should have done this and that, I should have had way more resources. It wasn't so much learning about serial killers, it was about knowing what

resources were necessary to do the investigation. We were asking too few people to do too many things. I was looking after the Missing Persons Unit, the MWRT, Homicide and acting [Inspector] sometimes...I was totally spread out mentally and physically with what I had. I learned that what we were doing was inadequate. I would have known how to better organize it, not ask Lori to do so much, and to tell management what we needed to do it right...

Sergeant Field was overwhelmed with work, and her investigators commented on it later. Detective Constable Clarke described her as being, “wonderful...awesome, but she had way too much on her plate. She had homicide investigators, trying to deal with us, no budget, not the people she wanted.” Detective Constable Chernoff described her as having “too much on her plate to pay attention to this investigation. She did a good job, but it’s one of those things that you’re either in or you’re out.” Detective Lepine described her as being “buried”: “She was a ‘go to’ person....everything would be laid on her, like reports needing to be done. They gave her the review team and she was swamped. I think she did a great job considering what was on her plate.” Detective Constable Shenher described Sergeant Field as being “put in a terrible position. She had a hard time doing either job well...she wasn’t there a lot because of her full time job [in Homicide].”

Sergeant Field was simply unable to effectively manage and lead the MWRT and instead served in more of a consulting role to the investigators. She was also the conduit from the investigators to the staff sergeant and the inspector of the Major Crime Section. If Sergeant Field had been working in the MWRT on a day to day basis, considering the investigative issues, weighing the evidence and

dealing with the problems, she would likely have been a much more effective advocate for the needs of the investigation and perhaps would have recognized that the premise of the investigation as a review team, and not an investigation into serial murder, was deeply flawed.

Although Sergeant Field did not advocate as loudly as she might have regarding the need for a full time supervisor, she did make several requests during 1999, and even identified a sergeant with an investigative background – Sergeant Bill Emerslund – whom she thought was a good choice for the assignment. Inspector Biddlecombe recalled the first time Sergeant Field made this request:

I went to the Deputy. Bill had been spoken for by Patrol and we were told we couldn’t have him, the priority was with Patrol. It wasn’t the best to have Geramy doing both jobs, wearing two hats, [but] she was told her priority was the missing women group, and [Detective] Crook could have acted for her. My indication in my document on May 21st was that their priority was the missing women group, and if that meant she had to have an actor, or reallocate files, so be it. If it had come to me that she needed to be full time on the Missing Women file, I would have supported her having an actor any time; she didn’t need to ask permission to do it.

However, Inspector Biddlecombe also suggested that Sergeant Field didn’t need to be full time on the Missing Women investigation, but rather could have had someone fill in for her in her Homicide Squad only as required, i.e., there would be times when she could handle both responsibilities. This was simply unrealistic if the investigation was to be properly supervised. Sergeant Field’s perspective was that she had made her thoughts known several times, and that the responsibility for determining that a full time supervisor was required was properly

a management decision. She was a new Sergeant in Homicide, the first woman in the VPD's history to be selected for that role, and she understandably did not want to appear unequal to the task she had been given. She did make a second request in writing in November of 1999 to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness through Acting Inspector Matthews, but was unsuccessful.

The failure to ensure the MWRT was effectively managed – starting with the assigning of a full-time team commander – was a function of resource pressures, a lack of understanding of the major case management model, a lack of clarity around the nature of the investigation, and a lack of leadership.

Detective Constable Shenher found herself in a similar situation. She was the obvious choice to act as the File Coordinator, who, pursuant to the Major Case Management model, should not take part in the investigation, nor supervise investigators. Rather, the File Coordinator should be responsible solely for the effective management and analysis of information so that it can be used strategically.

In the MWRT, Detective Constable Shenher acted as the de facto File Coordinator, Team Leader, Family Liaison, and Primary Investigator. She was in an impossible situation. This led to important tasks not being accomplished. As just one example, an important role of the File Coordinator is to keep a “running synopsis” of the investigation. Each investigator should turn in notes each working day, and the File Coordinator should summarize the important information, investigative steps taken, decisions made, and so on. This process allows anyone coming into the investigation part-way through, or a supervisor or manager, to review the conduct of the investigation. There are also important investigative purposes for a running

synopsis. In the review of the Bernardo investigation, Justice Campbell pointed out that:

...days of precious time could have been saved if a system had been in place throughout the investigation to maintain a detailed running synopsis of the investigation that could be quickly adapted as a core document for the basis of the search warrant preparation.³⁶³

Similarly, in a government-funded review of the “Beltway Sniper” case in the Washington DC area in October 2002 (during which John Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo shot 14 people, killing 10), the authors pointed out that:

Because the pace of these investigations can be so fast and the workload so taxing, even commanders with extraordinary recall may find that they simply cannot remember everything that has happened. For example, several managers from the Montgomery County Police Department spoke about how decisions were made and orders given without them ever being put in writing. While this practice was needed to keep pace with events, it made it difficult to recall later when and how decisions were made.

To guard against this, managers should task support personnel with maintaining an investigative log. The log should be a timeline of significant events, information developed, received and acted upon. Not only will it help managers remember what has transpired, it will facilitate information sharing among investigators. Commanders should routinely review this log.³⁶⁴

363 Justice Archie Campbell (1996). *Bernardo Investigation Review*, Government of Ontario, p. 177.

364 Gerard R. Murphy & Chuck Wexler (2004). *Managing A Multijurisdictional Case: Identifying the Lessons Learned from the Sniper Investigation*. Washington, D.C.: A report prepared by the Police Executive Research Forum for the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, p. 53.

In the VPD’s “Project Hope” (a 1997 investigation into a stranger-to-stranger violent sexual attack described in the “Biographies” in Appendix B) the file coordinator kept a running synopsis throughout the investigation. When the suspects were arrested, a 100+ page narrative for the Report to Counsel was prepared in a single day because of the thoroughness of the chronological record of the investigation. In the Home Invasion Task Force, the team met for a morning briefing every single working day and a full time clerk took minutes so that there was an accurate record of all investigative decisions and the justification for them. (This review of the investigation of the Missing Women was made extremely onerous because of the complete lack of any detailed chronology of the investigation: the best chronology was only 11 pages long and was prepared after the MWRT investigation had been disbanded. The status reports submitted from time-to-time provided only a summary of the investigation to date.)

Detective Constable Shenher was aware that the lack of defined roles in the investigation was a problem and made note of this in a June 22nd, 1999, memo to Sergeant Field requesting six additional investigators. Detective Constable Shenher advised that her dual role as investigator and File Coordinator was difficult, and that “everyone I have spoken to with experience in large case management has advised that it is imperative to have a File Coordinator solely dedicated to that function.” She advised that she was the logical choice, but that this wasn’t possible without additional investigative assistance.

The third part of the command triangle is the Primary Investigator who decides, in consultation with the Team Commander, the direction of the investigation. The Primary Investigator chooses investigators for particular tasks based on their abilities, and takes on investigative functions in his/her area of expertise. Detective Constable Shenher, to some degree, also acted as the de facto Primary Investigator in the MWRT. She delegated tasks to the other investigators, such as assigning Detectives Lepine and Chernoff to deal with the informant Thomas. However, although Detective Constable Shenher’s efforts were commendable, she had neither the experience nor training to be the primary investigator for a murder investigation; had her managers considered the investigation a murder investigation, it is highly unlikely she would have been left in this role. Compounding these problems was the fact that she was a relatively junior detective/constable, with no substantive authority to direct other investigators. While she had excellent co-operation from most of the investigators, this certainly was not the case with Detective Constables Cruz and James, who determined their own investigative priorities.

Meanwhile, Detective Constable Shenher was also serving as a field investigator, conducting missing persons investigations, dealing with family members of the Missing Women, and handling the informant Hiscox. The MWRT needed a Primary Investigator with sufficient experience, authority, and capacity to direct with a team commander an investigation as difficult as was faced by the MWRT. It was the responsibility of the MCS management team (the Inspector and the Staff Sergeant) to ensure this occurred.

What is of particular concern regarding the resourcing of the Missing Women investigation is that lessons learned from previous investigations weren't acted on. For example, the issue of assigning too many responsibilities in a major investigation, and the necessary resources and structure needed for a major investigation, had already been identified in a 1999 review of the Home Invasion Task Force (conducted at the direction of Inspector Biddlecombe). There were striking similarities in the systemic problems with the two investigations, as this excerpt from the HITF review demonstrates:

There is currently a complete lack of effective supervision and direction in the HITF (Home Invasion Task Force). The current "coordinator," Det. _____, has been attempting to be an investigator, a file coordinator, and a supervisor. All of these roles have suffered as a consequence. The Sergeant nominally in charge has a full time role in charge of the Robbery Squad and has had very minimal involvement in the HITF. Det. _____ has been actively involved in investigating, has made efforts to conduct some analysis of crime patterns, and has found himself drawn into activities such as public education seminars. The result has been a lack of direction and focus in the investigation, missed opportunities for evidence gathering, extreme frustration of individual members, and a total lack of appropriate information management. I want to be clear this is not a criticism of Det. _____, who cannot be expected to fill all these roles properly [and] it should also be noted that Det. _____ has suffered extreme personal stress resulting from the pressures of his work and admits to being completely burnt out.³⁶⁵

The review of the Home Invasion Task Force was submitted four months prior to the creation of the MWRT, and provided a template for a properly organized and resourced investigation following the Major Case Management model.

Unfortunately, in one of the many examples of where information was not effectively shared during the Missing Women investigation, Inspector Biddlecombe was away when the review of the Home Invasion Task Force he had requested was submitted, and he later advised that could not recall ever reading it, explaining he assumed it had been acted on and filed. (A copy of the report was, in fact on file in the Major Crime Section when this Missing Women investigation review began.) Acting Inspector Matthews had read the HITF review and supported the entire report, taking it to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness, who approved its implementation. That Acting Inspector Matthews did not examine the Missing Women investigation in the context of the HITF review is troubling, since he was familiar with the report; as noted in Part I, he agreed that in retrospect, he wished he had conducted a proper management review of the MWRT investigation.

Had the resources described above been in place, it would have been possible to more effectively leverage other resources. For example, a Command Triangle could have better orchestrated a re-focusing of the activities of the Vice Squad toward investigative strategies in support of the MWRT. Rather than simply requesting information from Patrol members, specific tasks could have been created for designated officers. Even units such as Traffic Enforcement and the "Citizens' Crime Watch"³⁶⁶ could have been requested to focus their efforts in the Downtown Eastside in hopes of identifying an offender. (A

365 Sergeant D. LePard, Home Invasion Task Force Review, January 31, 1999, Vancouver Police Department.

366 The Citizens' Crime Watch is a volunteer unit equipped with police radios and unmarked vehicles and is supervised by a police constable. It deploys several nights a week to search for stolen cars, and to provide "extra eyes and ears" for the VPD.

similar strategy was employed in refocusing resources in April 2003 with the City-wide Enforcement Team initiative that targeted disorder and the open drug market in the Downtown Eastside, and employed the assistance when available of the Drug Squad, Emergency Response Team, Traffic Section, and Mounted Squad).

When asked about the lack of adherence to the Major Case Management model, Inspector Biddlecombe provided his perspective:

Regarding proper major case management, Geramy was the sergeant in charge, Lori was the lead investigator, Gray was doing the paperwork, we had two investigators from Patrol, two from Homicide. I did the best I could at the time – I hadn't had the major case management course so I did the best I could and I thought it was going ok. I didn't give Geramy directions on how to run it. She was the sergeant in charge. Lori was the senior investigator and the others were assisting. A lot of feedback was coming from Lori about what the investigators were doing. I thought the structure was working. That's the feedback I was getting. I didn't go out in the field with them. I think Geramy was wearing 2 or 3 hats, she'd find herself on call which she shouldn't have been, she should have had an actor. Staff Sergeant Giles' job was to directly liaise with the homicide sergeants and the robbery sergeants. As a [previous] staff sergeant in homicide and robbery, my job was to deal with the sergeants and I expected them to keep me apprised of what was going on. You can't know the details of every case, but you do keep briefed on high profile or active cases.

Clearly, Inspector Biddlecombe had great challenges. Although he had some familiarity with the Bernardo Investigation Review and the Major Case Management Manual as a result of some research he

had conducted, he had no formal training to assist him in managing a major investigation, nor had he been a detective himself. He relied on Staff Sergeant Giles to ensure the investigation was functioning properly, but Sergeant Field described Staff Sergeant Giles as "wanting nothing to do with the Missing Women investigation," (and was also away on sick and other leaves for extended periods) and she felt that she was reporting directly to Inspector Biddlecombe. Inspector Biddlecombe felt, quite justifiably, that he had to meet all the challenges in the Major Crime Section without accessing resources from elsewhere in the VPD, first because of Chief Constable Chambers' focus on uniform positions, and then after he left because of the resource shortages in the VPD, and the resulting parochial attitude taken by the Deputy Chiefs.

However, part of the problem was how the Missing Women challenge was defined. Although Inspector Biddlecombe suggested he did believe when he formed the "mini task force" that "this could be turning into a murder file," he did not make a real commitment to the murder theory; he considered the Missing Women "potential murder victims." To come to any other conclusion regarding Inspector Biddlecombe's thinking would be impossible to reconcile with his decision to allow Detective Constable Shenher, who had only seven years' police service and who was in her first real assignment as a detective, to be "the senior investigator [with] the others assisting."

Detective Constable Clarke later described how she perceived the management thinking:

But some people like Fred really believed that there was some innocent explanation, that they would be found, moved away, indigent burials, etc. That was why I think there weren't a lot of resources. I

don't think he had the vision that this was what it turned out to be, and it seemed like it was just to appease people because of the outcry, a lot of pressure, people saying things in the media. So they had us working our asses off but I sort of felt like that was management's solution to the problem and we would find these people. I was kind of optimistic when I went to the ministry that there would be an error in the paperwork and that it would jump out at me and I'd find they'd died and fallen through the cracks. But it just didn't happen when I checked the information out.

The MWRT investigation needed a senior police leader with major crime investigation experience to ensure open lines of communication with the officers working on the case, and who had an open mind as to the possible explanations for the Missing Women. That was not the case. Alternatively, the investigation could have benefited from a somewhat arm's length review to clearly articulate what needed to be done to improve the investigation. This would have put pressure on the organization to take action and redeploy resources, as occurred with the Home Invasion Task Force review. But Inspector Biddlecombe didn't take advantage of this opportunity because he wasn't convinced of how serious the problem was, and because he was apparently unaware of the problems in the investigation:

I didn't ask [for a review of] the MWRT investigation because I had no idea of any problems, I thought everything when I left was going smoothly, they were looking at different suspects, following up different leads. I had concerns when James and Cruz came and I made my expectations clear, but I was never aware of any problems from May until I left. If I'd been aware then of what you're telling me today, I would have handled things differently but I didn't know there were problems.

One of the problems that Inspector Biddlecombe correctly identified was that he himself had no real training or experience in Major Case Management. In fact, although he had previously been a Staff Sergeant in the Major Crime Section (mainly an administrative role), he had never been a detective, and his first investigative role was as the sergeant in charge of a fraud squad, so his hands-on investigative experience was limited. (It should be noted, however, that a very long-serving member of MCS, (now Inspector) Al Boyd, who had worked for many years as both a detective and a sergeant in MCS, described Inspector Biddlecombe as the best Inspector he had worked for in terms of "getting things done" in MCS.)

Unfortunately, there was an attitude then in the VPD that a police manager could go to any area, regardless of their experience. In many cases, the Major Crime Inspector was a very senior Inspector in his last assignment (often a relatively short one), and was not necessarily well-qualified to deal with anything but administrative issues, relying on the sergeants and staff sergeants for operational matters. During this review, several former Inspectors in charge of the Major Crime Section were interviewed. Not surprisingly, the ones with the least relevant experience were most likely to believe that this experience was unnecessary, as summarized by one of the former Inspectors in charge:

Regarding going to Homicide without expertise or background in MCS, my expertise was in making sure they had the equipment and the knowledge to do their job and to assist them in getting it. It was my job to get Geramy where she needed to go in the task force. I had Al Boyd who was a really experienced homicide investigator. From the technical point of view, you wouldn't put someone in there at the investigator or sergeant

level, but at the manager level, I don't think it was as important, because I had 35 people with that kind of experience, in Homicide, Robbery and Ident.

The Pickton thing, my job was to make sure they'd looked at everything, what do you need to look at things further? I had two sergeants, Field and Boyd, who had the experience to deal with the investigative issues. They would look after the investigations and put the resources together. If I ever attended an investigation it was only out of interest and I would deal with any resource issues.

If my background had been in homicide, I may have delved further into this case, which may have helped or hindered.

Another MCS Inspector had this to say:

I see in MCS the proper role of the Inspector as an organizer and facilitator, get resources, and as a person to look at ops plans, decide on priorities, can we do this more efficiently without as much expense, that kind of thing. It's not investigative. It's difficult for me to envision a case where the Inspector would be involved as the Team Commander...I don't think the MCS Inspector should ever be in that triangle. The role of the Officer is to look at it to ask the tough questions, ensure investigations stay on the rails, argue in the corporate sense for more resources, arguing on behalf of the troops that they need some sleep or whatever.

In terms of sending Inspectors in the VPD to MCS without a lot of investigative experience, the Inspector job in the VPD is more like a Superintendent in the RCMP, so it's misleading to compare...One scenario is that you send people who have grown up in investigations and found themselves in MCS. Then there are the senior

Inspectors, it's a plum job, they don't have to do anything and they go there for the last year of their career and it's a "thanks."...The Inspector in charge of MCS...needs to have some background in investigations, not necessarily in homicide, and has to be a real strong people person...Putting just a senior person in there is foolish, that's the last thing you should do, put someone there because they're senior. It creates morale problems because the workers think that the Inspector is only going to be around for a little while and then retire and it'll be another Inspector.

Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness commented on the issue of selecting the manager for the Major Crime Section:

Regarding putting the right experience into MCS, when [a candidate]...had [his] interview for Inspector, at the end of [the] interview when [he] did so well, and with...[his] experience and training, I said, [he's] the guy for Major Crime, but [a different Inspector] was the senior guy, and there was that attitude, and that's who they sent. I think they should be bringing guys up through the areas they're going to have to lead. You could say the same thing about me; I loved Patrol but they sent me to Investigations and my only experience in Investigation was in Strike Force.

While it is true that the Inspector's function in an investigative section is mostly administrative, to accept that they may not have to step into a command role is a mistake. The Inspector in charge of an investigative section must have sufficient experience and training to take control over a complex investigation, and understand what is necessary for it to have a chance of success. The Major Case Management model is intended to be "rankless," i.e., the best person for the job, regardless

of rank, but the reality is that the Inspector in charge of an Investigative section cannot simply be an administrator; it was that attitude that resulted in various VPD managers failing to pay sufficient attention to the Missing Women investigation and then attempting to put the responsibility for the failings of the MWRT on Sergeant Field; this was most unfair.

As described earlier, the RCMP is pursuing an initiative to ensure that there are highly trained and accredited major case managers available for complex cases, and is moving toward a requirement that accreditation will be necessary to transfer into a supervisory or management role in an investigative area.

In his Bernardo Investigation Review, Justice Campbell endorsed a proposal similar to what the RCMP is now pursuing: ³⁶⁷

Murder and rape cannot be investigated by committee. It is essential that there be one person clearly accountable and clearly in charge of the overall investigation, whether that person is called a senior case manager or the senior officer in command.

The officer in charge should be drawn from a cadre of...senior and experienced criminal investigators, pre-selected...on the basis of proven investigative ability, experience in complex, major case management, and strong administrative, leadership, and team-building skills. One would expect to find officers with these qualifications at the rank of inspector and above. Although rank can also provide the authority required to deal effectively with other forces and agencies, other ranks should not be excluded by the glass ceiling which typically blocks working investigators from promotion

beyond the rank of Sergeant or Detective Sergeant. This cadre of officers would receive special case management training...

The author is participating in the RCMP's major case manager accreditation initiative, and several VPD members have been accredited or are in the accreditation process. Further, the entire current Executive of the VPD is committed to the same vision of sending experienced and properly trained supervisors and managers to investigative areas and staffing decisions are made with that objective in mind.

E. THE INVESTIGATION REQUIRED THE TEAM COMMANDER TO HAVE CONTROL OVER PERSONNEL ISSUES

i. More investigators needed

There were an insufficient number of field investigators in the MWRT to sufficiently perform the front line investigative tasks. While there was no direct forensic evidence from which to begin, there were plenty of investigative avenues the MWRT could have pursued had it had more field investigators.

For example, the MWRT could have much more actively pursued building relationships with the sex trade workers to develop information about potential suspects (as was recommended by the Behavioural Science Unit in June 1999). Further, it could have engaged in aggressive checking and surveillance of "Johns" in the target area, and surveillance of potential sex trade worker victims to determine if there were any associations that would link them to a suspect. (In 1999, there was compelling information that Pickton was using Ellingsen and others to assist

367 Justice Archie Campbell (1996). Bernardo Investigation Review, Government of Ontario, p. 305.

him in bringing sex trade workers to his property. Had this information been pursued, it may have been possible to link sex trade workers who went missing to female associates of Pickton, by constant checking of the drivers of vehicles entered by sex trade workers, for example. Also, several of the Missing Women were known to be associated with a particular hotel in the Downtown Eastside where a female associate of Pickton was living.)

The MWRT also needed more field investigators of the quality of Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff, and they needed to be full time with the Missing Women investigation, without being subject to the pressures of their part time Homicide Squad assignment. The team also needed additional investigators who were committed to focusing on team objectives, not individual agendas, as was the case with Detective Constables Cruz and James. Finally, the resources needed to be sustained until all reasonably possible investigative avenues had been exhausted. A serial killer had been operating, and the belief in 1999 and 2000 that the killer had stopped was in no way justification to stop investigating, as long as there were viable leads to follow up and viable investigative strategies to pursue.

ii. Lack of Personnel Control: Problems with Detective Constables Cruz and James

On May 25th, 1999, Detective Constable James checked known sex offender and former pimp McCartney in the Downtown Eastside. After checking McCartney's background, Detective Constable James decided he was a strong suspect for the Missing Women case.

Detective Constable James apparently first brought his suspicions about McCartney directly to the Provincial

Unsolved Homicide Unit as a proposed target. The Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit advised him to work through his own police department, so Detective Constables James and his former partner, Detective Constable Cruz, approached Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness.

Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness arranged for the assignment of Detective Constables James and Cruz to the MWRT, without consultation with Sergeant Field. He was influenced both by their direct approach to him, and also because of his belief that he was unlikely to be offered other candidates from the Operations Division. Although Staff Sergeant Giles did submit a memo to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness on June 30th, 1999, requesting that Detective Constables Cruz and James be assigned to the MWRT³⁶⁸, it appears this was a result of Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness' involvement. According to Acting Inspector Matthews, he assigned Detective Constables Cruz and James to the MWRT on the specific direction of Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness; Staff Sergeant Giles had a similar recollection:

Regarding Cruz and James, Brian used to do a lot of micro managing and I think they approached him at 2120 and said they had a really good suspect. I'm sure he listened to them and I got a phone call from Brian and he called me in and asked me what I thought of them and I said they came with baggage and he said, they do but can you use them? Geramy was so desperate for bodies that I was willing to take anyone. I knew their reputation, but I welcomed them and I knew we would have to keep them focused...There was certainly a growing problem with the dynamics of this workgroup, because you had Geramy and Ron and Mark from Homicide and these guys came flying in with a suspect and I know there were some clashes. Geramy came in a couple of times saying she couldn't deal with these guys and I told her she had to sit them down and tell them her

expectations and stay on top of them because we just couldn't find other bodies.

Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness' involvement in choosing team members for an investigative team was a departure from the normal process,³⁶⁹ and precluded any screening measures to ensure Detective Constables James and Cruz had the appropriate skills, knowledge and abilities to assist the MWRT. That being said, the "best practice" or "ideal" for staff selection is not always practicable, and Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness and other managers later commented on how difficult it was to obtain sufficient and appropriate staff during the Missing Women investigation, because of the extreme resource pressures. Unfortunately, the outcome of the assignment of Detective Constable Cruz and James to the MWRT was a difficult lesson in why standardized human resource selection processes were developed, and why major case management guidelines for creating and managing an investigative team are so important to adhere to.

There were three problems with Detective Constables Cruz and James' participation in the MWRT. First, their personalities were not a good fit with the investigative unit. Second, they were almost entirely focused on a single suspect to the detriment of the larger investigation. Third, they did not have the investigative skills required for the work that they became involved in.

The relationship of Detective Constables Cruz and James to the rest of the MWRT was poor from the outset. The manner in which Detective Constables Cruz and James were brought into the investigation was perceived by the other members of the MWRT as "back-dooring" their way into the investigation.

Further, Detective Constables Cruz and James came to the investigation with a reputation for disregarding proper police practice and taking matters into their own hands.

Further, Detective Constables Cruz and James were convinced when they came to the MWRT that McCartney was responsible for the Missing Women. While McCartney was clearly a violent sexual predator worthy of investigative attention, they Cruz victim to tunnel vision, a dangerous phenomenon documented in many major investigations (e.g., the David Milgaard, Guy Paul Morin, and Thomas

369 The normal process for selection to a specialty squad is an application to Human Resources, endorsed by the applicant's supervisor and manager, then a competition in which candidates are selected based on a review of their resumes, references, and an interview with a panel.

Sophonow wrongful conviction cases³⁷⁰. It should be noted however, that there is no suggestion that McCartney was wrongfully convicted – he clearly was a dangerous predator.) Detective Constables Cruz and Wolther’s focus on McCartney to the exclusion of all else was a detriment to the work of the MWRT. Despite repeated efforts by other members of the team to convince them to work on a variety of leads, including looking for information to link Pickton to the Downtown Eastside sex trade workers, they focused almost exclusively on McCartney, or other leads they thought were important, rather than team objectives.

To the credit of Detective Constables James and Cruz, through their tenacity and perseverance, they did gather enough evidence to charge McCartney on multiple counts of offences against sex trade workers.

370 Good examples and/or discussion of the impact of “tunnel vision” are found in reports such as: the 1994 “RCMP Investigation into Allegations of Wrongdoing by the Saskatoon City Police and The Saskatchewan Department of the Attorney General in the Investigation and Prosecution of David Milgaard” by Insp. M.J. Sawatsky; the 2001 Manitoba Commission of Inquiry, “Thomas Sophonow: the investigation, prosecution and consideration of entitlement to compensation,” by former Supreme Court Justice Peter deC. Cory; the 1998 Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General Commission on Proceedings Involving Guy Paul Morin, Commissioner: Fred Kaufman; and the 2004 “Report of the Working Group on the Prevention of Miscarriages of Justice” by the Heads of Prosecution Committee.

371 Binder 3, Tab 32.

Finally, and most problematically, in the course of their work on the MWRT Detective Constables Cruz and James received vital information on Pickton and failed to bring that information to the attention of the other MWRT members.

In 1998 and early 1999 when Detective Constable Shenher and Corporal Connor were looking into the Pickton information, and later in 1999 after the MWRT was formed, the investigators felt strongly that they needed information linking Pickton to Downtown Eastside sex trade workers in order to advance the investigation (e.g., to obtain a search warrant or wiretap). When Detective Constables Cruz and James joined the MWRT, they used the investigative technique of showing sex trade workers pictures of various suspects and asking them if the suspects were known to the women. While this was a useful technique, their focus in this activity was on having sex trade workers identify McCartney, and at first Detective Constables Cruz and James did not include a photograph of Pickton in their collection.

Later, however, they did include Pickton's photograph, and in April 2000, Detective Constables Cruz and James did receive information linking Pickton to Downtown Eastside sex trade workers. On April 5th and April 12th, their notes indicate three different sex trade workers selected Pickton's photo. One sex trade worker advised she had seen Pickton

walking around Oppenheimer Park in 1999. Another said Pickton had taken her to a house in Surrey or Coquitlam and provided drugs, and although the notes are cryptic, it appears a third recognized him as someone who drove an old blue van.

Detective Constables James and Cruz did not report this key information to Detective Constable Shenher or anyone else in the MWRT.

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374 Binder 3, Tab 32.

In being interviewed for this report, to his credit Detective Constable Cruz acknowledged that he did not have the experience, training or skills to conduct a serious investigation, such as the flawed McCartney investigation. He was contrite, and he self-identified that he had been in need of assistance and supervision, pointing out that he had never written a report into a major investigation such as the McCartney file.

In conclusion, the level of distress created by Detective Constables Cruz and James in the investigation prompted every single other team member to provide detailed criticism of their conduct. However, the structure of the MWRT was such that the members felt there was no effective remedy for the problems with Detective Constables Cruz and James. All felt that because James and Cruz had been

assigned by Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness, there was no point in complaining about them, and for this reason few of their concerns were reported to Sergeant Field or any other supervisor or manager.

The result is a lesson in the importance of ensuring that all members of an investigative team have not only the necessary investigative skills, but the capacity and willingness to be part of a team. It underscores the need for a full time team leader, and the need to utilize the Major Case Management model, in which the team leader ensures appropriate personnel are selected, decides the investigative priorities, deals with personnel issues, and releases from the team any member whose presence is counter-productive.

F. DETECTIVE INSPECTOR ROSSMO SHOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER INTEGRATED INTO THE INVESTIGATION

In August 1998, Detective Inspector Rossmo and Inspector Greer formed their “Working Group,” a committee intended to bring some structure and analysis to the Missing Women problem with a “strategic blueprint” developed by Detective Inspector Rossmo. As described earlier, this process was derailed, mainly because of Inspector Biddlecombe’s concerns, including that the investigation would be compromised by a lack of control over sensitive information, his objections to the press release, and because he felt the investigation should be run by the Major Crime Section, not by this committee of “outsiders” (i.e., officers who were not working in the Major Crime Section and reporting to him).

Inspector Biddlecombe did not see the strategic blueprint as being helpful to guide an investigation;

he saw it as uninformed, and unfortunately misperceived it as an attack on what MCS had done in the past to investigate sex trade worker homicides. His response was to provide an extensive report summarizing the considerable investigative effort that had gone into investigating historical sex trade worker homicides in Vancouver.³⁷⁶ Unfortunately, he did not address one of the fundamental reasons behind the strategic blueprint: to determine whether the Missing Women were the victims of murder, as he later explained:

Regarding not responding to Kim’s report about determining if the missing women might be murder victims, I don’t recall, I might not have put my mind to that, I’m not an analyst, we had no bodies, we know that we didn’t have linkages between the murders we had. I didn’t think [the Missing Women] were related [to previous homicides]...

However, Inspector Biddlecombe was right that the investigation should have been overseen by the Major Crime Section; to do otherwise was a recipe for confusion caused by a lack of clarity around who was in charge. But rather than essentially shutting down the committee’s work, a better solution to harness the considerable energy and talent that had been brought to the table would have been to have brought this committee under his direction, or by joining it as a co-chair, essentially creating an advisory team for the investigation, reporting to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness. Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness was later asked why the committee wasn’t brought under his command:

Regarding why Greer’s workgroup was being run out of Operations and not Invest, at the time of the strategic blueprint and Greer’s workgroup, I’m telling homicide that they WILL use Rossmo. And

376 Binder 1, Tab 79.

I had people there who didn't like this individual. They didn't like him. Even if he does something and this is what I think, in my opinion they were going to discredit him. So in District 2, there was another opportunity. I was saying to Blythe, give these resources to me from Operations and he was saying no, no, that's what they want to do. I was trying to keep peace and try to keep it on track so that's why I wrote my memo saying we're going to cooperate, we're going to get along.³⁷⁷

The end result, however, was that the committee was disbanded. Inspector Biddlecombe later related that he had Inspector Greer's agreement that the investigation should be run by the Major Crime Section, and that he assumed the strategic blueprint proposed by Detective Inspector Rossmo would be absorbed into the investigation being supervised by Sergeant Field (and much of it eventually was, for the most part).

But by essentially excluding Detective Inspector Rossmo from having a significant role in the investigation in the early stages, the value of the committee structure and the knowledge he could have brought to bear was lost. Detective Inspector Rossmo described later that:

...there was no point in continuing with the working group without the cooperation of MCS, but at least there was one person assigned to the case... This was a situation where we almost got it. It was community based policing: Dave saw a problem, identified it to his bosses, we were so close, but it just didn't happen. We had a warning at this stage, smoke, we don't know for sure, but we want to take it seriously. The attitude in MCS was that no body, no evidence, so we don't have to do anything. It's like the fire department seeing smoke, but saying we can't see fire so we don't have to do anything. I think the way you define a problem defines your

response. And putting Lori, who I have a lot of respect for but who was a junior member with no violent crime experience, in as a missing persons detective for this case defined what Fred thought the problem was. It was very important to try to find as many of these people that could be found, which helps define the problem, but it should have been done in parallel with other things, which requires the necessary resources and expertise.

Later, when the investigation became "suspect focused" in May 1999 and the MWRT was created, Inspector Biddlecombe named Detective Inspector Rossmo as a "resource," but this was something he wasn't even aware of, and it did not provide a formal role for him. And after Detective Inspector Rossmo submitted his comprehensive analysis that same month, there was no re-evaluation of his role in the investigation.

When the MWRT was created, it was not too late to take advantage of Detective Inspector Rossmo's knowledge in a more constructive manner; in fact, there was now an acceptance that there was at least a possibility that a serial killer was responsible for the Missing Women, and so it made even more sense to bring in an expert who had studied and worked serial murder cases. It was true that Detective Inspector Rossmo had a lack of credibility in the Major Crime Section, for a variety of reasons which needn't be reviewed here in total. But two of the reasons were that Detective Inspector Rossmo had no experience as a "traditional" serious crimes detective or as a supervisor, and there was a lack of familiarity with geographical profiling, resulting in a commonly held opinion that it was "smoke and mirrors." Therefore, there were those who believed Detective Inspector Rossmo couldn't possibly have any useful advice for experienced investigators (although the investigators in the MWRT didn't feel that way, and they sought his advice on several occasions).

377 Referring to a September 1, 1998 memo (Binder 9, Tab 3).

The reality was that Detective Inspector Rossmo never claimed that what he had to offer were traditional investigative skills and he shouldn't have been held to that standard. But what he could have brought to the investigation – in addition to experience working as a constable in the Downtown Eastside – was very in-depth knowledge of serial predator investigations – including serial murderer cases – gained in his research for his PhD thesis on geographic profiling. In addition, by the time of the Missing Women investigation, he had been consulted internationally on twenty serial murder cases, and part of his process in providing a geographical profile was to review not only the crime sites, but also other aspects of the investigations and to participate in brainstorming sessions with the investigators. The knowledge and experience he had gained would have been invaluable to the Missing Women investigation, and was unique in the VPD. Detective Inspector Rossmo later described what he thought he could bring to the investigation.

I think that because I had a lot of experience visiting cases and because I'd studied a lot about this topic, regular high level review meetings would have been good, Brian, Fred, myself, Geramy, maybe 10 people, how can we make it better, what are the problems, what are we not doing? By no means do I think I had all the answers. I believe in the team approach, brainstorming. One of the things that's become standard in a geographic profile is we give a presentation, look at all the crime sites, then brainstorm. I can suggest what has worked in the past, but it's the group dynamic, people playing off each other, that's really helpful, and this case deserved that because it was big and problematic. It prevents things from falling between the cracks. For example, one of the areas that's been identified in cognitive bias deals with relative probabilities. You get investigative roller coasters. When I was out on the Bernardo case, they said they had 16 ups and

downs. A hot suspect comes to their attention, then he doesn't pan out. So what happens is suspect A is really hot. Suspect B looks good but not as good as A. Suspect B psychologically remains a 2nd class suspect because that was how he was originally assessed.

Unfortunately, although Detective Inspector Rossmo had great respect for Sergeant Field and Detective Constable Shenher, he felt he was unwelcome in the Major Crime Section and by Inspector Biddlecombe. As a result, he did not proactively involve himself in the investigation to any great extent, and his participation was sporadic. Although he would visit the MWRT and consult from time to time, he was not present for regular team meetings and didn't have detailed knowledge of the progress of the investigation.

Perhaps if there had been greater management acceptance that a serial killer was likely responsible for the Missing Women, Detective Inspector Rossmo would have been brought into the investigation in a more meaningful way. But this was a Catch-22; because Detective Inspector Rossmo wasn't brought into the investigation, his considerable knowledge and analytical skills were not brought to bear, and he wasn't in a position to advocate for the serial killer theory and an improved response to the problem. Detective Inspector Rossmo's ability to conduct analysis, to make sense of large amounts of data, and to reflect this information in compelling reports were skills lacking in the Missing Women investigation, something that resulted in a weakening of the impact of the evidence available.

In an unfortunate turn of events during the Missing Women investigation, in early 2000 the City of Vancouver once again sought budget reductions in the VPD, and recommended to Council that

the VPD's sworn authorized strength be reduced by seven positions. After strenuous objections by the VPD, Council eventually approved a reduction of 3.5 positions. This circumstance factored into already-occurring discussions around the renewal of Detective Inspector Rossmo's contract. He and the VPD were unable to come to mutually agreeable terms so in December of 2000, Detective Inspector Rossmo launched a lawsuit against the VPD for refusing to renew his contract. He took the position that he had been "promoted" to Detective Inspector, that there was no provision in his contract for him to be returned to the rank of constable, and that the failure to renew his contract therefore constituted a wrongful constructive dismissal. The VPD's position was that his rank was a function of his contract and was not a promotion, that it was entitled to not renew his contract, and that the natural consequence was that he would return to the rank of constable if he so wished. The matter came to trial in June 2001.

Detective Inspector Rossmo was unsuccessful in his Supreme Court trial. The Court found that:

Dr. Rossmo's employment was not terminated and he was neither dismissed nor demoted. The Agreement expired without renewal. Dr. Rossmo was offered, and rejected, a two-year extension of the Agreement. He declined to return to his pre-Agreement position as Constable. There was never any suggestion by the Board or the VPD that his employment as a sworn Constable would terminate at the end of the Agreement. The Board was not obligated to either maintain the GPU at the end of the five-year term or to reassign Rossmo to another

position as an Inspector.³⁷⁸

There was considerable press attention to the trial because of some sensational allegations made in and outside the courtroom, and the Missing Women investigation became one of the issues. There was a suggestion that the VPD's failure to renew Detective Inspector Rossmo's contract was somehow linked to his conclusion that there was likely a serial killer operating, a completely unfounded allegation that was nonetheless repeated in an "NBC Dateline" episode about the Missing Women case after the arrest of Robert Pickton.

In fact, the tragic reality was that Inspector Biddlecombe and Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness had already retired from the VPD, and they were the officers at the management level who were familiar with Detective Inspector Rossmo's analysis. Deputy Chief Constable Unger, who had replaced Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness, was the focus of many allegations during the trial, including that he was responsible for the breakdown in negotiations between Detective Inspector Rossmo and the VPD. Although there was evidence that there was animosity between Deputy Chief Constable Unger and Detective Inspector Rossmo, Deputy Chief Constable Unger apparently hadn't even read the May 1999 analysis pointing to a serial killer, nor had Inspector Biddlecombe's successors or Chief Constable Blythe. There was no foundation to the allegation that Detective Inspector Rossmo's conclusions regarding a serial killer were the basis of the decision not to renew his contract.

During the trial, Detective Inspector Rossmo cited Inspector Biddlecombe as being an impediment to the success of the Missing Women investigation, and suggested, not surprisingly, that his expertise

378 *Rossmo v. Vancouver Police Board and DCC Unger*, 2001-12-19, BCSC 1775, Docket: S006686, Vancouver Registry, at paragraph 99. (A subsequent appeal of the decision in the BCCA was also unsuccessful.)

was not properly used by the investigators. He gave evidence that when the meeting of September 16th, 1998, chaired by he and Inspector Greer was held, Inspector Biddlecombe threw “close to a small scale temper tantrum.” In a news article about this incident, his evidence was described as follows: ‘He [Rossmo] said Biddlecombe “threw a small temper tantrum” when he was brought in... Inspector Biddlecombe threatened not to send people to meetings, or share information.’³⁷⁹

This was a somewhat misleading media characterization of Detective Inspector Rossmo’s evidence. In evidence later in the trial (and as he related to the author), Detective Inspector Rossmo agreed that geographic profiling “probably wasn’t the main issue that annoyed [Inspector Biddlecombe].” He further conceded that the issue of not sharing information was because Inspector Biddlecombe believed someone who worked for Inspector Greer – not Detective Inspector Rossmo – was leaking information to the press.

It would be fair to say, however, that Detective Inspector Rossmo was critical of the conduct of the Missing Women investigation generally, and of Inspector Biddlecombe specifically. He testified that Biddlecombe “denied” that there was a serial killer in media reports. (In fact, early media reports show Biddlecombe admitted that a serial killer was a possibility, but stated there was no evidence of one.

³⁸⁰ Detective Inspector Rossmo said somewhat the same thing – albeit with a different emphasis – in May of 1999, when he was quoted as saying there was no conclusive evidence of a serial killer but “but we have to consider that as a definite possibility.”³⁸¹) However, Detective Inspector Rossmo was also very complimentary of Detective Constable Shenher and Sergeant Field, saying he had “the utmost respect” for them, as he did when interviewed for this Review.

Detective Inspector Rossmo also testified that he didn’t feel like he could just pick up the phone and talk to Detective Constable Shenher or Sergeant Field because “I thought that the climate between myself and Inspector Biddlecombe had deteriorated... you don’t go to the people. You go to the [officer in charge].” This was incorrect, and Detective Inspector Rossmo conceded that when interviewed for this review:

I didn’t feel comfortable in MCS, but I did go to their office and I had no problems with...the HITF, the MWRT...there was no issue about contacting Geramy or Lori, although I wasn’t comfortable. I didn’t have an official capacity – I didn’t know he put me in a report as a resource to the team...

Detective Inspector Rossmo was consulted during the course of the investigation and assisted where requested. As examples, on May 19th, 1999, he participated in a brainstorming session hosted by Sergeant Field. On June 8th, 1999, he participated in the distribution of a questionnaire to sex trade workers at a WISH meeting. And in early 2000, he

379 Andy Ivens, “Roadblock on serial killer: Cop: Ex-inspector suing force blames stubbornness of cops investigating cases of 30 missing women in Vancouver” in the *Vancouver Province*, June 21, 2001, p. A3.

380 Lindsay Kines, “Missing women cases probed: Vancouver police will review 40 unsolved cases dating from 1971, but they doubt a serial killer was involved in any disappearances,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, September 18, 1998, p. B1.

381 Ian Bailey, “Expert tackles case of missing women: The Vancouver detective’s technique uses a program to predict where a criminal is likely to live,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, May 18, 1999, p. B3.

provided expert advice to Detective Constables Cruz and James to assist in obtaining a search warrant for McCartney's residence in ——. He also discussed the case from time to time with Sergeant Field and other members of the MWRT.

But regardless of being responsive to requests from the MWRT, it was true that Detective Inspector Rossmo was not given a meaningful role in the investigation, to its detriment. There were many areas where his expertise could have helped focus investigators' efforts, and where he could have pointed out the fallibility of various theories. For example, when Inspector Biddlecombe decided that an increase in AIDS and overdose deaths could have resulted in an increase in indigent "Jane Doe" burials, Detective Inspector Rossmo could have immediately pointed out the weakness of that theory, i.e., that there was no comparable list of missing men.

When the investigation of Pickton was derailed in September 1999 (as described in the Chronology and Chapter 7 of this Analysis), Detective Inspector Rossmo's analytical and report-writing abilities could likely have been brought to bear to synthesize the evidence pointing to Pickton's viability as a suspect.³⁸² Most importantly, as the Missing Women investigation continued, he could have continued to help "define the problem" so that the appropriate response would be more apparent, i.e., advocate for the serial killer theory, which became more and more compelling as the investigation proceeded.

Flowing from a greater commitment to the serial killer theory, Detective Inspector Rossmo could have used his knowledge of other serial murder cases to help in the development of investigative strategies, to focus the investigation, and to advocate for a regional response and a Joint Force Operation, which he strongly believed were required for the investigation to be successful.

It is ironic that one of the positions taken by the VPD at Detective Inspector Rossmo's civil trial was that there was insufficient work, i.e., serial predatory offenders, to justify a full time geographic profiler, and that the majority of his work was for other police agencies. However, there was a serial offender of the worst type operating in Vancouver, and the failure to recognize this meant that an important resource that could have been applied much more intensely was relegated to a minor role.

It should be noted that the Missing Women case did not lend itself specifically to geographical profiling because of the lack of known crime sites. And from what is known now about how the Missing Women came to arrive at the Pickton property, it is unlikely that geographical profiling would have been helpful. But Detective Inspector Rossmo had other crucial skills and knowledge around serial killer investigations that could have greatly benefited the Missing Women investigation. The failure to take full advantage of this expert resource when it was most needed was unfortunate, to say the least.

382 In 1991, Detective Inspector Rossmo co-authored, with well-known SFU Criminology Professor Neil Boyd, an analysis of the evidence against convicted murderer David Milgaard. They concluded that Milgaard was innocent and that the evidence pointed to Larry Fisher long before the Supreme Court of Canada ordered a new trial for Milgaard; he was cleared by DNA; and Fisher was convicted of the murder for which Milgaard had served 23 years in prison. (See: Neil Boyd and D. Kim Rossmo (1992), *Milgaard v. The Queen: Finding Justice – Problems and Process*, Simon Fraser University Criminology Research Centre.)

G. THE INVESTIGATION SHOULD HAVE UTILIZED A MEDIA STRATEGY

i. Introduction

Media strategy is, or ought to be, an important aspect of every serious investigation. “Public appeals” are used to solicit information from the public. Information can be strategically released to trigger certain responses from a suspect to further the investigation. In cases where public safety is at risk, a strategic media strategy can be part of a strategy to “suppress the crime,” i.e., discourage the offender from committing further crimes by causing him to believe he is likely to be caught if he continues.

This section of the Review will provide a brief chronology of media statements made by the VPD regarding the Missing Women. Also included are extensive comments from Constable Anne Drennan, who was the VPD spokesperson from the beginning of the investigation into the Missing Women until it was transferred to the JFO, and who has considerable experience in police/media issues. The appropriateness of the VPD’s media strategy will then be considered.

ii. Analysis

By the time Detective Constable Shenher was assigned to the Missing Persons Unit in July of 1998, there had already been a considerable amount of media interest created by the perceived (and real) increase in women missing from the Downtown Eastside. Wayne Leng (Sarah de Vries’ friend) had been trying to generate interest in the media, and he had what seemed to be a sensational tape purporting to be from a suspect who was threatening to kill more women (later shown to be a hoax).

Constable Drennan recalled her perception of the media interest at the time:

The first indication I heard about the community concern of a number of Missing Women was when what is now CityTV, which was VU13 at the time, came to us and wanted to do a story about a number of missing sex trade workers from the Downtown Eastside. They had been approached by Wayne Leng and he had given them this incredible story and that was the first time I remember making internal inquiries as to whether we knew anything about a group of women going missing. His web site was part of it at some time and he started doing the rounds with the media. . . There was no suggestion at that point of a serial killer, although the media asked that question very quickly. From that first story, that whole thing started to mushroom in the media and there were frequent questions about what we were doing, and what did we think was the cause of it. We didn’t know the numbers at that time, just that there was no indication of a serial killer.

In response to the assignment of Detective Constable Shenher to the case, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that the VPD was “concerned about the number of missing women who were involved in drugs and the sex trade and put more resources into finding them.”³⁸³ At this time, there had been 16 women reported missing in the previous decade, 10 of them in the previous two years. Media spokesperson Constable Drennan was quoted in the same article as saying, “the missing persons section has been told to give these particular 16 files the highest of priorities,” and also stated there was no indication of a serial killer preying on the women.

By March 1999, Detective Constable Shenher’s investigation had demonstrated compelling

383 Lindsay Kines, “Police target big increase in missing women cases: Investigators will look into each incident to determine if there are any similarities,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, July 3, 1998, p. B1.

circumstantial evidence that foul play was likely, but the official position of the VPD remained that there was no evidence of a serial killer. On March 3, 1999, Constable Drennan was quoted in a *Globe & Mail* article regarding the Missing Women's investigation: "there is a cause for real concern...[but] there is not a single piece of evidence to suggest a serial killer."³⁸⁴ In April 1998, Detective Constable Shenher and the VPD's Vice Squad sergeant, Don Smith, appeared with Maggie de Vries on the CKNW's "David Berner Show." When Berner asked Detective Constable Shenher what she thought had happened to the Missing Women, she said:

I don't see this as having a positive outcome...when you have families that are in contact with their loved ones the way...Maggie was...and all of a sudden that contact stops...And as Maggie said, you're not talking about women who can jump on a plane and you're not talking about women that are going to be recruited, if you will, to work in different areas. Many of these women were very sick either through their addictions or through HIV, some had AIDS. They were at points in their lives where they really needed the support systems that they had built here...they're not only imprisoned by their poverty and their social situation; they're imprisoned by their addictions, they're imprisoned by illness. That makes it highly unlikely that they would just up and go...my gut feeling is that some of them have met with foul play.³⁸⁵

By June 1999, very significant developments had occurred. Detective Constable Shenher had submitted a report on May 14th, 1999, setting out an "action plan" for moving to a "suspect-based" investigation. The MWRT had been created and

staff had been added, including two Homicide Squad detectives. The team was consulting with other police agencies, including the Green River killer investigators, and police in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., who had investigated a serial murder case that began as missing sex trade workers. Additionally, Detective Inspector Rossmo's analysis had been completed, showing compelling statistical evidence that a serial killer was the most likely explanation for the spike in the number of women missing from the Downtown Eastside.

But in the media, the VPD continued to stress that police had no evidence that a serial killer was at work in Vancouver.³⁸⁶ Constable Anne Drennan later recalled that by this time Detective Constable Shenher and Constable Dave Dickson advised her they were convinced there was a serial killer and "that was pretty unsettling," but:

I was told what the position was with respect to the serial killer. Fred [Biddlecombe] was adamant that if we know we have no bodies and no crime scenes, then we cannot tell the public there was a serial killer because we didn't know that. He thought it would be irresponsible that we thought there was a serial killer and that it would panic the residents of the Downtown Eastside. That was the constant theme.

Sergeant Field later recalled the mindset at work:

There was a general feeling not to put fear in the community without any direct evidence, and that we didn't have anything of substance to give to the media, who would want to know what we had and what we were doing. We just had the numbers of women. We found no bodies, nothing to suggest

384 Lindsay Kines and David Hogben, "20 outstanding files: A group of prostitutes is convinced a serial killer is responsible for disappearances in Vancouver, but the police disagree," *National Post Online*, March 3, 1999. (Binder 3, Tab 85.)

385 Maggie de Vries (2004). *Missing Sarah*, Penguin Canada, Toronto, Ontario, p. 217.

386 Lindsay Kines, "Homicide detectives join search: Vancouver city police are expanding their investigation into the disappearance of more than 20 women in the Downtown Eastside drug or sex trade although there is no evidence any were murdered," in the *Vancouver Sun*, June 4, 1999, p. B1.

anybody had been abducted. Nothing we could take to the community. We were probably more afraid of the media frenzy that would ensue, than the fear it would cause with sex trade workers.

Inspector Biddlecombe's perspective was that the media could not be trusted, and it was his practice to provide them as little information as possible:

They'd be crawling up our backside wanting to know what's going on and it would cause all kinds of problems... My role was to be somewhat cautious. Once you say something to the media, you can't take it back. My practice is to be very careful. I've seen too many homicide files burned because a duty officer talked about holdback information and all of a sudden your holdback information is gone...I said any dealings with media had to be through Anne and Geramy. I felt if Geramy wanted to pursue leaking certain information to the media to "build fires" or whatever, that was her role. If she wishes to develop a media strategy, that was up to her. It was common knowledge in the Downtown Eastside that we were going down that road of looking at it as a murder investigation. The word was getting out to the people in the Downtown Eastside whether we did it with a big media thing or not, and we didn't need to warn people in the west side. I've seen the media out and out lie, quote me when I never spoke to them. I simply do not trust the media and am very careful when I deal with them. I've seen them make up stories because we wouldn't tell them what was going on. I would never have made a statement that we had a serial killer in '98 or in June when Geramy said we were looking at the possibility. We felt that we were looking at potential murder victims, but I thought it was premature even in June '99 to make

that comment. I wasn't going to put that out there and have the media drive our investigation.

However, Detective Constable Shenher appeared on a number of radio shows in 1999 and 2000, and recalled that she discussed openly her belief that a serial killer was likely:

Maggie de Vries, Sandra Gagnon and I were guests on David Berner on CKNW back in early 1999 and that was where I began talking about my feeling that these women didn't just take off to Prince Rupert to start new lives with their logger husbands.

On June 23rd, 1999, the VPD participated in the taping of an America's Most Wanted episode, to be broadcast at the end of July. This followed a time of considerable pressure on the VPD and the Police Board to offer a \$100,000 reward, as had been done in the home invasions of the elderly and the "garage robbery" cases. America's Most Wanted staff brought up the possibility of a serial killer in their discussions with Constable Anne Drennan, but she recalled:

I was told to make sure that when John Walsh went up to speak at our press conference, that he not refer to a serial killer, because in previous conversations with Avery [an AMW staffer] he had talked about a serial killer. But I was told that wasn't to be mentioned and I was to speak to Avery and Walsh and I did. I don't remember who it was who told me that, but I assume it was Fred because that's who I was taking direction from.

By September 1999, the language being used by the VPD's media spokesperson was shifting. For example, in a *Vancouver Sun* article on September 17th, 1999, Constable Drennan, commenting on the VPD having located two of the Missing Women, said:

Every door remains open...The possibility of foul play, serial killer, multiple killers is still out there. And we're not closing that door in any way.³⁸⁷

Then by November 1999, the magazine "Elm Street" published a major article on the Missing Women case. Constable Drennan was quoted as saying that the police now realized that there were too many missing women for their disappearance to be coincidence and acknowledged that there could be one or more serial killers.³⁸⁸

Constable Drennan later recalled:

I know that as I became more aware of Geramy and Lori and Dave's feelings, I started to change my phrasing slightly, like "not closing the door" to there being a serial killer rather than there's "no reason to believe." But that was a personal choice that a media officer can make. Then by the time of the Elm Street article I agreed that there could be one or more serial killers...there was never a real solid acknowledgement that we had a serial killer, despite various comments that were being made.

By 2000, Detective Constable Shenher was being more emphatic that a serial killer was responsible for the Missing Women.

On the Vicki Gabereau show, I know I said I felt quite certain most if not all of our victims had met

with foul play and that the more time that passed, the more likely a serial killer scenario was, in my opinion...The thrust of the Gabereau show was that this was a genuine mystery. Sandra Gagnon and I were on and she interviewed us together. We both stressed how unusual it was for Janet Henry, Sandra's sister, to go more than a day or two without calling and I remember making the point that this was the case with a good percentage of the Missing Women: many kept in regular contact with loved ones and suddenly, that contact stopped. I said that, in my opinion, this was highly irregular for many of these women and we were getting closer and closer to ruling out all the possible types of accidental and medical scenarios they could have encountered and I was quite certain they were the victims of foul play – I always used those words.

Geramy, Ron Lepine and I also did Rafe Mair a few months later, and again, I felt I was fairly bold in going past what seemed to be the party line of "no bodies, no reason to think the worst" and I said I felt they had met with foul play.

I remember feeling very frustrated because Anne continued to say there was no reason to think the worst because there was no evidence of foul play and no bodies because I was saying that, as the lead investigator, I felt certain something bad – criminal bad – had happened. I spoke with Anne fairly regularly and I don't feel it was her fault at all. I feel she wasn't properly briefed and she was the victim of our lack of a media plan – I don't know what the brass was telling her to say or not to say. Having said that, as I started to speak my mind, some people were irate, asking, "why won't the VPD acknowledge the possibility of a serial killer?" and it pissed me off because I WAS saying that publicly – but I wasn't considered the official voice, I suppose.

387 Lindsay Kines, "2 missing women confirmed dead: They were among the 31 missing Vancouver women suspected of being victims of a serial killer, but a police probe reveals one died from heart problems and the other from a drug overdose," in the *Vancouver Sun*, September 23, 1999, p. B1.

388 Binder 2, Tab 76.

I don't remember ever being told to tone down my comments and I doubt the brass heard half of them. By mid-2001, the RCMP – VPD Joint Force Operation, "Project Evenhanded," was already up and running, investigating the Missing Women cases, and had a strategy that was based on the premise that one or more serial killers was at work. But this premise had not been made public by the JFO, and the VPD continued to demonstrate a lack of clarity around the issue.

For example, on July 3rd, 2001, the sister of one of the Missing Women wrote an email to Detective Constable Dan Dickhout in the Missing Persons Unit (which was still responsible for the initial investigation of any new reports of missing women from the Downtown Eastside). She noted that she had seen Detective Constable Shenher on the Vicki Gabereau show (a rerun) and that Detective Constable Shenher had stated that she believed a serial killer was responsible for the Missing Women. The email asked, "what has changed since that interview for the department to believe a serial killer no longer exists?"

Detective Constable Dickhout responded:

I don't believe the Department has a stated position on whether or not a serial killer is at work. I discussed this point with my Inspector and we believe that it is possible but as yet there is no evidence that supports or refutes this theory.³⁸⁹

Yet prior to this exchange, there was already considerable evidence pointing to a serial killer, and on May 9th of 2001, Sergeant Field had briefed the Senior Management Team of the VPD that "it was generally suspected that the Missing Women were the work of a serial killer."³⁹⁰ Most importantly, the

JFO was well under way, and its whole purpose was to identify and arrest the serial killer.

On September 7th, 2001, Acting Inspector Boyd from Major Crimes submitted a report to Deputy Chief Constable Unger advising that "from all indications sex trade workers will continue to go missing. Therefore there is considerable urgency to work quickly to identify a suspect or suspects ASAP."³⁹¹

But even subsequent to Acting Inspector Boyd's alarming report, Constable Sarah Bloor, one of the VPD's new media spokespeople (after Constable Drennan was transferred to the Organized Crime Agency in June 2001) provided another inconsistent message: On September 23rd, 2001 in response to a query about the serial killer theory, Constable Bloor responded, "we just don't have any concrete fact to suggest that."³⁹²

Clearly there never was a well-defined media strategy for the Missing Women investigation, such as the strategies being used in other, contemporaneous investigations. The development of a media strategy to address the reality that a serial killer was at work wasn't possible, because there was never a strong commitment beyond the investigator level to accepting that the Missing Women had met foul play until well into 2001. A media strategy for a serious investigation must be developed in consultation with the investigators, to achieve a specific purpose. But as Constable Drennan later reported:

I never had a meeting with the Missing Women Review Team. It wasn't like having a meeting with the Home Invasion Task Force where you would have a strategy session and be part of the investigation...There was no formal media strategy...

389 Binder 24, Tab 39.

390 Binder 27, Tab 18.

391 Binder 10, Tab 15.

392 John Colebourn, "Police still leery of serial-killer theory," in *the Province*, September 23, 2001, p. A28.

Usually on a major case we're brought in to be included in the strategic process and we're advised who our contact person on the file is. We would then discuss where the investigators wanted to go and what kind of media strategy would be necessary...You couldn't talk about implementing the kind of strategy we did with the HITF to drive the offenders to ground, to make them stop what they were doing, because there was no acknowledgement of the nature of the problem. It was always that they would be found dead, or had moved to another community and didn't want to be identified. The idea that there was a serial killer out there was just unacceptable in the conversations I was privy to so there was no discussion that I heard about doing anything to try to make the killer stop.

While Constable Drennan was speaking frequently to Detective Constable Shenher and Sergeant Field, she was getting her direction about what position the VPD was taking from Inspector Biddlecombe and other managers. This is exactly why the major case management model dictates that the investigation team must drive the media strategy. The team commander is responsible for ensuring that the media strategy is consistent with the investigative goals, but, as discussed, in the MWRT, there never really was a team commander. The Bernardo investigative team provided a case study in the damage that can be caused by the failure to properly delegate media liaison duties:

The GRT did not have a full time media officer. Inspector Bevan had responsibility for media relations, an impossible job for any task force commander. A task force commander may need to be available to the media from time to time, but it is a fundamental mistake for the person in charge of a major serial predator investigation to have the daily, hourly, minute-by-minute responsibility of

dealing with the media. That is particularly true in an investigation described as a media feeding-frenzy. It is a full time and very specialized job for a police media officer to balance the legitimate need for public information, through a fiercely competitive industry, against the need to preserve victims, witnesses, and working investigators from undue obstruction and harassment, and to protect the integrity of the investigation.³⁹³

The MWRT's media relations strategy was driven in part by managers who were only remotely connected to the investigation. This violated the principles of major case management developed at the Canadian Police College: The team commander has the responsibility to "establish the standards and controls for all media liaison and shall approve all media releases."³⁹⁴ Following the principles of major case management would have served the Missing Women investigation far better than the inconsistent and disjointed approach that was employed. As Constable Drennan later recalled:

There was a point when...Geramy...indicated to me that she felt Detective Constable Shenher was right, that there was something very wrong here, she felt so terrible that she was trying to do this off the side of her desk... Geramy was the only person throughout this whole thing who was very media savvy about trying to get everything out, that we were really trying hard to do the right thing. She would do interviews whenever she could, she was carrying a huge load, she would cancel meetings to do interviews, she was very very good.

An effective media strategy can also be a very powerful investigative tool to develop leads, build confidence in the public, leverage support for

393 Justice Archie Campbell (1996). *Bernardo Investigation Review*, Government of Ontario, p. 144

394 Canadian Police College, Major Case Management Manual, Part I, Chapter III.

resources, and, perhaps most importantly, suppress the crime. In the Home Invasion Task Force case Constable Drennan referred to, there had been a series of very serious home invasions of elderly people in which they were terrorized and physically abused in late 1998 and early 1999. The first goal of the media strategy was to make the offenders stop. As Constable Drennan later recalled:

With the HITF, we had a one-hour television show with the AG and everything, it was a strategy to get the media on it. They pre-empted Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy for our show. During the HITF, we put out pieces of jewellery to find victims, but also to “heat up” the suspects, that we were coming for them. We...let [the media] film [the] task force project room, which was really cool for them with all the information on the walls, and met our objective of trying to make the suspects feel like there was a big effort going on to catch them. We were constantly talking about strategies to make them stop, which they did almost immediately after the big media initiative, the media interviews...we had patrol saturation out there, it had the potential to help investigatively but also made them stop, which was the first objective, to cool them down.

[In respect of the MWRT] if there had been acceptance that there was a serial killer, the media unit could have helped. Like we might work with a psychologist or a profiler to give an idea of what the guy’s all about so that we could get a message out to the offender to push whatever buttons the investigators wanted pushed. It would be very carefully crafted...We always put together a plan and we take it to the investigators and ask them if it’s appropriate, and we start to massage the plan according to what the investigators want. We might get the message out to the offender like we’re close, we’re closing in. [In the same time period as] the

Missing Women investigation, we were using some really effective media strategies, proactive strategies, with [other] serious cases.

iii. Conclusion

The media strategy for the Missing Women investigation was inadequate. What strategy existed was focused on finding “missing” women and allaying concern about a serial killer, rather than solving a murder case. There was a disconnect between the official position of the VPD, and the statements Detective Constable Shenher was making which clearly expressed concern that the Missing Women had met with foul play.

A well-thought out media strategy could have accomplished several goals. For example, it could have been used to “drive the offender to ground;” to leverage more resources; to generate activity by the offender that might have provided leads; or to generate information from particular populations, such as those who live in the Downtown Eastside.³⁹⁵ And, as Detective Inspector Rossmo later explained regarding his proposed press release:

The rationale was that the media were already talking about this, because the community was. Two, I’ve never seen a police agency get in trouble for saying they thought they had a serial killer when they didn’t, but I’ve seen lots of agencies get in trouble for saying they didn’t when they did. I thought it would protect the department, because it takes the wind out of critics’ sails. If the police deny it, it’s an attack point. Third, the research is pretty

395 It should be noted, however, that a strategy to solicit information from sex trade workers cannot rely on traditional methods of disseminating information through the mainstream media. A strategy that provides and solicits information at the points of contact for sex trade workers would be necessary, such as attending meetings at WISH, as the MWRT members did. This does not mean, though, that a parallel media strategy wasn’t appropriate.

clear that most serial murders are solved by some piece of information that came from the public.

Unfortunately, media duties were split between Detective Constable Shenher, Sergeant Field, and Constable Drennan, with Field and Shenher supporting the serial killer theory. Meanwhile, Constable Drennan, who was getting her direction from Inspector Biddlecombe and Deputy Chief McGuinness and their successors, rather than Sergeant Field, tended to minimize the possibility of a serial killer, as did her replacement, Constable Sarah Bloor. Constable Bloor's statement to the media on September 23rd, 2001, showed clearly the disconnect between the investigation and the media spokesperson. There was a resulting lack of consistency, a failure to capitalize on the benefits of a planned media strategy, and a lack of resources in place to take advantage of any such strategy.

These problems can be attributed not only to VPD management's failure to accept that a serial killer was at work, but also the failure to assign a full time Team Commander. It is the Team Commander who should have driven the media strategy, and who could have delegated a team member to be the single liaison with the media officer to ensure she was properly briefed. Alternatively, a suitable member of a properly staffed task force could have been assigned the duties of media liaison.

It is troubling that it seems to have been well known that sex trade workers were visiting the Pickton property, despite the fact that not a single one of the many dozen sex trade workers shown a picture of Pickton by investigators in 1999 admitted to knowing him. Even a doorman at the Roosevelt Hotel, where some of the Missing Women lived, told

a reporter after Pickton's arrest that Dinah Taylor, a girlfriend of Pickton's, "often invited working women from the Downtown Eastside to party at Pickton's pig farm in Port Coquitlam."³⁹⁶ Garry Bigg was a friend of one of the confirmed dead at the Pickton farm, Sereena Abotsway. He was also the fiancé of Missing Woman Heather Chinnock, and told a reporter after Pickton's arrest that Chinnock "would sometimes spend several days at a time at the pig farm and considered it a refuge from her difficult life in Surrey's sex trade." He said Abotsway also visited the farm.³⁹⁷

It will never be known whether an effective, targeted media strategy (particularly in conjunction with "on the ground" resources) might have been helpful in developing information that would have advanced the Pickton investigation in the summer of 1999. This was when the significant momentum that had been achieved was lost, in part because of a perceived lack of credible witness information. What is clear is that every major case needs to consider the value of an effective media strategy. This requires that major case management principles be followed, and that investigative teams work collaboratively with media liaison officers to ensure best practices are followed.

H. THE POLICE BOARD SHOULD NOT HAVE MADE INVESTIGATIVE DECISIONS

During the Missing Women investigation, there was considerable pressure on the Mayor and Police Board to create a task force and approve a substantial reward, as it did for the "home invasions of the elderly" and the "garage robber" investigations. Despite initial resistance, the Board eventually

396 Adrienne Tanner, "'I advised her not to go': She left the Roosevelt Hotel for Coquitlam and hasn't been seen since," in the *Province*, February 24, 2002, p. A4.

397 Kim Bolan, "Memorial for a missing woman: A Surrey woman visited pig farm for years, finance says," in the *Vancouver Sun*, March 12, 2002, p. B1.

approved contributing \$30,000 to a \$100,000 reward for the Missing Women investigation. The Board's decision was made despite a police recommendation against a reward, because of the concern that the investigation would be compromised. The Board's approval of the reward against a police recommendation raises the question of whether the Board overstepped its legitimate role.

The role of police boards in BC is set out in Part 5 of the Police Act, sections 23 to 30.³⁹⁸ The provincial government has summarized the duties set out in the Police Act, in part, as follows:

A police board sets the priorities, goals and objectives of its police department and develops the annual police department budget. The police board is responsible for service and policy complaints related to its police department. It also receives complaints against the Deputy Chief Constables. The board strives for a fair and responsive interaction between police and the community.³⁹⁹

The role of police boards involves policy and budget oversight, but does not include involvement in day-to-day operational policing, which is the sole responsibility of the Chief Constable.⁴⁰⁰

In March and April 1999, there were many requests that a substantial reward be offered in the Missing Women case. Much of the momentum for this request, as described in the chronology, came from Maggie de Vries, the sister of one of the Missing Women, Sarah de Vries. The Attorney General eventually committed to contributing to a reward if requested to by the VPD. Mayor Owen initially

resisted the idea of a reward, but later, in response to public pressure, changed his mind. The media focused considerable attention on the issue.

Internally, the VPD debated the effectiveness of a reward. Rewards were known to generate large numbers of tips of little or no value to an investigation, each of which had to be investigated nonetheless. A decision was reached that a reward would hinder the investigation, and a report to the Police Board set out the rationale.

When the Police Board met on April 28th, 1999, Maggie de Vries attended and advocated for a task force and a reward. Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness recommended against the reward, reiterating concerns that there was no evidence against which to filter tips, and that this might result in investigative time being spent unwisely. However, the Board resolved to approve a reward, and seek additional reward funding from the Attorney General.

This was an extraordinary step for the Board. The Board's usual role with respect to rewards had been to approve a recommendation from the police department, and historically had been a pro forma function. By making this decision, it overstepped its responsibility to leave operational decisions to the Chief Constable (and his subordinates). In this case, whether right or wrong, the VPD specifically recommended against a reward for investigative reasons. The Board went against this recommendation, effectively making

398 *Police Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 367, as amended.

399 www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/police_services/boards/index.htm

400 For a full discussion of the role of police boards and the independence of the Chief Constable and individual constables, see Ceyssens, Paul. *Legal Aspects of Policing* (2003), Earls court Legal Press, Inc., Chapter 1.

an operational decision.⁴⁰¹ The law around police board governance makes it clear that “...police boards should not be making operational decisions for the police department...Boards are responsible for planning, not operations.”⁴⁰²

(As it turned out, there were no tips of value generated by the reward. Hiscox’s tips came in July and August 1998, almost a year before the reward was announced. Thomas’s tips came much later, and he never expressed any interest in the reward. However, eventually the reward poster became a way of keeping the investigation in the public eye, and was supported by the investigators, who asked that it be renewed each year after it was initially approved in 1999.)

Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness, based on advice from his staff, recommended against creating a reward, because of the concern that it would compromise the investigation. Whether or not this decision was the correct one is a legitimate issue for discussion. However, in terms of the role of the Police Board, it is troubling both that the Board seemed to be acting in response to political pressure,

and that it strayed into operational police matters by approving a decision that went against police recommendations.

I. A PROACTIVE STRATEGY SHOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED

If the VPD had accepted that its investigation was an investigation into a serial killer, one of the first considerations had to be whether the crimes were historical or ongoing. If it was determined that women were continuing to go missing, and by inference, that women were being killed, then it was essential for the VPD to consider what could be done to suppress the continuing crime. Naturally, successfully identifying and apprehending the killer was the best way to prevent further crimes, but there were other strategies that might have been utilized, or at least seriously considered by the MWRT (such as a media strategy). It is not apparent that proactive strategies were seriously considered by the MWRT, nor would they have been realistic with the resources available.

However, to the MWRT’s defence, before the JFO took over the investigation in January 2001, there may have been insufficient information available to justify a proactive unit, i.e., it was not clear that women had been going missing in 1999 or 2000, due to the delay in additional Missing Women being reported after they were last seen, delays in the investigation to determine whether or not new missings met the profile of the Missing Women and were actually missing, and an apparent lack of analytical capacity – and a failure to maximize the use of existing analytical capacity – that might have “raised the alarm” when women began to go missing again. As a result, by the end of 2000, Detective Constable Shenher believed that only Jennifer Furminger had gone missing since the beginning of 1999 (when Jacquelene Mcdonell was last seen).⁴⁰³

401 Mr. Bob Cole was the B.C. Police Services Division’s Program Manager responsible for liaison with police boards in BC until mid-2004. About the Missing Women reward matter, he said, “clearly the issue of the reward was an operational decision and the Board should not have become involved.” Police Services has made a considerable effort to providing education and orientation to police boards specifically aimed at ensuring they understands their proper role of governance, and that it does not stray into operational matters. For example, in 2003, it began a “Leadership Series” of seminars to educate police boards on their roles and responsibilities. There are 13 such seminars scheduled for 2004/2005. The Police Services Branch of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General should be commended for its efforts to ensure police board members receive adequate training.

402 Mark Lalonde & Daryl Kean, Daryl (2003). *Municipal Police Board Governance in British Columbia*. Victoria: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General of British Columbia (Justice Institute of B.C., Police Academy), p. 29.

403 Binder 15, Tab 16.

The following table provides the names of the Missing Women who were reported missing in 1999 and later:

NAME	Date Last Seen	Agency Reported To	Date Reported	Pickton Charged
CREISON, Marcella*	1998-12-27	VPD	1999-01-11	No
MCDONELL, Jacqueline	1999-01-06	VPD	1999-02-22	Yes
BORHAVEN, Andrea	1997	VPD	1999-05-18	Yes
YOUNG, Julie*	1998-10-09	VPD	1999-07-06	No
MAH, Laura*	August 1985	VPD	1999-08-03	No
CRAWFORD, Wendy	1999-11-27	Chilliwack RCMP	1999-12-14	Yes
FURMINGER, Jennifer	1999-12-27	VPD	2000-03-30	Yes
WOLFE, Brenda	1999-02-17	VPD	2000-04-25	Yes
CREY, Dawn	2000-11-01	VPD	2000-12-11	No
JONES, Debra	2000-12-21	VPD	2000-12-25	Yes

* See footnote ⁴⁰⁴

But as shown in the table below, it was only in 2001, after the JFO began its work, that there was a significant increase in reports of Missing Women who had gone missing relatively recently:

NAME	Date Last Seen	Agency Reported To	Date Reported	Pickton Charged
FELIKS, Cynthia	1997-11-26	New West. Police Service	2001-01-08	Yes
PAPIN, Georgina	1999-03-02	Vancouver PD Mission RCMP	2001-03-14	Yes
BOEN, Yvonne **	2001-03-16	Surrey RCMP	2001-03-21	No
SEBASTIAN, Elsie ***	1992	Vancouver PD	2001-05-16	No
JOHNSON, Patricia	2001-03-03	Vancouver PD	2001-05-31	Yes
JOESBURY, Andrea	2001-06-05	Vancouver PD	2001-06-08	Yes
CHINNOCK, Heather	April 2001	Surrey RCMP	2001-06-19	Yes
ABOTSWAY, Sereena	August 2001	Vancouver PD	2001-08-22	Yes
BOTTOMLEY, Heather	2001-04-17	Vancouver PD	2001-11-29	Yes
WILSON, Mona	2001-11-25	Vancouver PD	2001-11-30	Yes
ROCK, Dianne	2001-10-19	Vancouver PD	2001-12-13	Yes
DREW, Tiffany	2000-03-10	Vancouver PD	2002-02-08	Yes

** See footnote ⁴⁰⁵

*** See footnote ⁴⁰⁶

404 Creison, Young and Mah have not been linked to the Pickton property. Crey's DNA was found on the Pickton property but there was insufficient evidence for charges.

405 Boen's DNA was found on the Pickton property but there was insufficient evidence for charges.

406 Sebastian has not been linked to the Pickton property.

By the time the JFO had taken over the investigation, the VPD did not feel responsible to take a leadership role in implementing a proactive strategy. The JFO, however, requested that the VPD keep the responsibility for investigating any new reports of missing women from the Downtown Eastside, since the JFO started with only four investigators and was in a “review” phase. According to Inspector Don Adam, the JFO Team Commander, the VPD was expected to manage any new risk that became apparent. But the VPD, having essentially shut down its investigation other than investigating new reports and passing them on to the JFO, was not engaged in any other investigative strategies. There was no “risk management” occurring around preventing further sex trade workers from going missing.

By September of 2001, the JFO had come to the conclusion that the killer was again active and warned the VPD. As a result, on September 7th, 2001, Acting Inspector Boyd submitted a memo to Deputy Chief Constable Unger requesting additional resources to send to the JFO. He stated that:

the most startling statistic to date is the revelation [that] 22 additional missing sex trade workers have surfaced which may match the profile of the original 31. Most of these have been reported missing from municipalities surrounding the Lower Mainland... From all indications sex trade workers will continue to go missing. Therefore there is considerable urgency to work quickly to identify a suspect or suspects as soon as possible.⁴⁰⁷

It was then clear that a significant number of the new reports of missing Downtown Eastside sex trade workers had been made to the VPD, as well as other jurisdictions. Acting Inspector Boyd’s sense of urgency to assign more investigators was well founded. But it was optimistic to think that ~~this was the only solution to the problem; even the~~

best-managed and -resourced investigation will only improve the chances of identifying the killer, not guarantee it. Therefore, a proactive strategy was required to increase the chances of catching the killer, since the experience in other jurisdictions with a serial killer targeting sex trade workers had demonstrated that the suspect was likely a frequent visitor to prostitution “strolls.”

Despite not initiating any proactive strategies that would complement the work of the JFO, the VPD was, however, completely responsive to any requests from the JFO. As Team Commander Inspector Don Adam stated, “the VPD gave us everything we asked for, forthwith.” But as to the question of whether the VPD should have been doing more while the JFO was conducting the review stage of its investigation in early 2001, Deputy Chief Constable Unger later stated:

If they had recommended something, we would have responded. We expected them to make any recommendations about what to do once they took over the investigation; we weren’t about to start our own parallel investigation into these cases.

The JFO committed to a proactive strategy in November 2001, with a semi-covert team fielded in the Downtown Eastside in January 2002. There is a legitimate question as to whether more could have been done sooner, once it was identified in mid-2001 that a serial killer was clearly still operating in the Downtown Eastside. For example, strategies such as saturating the area with plainclothes officers could have enhanced the likelihood of identifying the offender and/or developing information that would identify him, which was the purpose of the proactive team. Conversely, an overt and highly visible police presence, coupled with an aggressive media strategy,

407 Binder 10, Tab 15.

could have been employed to suppress the offender's activities, although this would likely have been counterproductive in terms of catching him.

J. THE INVESTIGATION REQUIRED BETTER ANALYTICAL SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT

i. Introduction

This section will summarize the problems in the Missing Women investigation related to the use of SIUSS (Special Investigative Unit Support System), the analytical software used to support the investigation. The invaluable lessons learned from the Bernardo investigation and subsequent review will be used to provide some context for the issue, and to compare the government responses in Ontario and British Columbia. The current state of major case management software in British Columbia will also be reviewed.

ii. The Special Investigative Unit Support System – “SIUSS”

SIUSS was first developed by Criminal Investigative Technologies Inc. (CITI), and was first marketed to the police community in 1988 as a comprehensive intelligence database and analytical tool used to support criminal investigations. SIUSS is analytical software that looks for links between pieces of information. For example, if a suspect in a sexual assault was subsequently checked picking up a sex trade worker, and both those pieces of information had been entered in SIUSS, they would be instantly linked. This makes it easier to identify potential suspects when the volume of information is large.

The provincial Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit (CLEU) adopted SIUSS in 1992, when it was still a DOS-based program, which it remained until 2000, despite most computers having switched to the Windows operating system and most software having adopted a Windows interface. As described by Special Constable Ryan Prox, who was an intelligence analyst with CLEU in the mid-1990s, there were problems with SIUSS:

It was less than user friendly and required the operator to memorize complex keyboard functions... If you didn't use the program on a regular basis you had to read the manual and relearn the basic functions again before you could do anything. There was nothing intuitive or easy about using SIUSS. While the software provided very powerful analysis tools, it was overly complex and required intense data entry in order for it to function properly.⁴⁰⁸

In 1999, CITI entered into a joint venture with Anteon Inc. The joint venture eventually failed, and in late 2001, Anteon ceased all operations associated to CITI-SIUSS, so upgrades necessary to ensure compatibility with other systems became a major challenge and cost item.⁴⁰⁹

In the mid-1990s, it was recognized in the Investigation Division that analytical software to support serious investigations was critically important, and SIUSS was acquired for the Sexual Offence Squad, and later for the Home Invasion Task Force. Inspector Biddlecombe, to his credit, managed to find money from another investigation's budget to acquire SIUSS for the MWRT in 1999.

408 Email to the author, February, 2004.

409 Special Constable Ryan Prox, *Criminal Intelligence Section Business Process Analysis*, Vancouver Police Department, January 5th, 2004.

iii. The Use of SIUSS in the Missing Women Investigation

The use of SIUSS in the Missing Women investigation was fraught with problems from the beginning. When the MWRT was formed in May 1999, a clerk, Ms. Gray, was loaned to the team from the Robbery Squad to perform data entry in SIUSS. However, she had only limited training using SIUSS (a one-week course), and no training as a SIUSS analyst, so she could not do any more than data entry and very basic queries on the system. Consequently, the powerful analytical tools in the system could not be used. And because Parker had no operational policing or intelligence analysis background, she had a limited understanding of the relative investigative value of the information she was working with; this was to contribute to the problems. This is not a criticism of Parker; she was hired and trained as a clerk, not as an analyst, yet was thrust into a role for which she was unprepared, which contributed to her eventually going on stress leave.

Sergeant Field and Detective Constable Shenher recognized the problems early. On June 14th, 1999 – within weeks of the investigation team beginning its work – Sergeant Field submitted a request through Staff Sergeant Giles to Inspector Biddlecombe setting out the “absolutely essential” need for a full time police analyst to manage the SIUSS database. Sergeant Field pointed out that their data entry person, Gray, needed guidance regarding what information was relevant. She requested Detective Frank Owen as a full time analyst, since Detective Constable Carl Vinje, an experienced SIUSS analyst, was working full time in the Home Invasion Task Force.⁴¹⁰

Staff Sergeant Giles recalled that:

[Sergeant Field] came to my office about it and my recommendation to Fred was not to give him to her because I didn’t think we could release him from Robbery. She had the use of Carl Vinje from HITF, Sue Jarvis, Pickerell, Gray, who was their clerk. The edict had come from Brian to get all this stuff entered and if it meant doing it on OT then do it. I think he had the opinion that everyone would jump at the OT but what happened was that they were overwhelmed by the data and only one or two of them were trained in SUISS, so even though OT was granted they got burnt out. There was a ton of work and I felt in Robbery in a section in turmoil that only had one analyst, that we couldn’t give him up.

Inspector Biddlecombe responded to Sergeant Field’s request with the message that Detective Owen would only be available to the MWRT on an overtime basis as needed. Inspector Biddlecombe later explained:

Geramy asked for Frank Owen at one time to do SIUSS, and that was only the second thing I ever said no to. The reason for that was that the Robbery analyst was booking off on a lot of sick and Frank was going to be the robbery analyst. Robbery had their own system they were using and it was very important that they had an analyst. To take Owen out of there, I would have had to train Owen on SIUSS, and then train someone else to do the Robbery job, and that would have delayed things even further. She had Pickerell available at any time and also Carl Vinje on OT. I couldn’t spare Owen.

(The VPD had, and continues to have, a chronic shortage of adequate civilian support staff, particularly those with the technical expertise

410 Binder 3, Tab 63.

required to support investigations.⁴¹¹) As a result, when the MWRT was formed, the VPD had already gone to the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit to borrow a trained analyst for the Home Invasion Task Force, Detective Constable Carl Vinje, in February 1999; that well was dry.

Sergeant Field again raised the issue of a lack of analytical capacity on January 10th, 2000, when she submitted a status report to Acting Inspector Matthews. In her report she noted problems with analyzing the volumes of information that had been collected and that “Parker was trained in data entry, but not as an analyst.”⁴¹² But no relief was forthcoming.

Despite the challenges, Detective Constable Shenher continued to attempt to maximize the potential for SIUSS to assist in the investigation. For example, on July 7th, 2000, she submitted a memo to Acting Inspector Boyd regarding the cost of creating a utility to allow “data mining” of information not then compatible with SIUSS, such as DEYAS bad date sheets and traffic ticket data.⁴¹³ The request was approved, but according to Detective Constable Shenher, the SIUSS representative had by this time become very difficult to get any assistance from, and the proposal to enhance the data mining capabilities of SIUSS did not proceed.

By the summer of 2000, the SIUSS manufacturer switched from a DOS-based system to one based on an “ORACLE” platform. Unfortunately, according to Detective Constable Shenher, the company’s representative, an ex-RCMP member named Doyle, decided not to upgrade the VPD’s software

immediately, and did not tell the VPD an upgrade was coming. When he did advise of the upgrade, and that the company would no longer support the DOS version so the upgrade had to occur, he also advised that he would be unable to provide support or training for the new program for weeks or even months.

As a result, on July 25th, 2000, Detective Constable Shenher noted that SIUSS had been at a “standstill all week,” that the import feature wasn’t working, and that no one was trained to use the new Oracle-based system that had been imposed.⁴¹⁴

Detective Constable Shenher later pointed out that Inspector Fred Biddlecombe negotiated the acquisition of SIUSS, and:

I don’t feel Doyle ever lived up to the promises of service and support he made to Fred. Doyle was constantly available prior to Fred finally making the purchase, but suddenly unavailable once we had the system and Fred had retired. It often took Doyle weeks to respond to our requests for technical support and he was often in the Eastern U.S. and unable to come and see us for weeks on end, nor was there any phone or online support available.

By September of 2000, Sergeant Field had finally been successful in obtaining an agreement from the RCMP to take over the investigation. But the problems associated with SIUSS continued to bedevil her efforts. On September 29th, 2000, Sergeant Field advised of a “setback in our plans to have the RCMP assist with the Missing Persons Review Team investigation.”⁴¹⁵ She advised that a “major problem” had been a lack of trained SIUSS data

411 See for example the civilian staffing requests made to the City of Vancouver in 2002 and 2003. (Vancouver Council approved a significant number of new civilian positions for the VPD in March 2005.)

412 Binder 15, Tab 47.

413 Binder 15, Tab 80.

414 Binder 32, Tab 1.

415 Binder 3, Tab 12.

entry and analysis personnel. To compound this problem, the team's SIUSS data entry clerk, Gray, had gone on stress leave, leaving the team with no one trained to perform this function. As a result, Sergeant Field requested that the services of Detective Constable Sue Jarvis, a VPD member with the appropriate training then on assignment at the Organized Crime Agency of BC, be obtained for the MWRT. The services of Detective Constable Jarvis were subsequently obtained, but within weeks, Detective Constable Jarvis had to leave her duties for medical reasons.

Detective Constable Shenher recalled the frustration of trying to obtain staff who could use SIUSS.

I was told by Acting Inspector Matthews and Geramy both to just go over to SOS and OCA myself and ask those people if they wanted to work some OT. Unfortunately, no one wanted to work in that windowless room on their summer vacation and none of the managers wanted to let anyone come and help us during the week.

And by the time the investigation was being “wrapped up” so that it could be transferred to the RCMP, Detective Constable Shenher discovered other more serious problems:

I had been told all along by Gray that we had all the victims' file information entered into SIUSS and were in decent shape in terms of the tips being entered. As we discovered when we were trying to get things together to send it out to Surrey, none of the victim files were entered into SIUSS in anything close to their entirety. All that had gone in was bare bones info – which is what we had done at the start, with the understanding the rest would be

in ASAP once we got organized. When Gray was gone on stress leave, I was shocked to find none of the necessary front-end loading had occurred. I immediately went to Geramy and told her the entire foundation of our case – what we knew of our victims – wasn't even in the system, making all of the search and analytical functions useless.

On January 25th, 2001, Sergeant Field submitted to Inspector Spencer a comprehensive report summarizing the status of the MWRT and the progress made in creating a Joint Forces Operation with the RCMP.⁴¹⁶ She again pointed out “major problems with SIUSS,” as a result of which she reported she was not confident that all relevant information was in the system, or that all files had been investigated fully.

As the RCMP-led Joint Force Operation began, the SIUSS related problems continued. Although there had originally been discussion of continuing to use SIUSS, and this issue was being actively debated in April of 2001, by September of 2001, problems had still not been resolved and Sergeant Adam notified Mr. Doyle, the SIUSS representative, that “due to the many delays etc...we will not be going forward with SIUSS.”⁴¹⁷ As a result, a decision was made to switch to E&R, but migrating the information in SIUSS to the new system proved to be a major challenge. The fact that there was no common electronic major case management software in place in BC was one more obstacle frustrating the investigative team. This needn't have occurred, had the lessons of the Bernardo investigation been taken to heart in BC.

416 Binder 3, Tab 12.

417 Evenhanded file notes.

iv. The Bernardo Investigation – Lessons Not Learned

Between 1987 and 1990, Paul Bernardo committed a series of at least 18 sadistic rapes or sexual assaults in Toronto. He then killed Tammy Homolka (the younger sister of his wife, Karla) in 1990, and, abetted by his wife, murdered teenagers Leslie Mahaffy in June 1991 and Kristen French in April 1992 in jurisdictions neighboring Toronto. Bernardo was arrested in 1993 and it became apparent that there were serious problems in the investigation, many of them systemic in nature. As a result, in 1995, the Ontario government ordered an inquiry into various aspects of the investigation, to be conducted by Justice Archie Campbell. The tragic events of the Bernardo case had one positive outcome: Justice Archie Campbell's subsequent detailed review of the investigation provided a blueprint for how such serial predator investigations should be conducted in the future. One of the key issues his report covered was the issue of major case management software:

The Scarborough Rape investigations and the GRT investigations were seriously hampered by the lack of a uniform, effective, free-standing computerized case management system to analyze the masses of information about suspects and tips and investigative leads...Vital information about suspects, including Bernardo, was overlooked because there was no such system in place.⁴¹⁸

The Campbell Report made an urgent call for government-mandated standardized major case management software for serial predator investigations. The Government of Ontario did approve this recommendation and struck

a sub-committee to examine the issue. The sub-committee issued a comprehensive evaluation of the systems available at the time on December 13, 1996. And by June 1997, the Government of Ontario had responded to the Campbell Report's recommendations, saying this about case management software:

Case management technology products will be thoroughly evaluated and the best product for use by all Ontario police services will be selected, customized, acquired and mandated by regulation.⁴¹⁹

By 2000, Ontario had selected the case management software "PowerCase" and it was announced that 300 PowerCase licenses would be rolled out at over 70 sites throughout the Province over the next 24 months for major case management.⁴²⁰ (However, there are anecdotal reports from Ontario that achieving compliance with the provincial standard has not been without problems, and the Ontario "solution" is not a panacea for BC's problems.)

On a related issue, in the mid-1990s, BC's Attorney General made it clear to the police community that he expected all police departments and detachments to fully contribute to ViCLAS (the Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System). The use of ViCLAS was seen as a very important step in dealing with serial predators. In the Bernardo inquiry, Justice Campbell found that:

Had the ViCLAS system been in place and fully used at that time, it would immediately have suggested a link between the Scarborough and Henley Island rapes. It would have enabled the separate

418 Justice Archie Campbell (1996). *Bernardo Investigation Review*, Government of Ontario, p. 313.

419 Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services Ontario, *The Campbell Report: A Call to Action*, June 23, 1997, pp. 6-8.

420 <http://www1.globalgraphics.com/news/ggpress.nsf/PressReleasesPublishedCurrent/937A8DB14F0733478025698B003603C5>

investigations to pool their resources and focus the two investigations in the direction of the common attacker.⁴²¹

Before the Attorney General's strong suggestion that ViCLAS rules be complied with, many police departments and detachments were not contributing to the system because of the resource implications. The VPD made completion of ViCLAS booklets mandatory, and assigned a full time coordinator from within its existing staff to ensure all relevant cases were entered into the system. The implementation of ViCLAS, and the VPD's commitment to its use, was an important step in dealing with serial predators.

However, BC's government did not take the other aggressive steps taken by Ontario regarding major case management. That issue was the subject of a major article about the Missing Women investigation in the *Vancouver Sun* in September 2001:⁴²²

But while Ontario has responded by spending more than \$55 million to fill cracks in the system, B.C. appears to have ignored many of the lessons of the Bernardo case. And with up to 45 women missing from the Downtown Eastside, and police acknowledging a serial killer may be responsible, the case could potentially be the largest serial murder investigation in B.C.'s history.

The article went on to quote from experienced homicide investigators from multiple jurisdictions in BC, all of whom emphasized the need for a common standard for an electronic case management system, amongst other things. Then-Chief Constable Terry

Blythe of the VPD said the provincial government needed to follow Ontario's lead and provide some guidance on the issue: "I would like to see them play a more significant role in bringing police organizations together."

Inspector Rod Gehl, who was the Team Commander for the "Abbotsford Killer" investigation that resulted in the arrest and conviction of Terry Driver, wrote a master's thesis on the subject of multi-agency investigations, and addressed the issue of electronic case management systems. He recommended "the identification and development of a common Major Case Management data base between all police agencies in British Columbia."⁴²³

However, it appears that no action was taken, or if it was, nothing came of it. It was only in 1998, when the VPD on its own pursued a new Records Management System called "PRIME" (Police Records Information Management Environment), that the groundwork was laid for a Province-wide system for electronically storing police records. In February 1999, then-Inspector Jim Chu made a presentation to then-Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh about PRIME, as a result of which the Attorney General wrote letters of support for PRIME, and later provided a \$200,000 grant for the Records Management System integration software known as LEIP (Law Enforcement Information Portal).

PRIME-BC went "live" in Vancouver and Port Moody in March 2001, and Richmond in November 2001. The provincial government has since championed PRIME as a Province-wide system. In March 2003, Solicitor General Rich Coleman introduced legislation requiring all police agencies in

421 Justice Archie Campbell (1996). *Bernardo Investigation Review*, Government of Ontario, p. 110.

422 Lindsay Kines, Lori Culbert and Kim Bolan, "B.C. slow to adopt lessons of Bernardo: Police face obstacles tracking down serial predators," in the *Vancouver Sun*, September 26, 2001, p. A1.

423 A. Rodney Gehl (2001). *The Dynamics of Police Cooperation in Multi-Agency Investigations: Finding Common Ground*. Masters Thesis, Royal Roads University, p. 93.

BC to use PRIME-BC. In the legislature during the introduction of the Police Amendment Act, 2003, he stated:

We know PRIME works. We tested it in Vancouver, Richmond, and Port Moody...Our pilot project allowed us to test PRIME in the three agencies... When I identified PRIME as the system, as the Solicitor General, through working with my ministry, the first challenge I knew I would face was that someone was going to say: “We’re not taking it, because we don’t want to pay for it.” Then we would have a hole in the middle of information management and policing in the province. Even during times of tough economic times and cuts, I went to Treasury Board and asked them to fund the system province wide – that the province would pay for it so that we would have the system in the field and it could be integrated completely into policing and there would be no excuse for not doing it. They saw that vision too, and as a result of seeing that vision, we are funding PRIME in B.C.

It should be noted, however, that a records management system is not the same as a case management system, which requires analytical and investigative functions not required in a system that exists to store and retrieve information. As Justice Campbell said in his Bernardo Review:

It is important to distinguish between a case management software system, a stand alone system which depends for its efficiency on a database unique to the particular investigation, and the larger police data system which contains occurrence reports and records. For serial predator investigations, the first priority is to mandate, by regulation, one standard case management software

system for use in all major homicide and sexual assault investigations by all forces.

However, the PRIME-BC system championed by Minister Coleman throughout BC may provide a partial solution with a Major Case Management “module,” which was released by the vendor (Versadex) on November 1st, 2003 as part of its “RMS Version 6.2” upgrade. This upgrade resulted from the work of a committee formed in January 2003 with representatives from Versadex, the VPD, the RCMP, the Organized Crime Agency of BC, and several police departments from the Capitol Regional District. This software was beta-tested in the Organized Crime Agency in 2004 and is also being tested by the Victoria Police Department. Once the product has been tested with live cases, Versadex expects that a new iteration will be released as version “7.0” in mid-2005, and should then provide a very functional system.⁴²⁴ While it appears that implementation of the new software will be an advancement, there are acknowledged weaknesses, as identified in a report prepared by a civilian VPD intelligence analyst, Special Constable Ryan Prox, who has a high degree of expertise in case management software and intelligence analysis:⁴²⁵

In terms of analytical capabilities, Versadex 6.2 is quite weak compared to other software packages available...Versadex 6.2 is not an intelligence analysis program like SIUSS, but rather it is a major case management system designed to assist in collecting evidence and preparing a case for court. This module is built around the Versadex engine, which is designed exclusively as a Records

424 According to Mr. Ray Waters, Implementation Manager for Versadex, in a meeting with the author on September 3, 2004. (Prior to joining Versadex, Mr. Waters was a member of both the Organized Crime Agency and its forerunner, the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit.)

425 Special Constable Ryan Prox, *Criminal Intelligence Section Business Process Analysis*, Vancouver Police Department, January 5th, 2004.

Management System for running the daily investigations conducted by police and maintaining records of police response to crime. The difference between the two types of systems is critical.

Despite the analytical weaknesses of PRIME, however, Special Constable Prox acknowledges the benefits of the PRIME product and has developed detailed recommendations to support the implementation of Versadex 6.2. He notes that its weaknesses can be addressed by using it in conjunction with complementary analytical software currently available (a solution supported by Versadex):

Analyst Workstation 2 can be run on a combination of client and server machines. This facilitates the sharing of information amongst analysts within an agency and provides a conduit for full integration between Analyst Notebook, iBase SSSE, Data Minder, Pattern Tracer and interfaces with GIS mapping. In other words, Analyst's Workstation 2 is an integrated collection of i2's most powerful analysis tools including Analyst Notebook, in a network deployable version.

Currently in B.C., there are multiple electronic major case management systems being used, which makes sharing of information and integration of efforts difficult, particularly when they occur mid-investigation, as occurred with the Missing Women investigation. Some police departments have developed "home grown" systems, while the RCMP is using the RCMP-developed product "E&R III" for major projects, although their Integrated Homicide Investigation Team is using an internally developed combination of off-the-shelf software. The VPD's Sexual Offence Squad is using a combination of PRIME and off-the-shelf software for major case management, a solution supported by Versadex. The VPD is also using a document management system called "SuperText" in the Financial Crime Squad to manage cases with huge volumes of documents. As shown in the schematic below, the

Project Evenhanded JFO is also using SuperText in conjunction with E&R III and other systems to manage the overwhelming volume and complexity of the Pickton investigation, and the resulting disclosure challenges.⁴²⁶

As a result of the information management challenges faced by the JFO, the RCMP contracted a group of expert consultants "to produce a new set of guidelines, processes and procedures for the investigation of multiple homicides," with information technology "a special focus in regard to the handling of evidence."⁴²⁷ Known as "Project Quick Start," the group planned to have a report ready by the fall of 2004. According to Mr. Paul Morgan, the group's IT expert, the Versadex product will not be up to the level of sophistication currently in use in the Evenhanded JFO for three to five years.⁴²⁸ He agrees that there ought to be a common system in use in BC, and that it makes sense to use the Versadex platform, but that the standards it must meet are the specifications of the E&R system – at whatever level they are at – when a Province-wide system is deployed.⁴²⁹ According to some major case managers, the system envisioned by the "Quick Start" consultants may be too complex for "routine" major investigations: a better solution may be to have a range of standardized options available.

426 Schematic provided by Mr. Paul Morgan.

427 From a presentation and supporting documentation provided to the author and other members of the VPD Executive, June 2004.

428 Mr. Waters of Versadex suggests that a very functional product will be available from Versadex in 2005.

429 It should be noted that there are highly experienced investigators who believe that the complex information management model being used by Evenhanded is unnecessary for most major investigations, requiring too much expertise and time to be effective in a rapidly unfolding investigation, and that there are simpler solutions available and in use now.

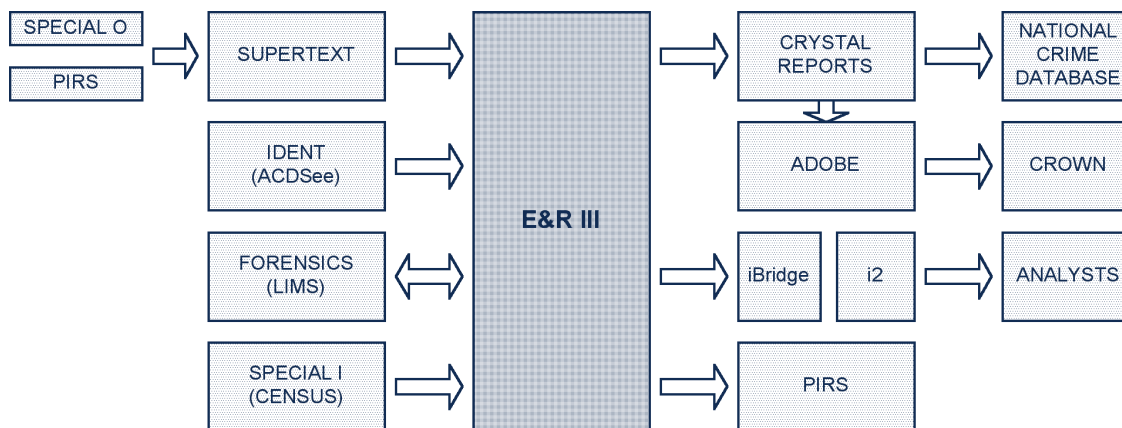
v. Conclusion

The MWRT was plagued with problems related to the management and analysis of information. This problem of “information overload,” and the inevitable inability to process, analyze, and prioritize data, was to contribute to frustration and delays in the investigation. The VPD Investigation Division did not have available properly trained analysts to perform functions crucial to managing large amounts of data in a case where the offender was unknown and there were many potential suspects.

There was insufficient effort applied at the management level to ensure that the human resources in sufficient numbers with the appropriate skills were in place in the investigation. For example, there could have been an effort to obtain the services of an analyst from another police agency that might have been able to loan one to the VPD. (Ironically, now-

Special Constable Ryan Prox, an expert analyst and former employee of CLEU, was working as a policy analyst in the VPD’s Planning and Research Section when the MWRT was operating. By mid-2000, because of his expertise, he had been loaned to the new Organized Crime Agency of BC to work as the analyst on a complex homicide file, at the request of the Team Commander who was aware of his abilities.⁴³⁰) Despite this reality, there is no evidence to date that the problems with information management and analysis contributed to a failure to identify Pickton as a suspect in the Missing Women case. (This certainly was the case in the Bernardo investigation, where Bernardo’s name appeared multiple times in relation to the investigation, but the capacity to link these incidents electronically did not exist.⁴³¹)

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430 Unfortunately, none of the managers in MCS was aware of Mr. Prox, nor is it clear he would have been made available in 1999.

431 Justice Archie Campbell (1996). *Bernardo Investigation Review*, Government of Ontario.

In fact, Pickton was identified almost immediately as a suspect in the Missing Women investigation (on July 27th and August 6th, 1998), and considerable investigative effort was applied to him as a suspect beginning in 1998 and carrying on into the summer of 1999. There is no indication that any information about Pickton was “missed” because of problems with the analytical software —————

—————, or that Pickton wasn’t rated as highly as he should have been as a suspect due to the problems with SIUSS.

However, this in no way lessens the importance of taking steps to ensure that investigators have the benefits of an effective electronic case management system staff trained in its effective operation. (And while problems with SIUSS clearly didn’t result in a failure to identify Pickton as a suspect, there was a very serious problem with information management and analysis generally that had a very significant impact on the course of the investigation.) Without the adoption of common software for electronic case management throughout BC, future problems are inevitable.

7. THE PICKTON INVESTIGATION PRIOR TO THE FEBRUARY 2002 SEARCH WARRANTS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Review will focus on the investigation of Pickton prior to the search warrants being executed in February 2002. Analysis will be provided regarding the media response to the search of the Pickton property and the RCMP’s reaction; the issue of the RCMP’s jurisdictional authority over the Port Coquitlam investigation; the available evidence

supporting continued aggressive investigation of Pickton; the reasons the 1999 investigation stalled; the inadequate investigation after September 1999, including the January 2000 interview of Pickton; missed investigative opportunities; the reasons why the JFO did not target Pickton; and other related issues.

It is not within the scope of this review to conduct a complete analysis of the RCMP-led Pickton investigation that occurred prior to the execution of the search warrants in February 2002. To do so would require interviews of all RCMP members in an operational and decision-making capacity with regard to the Coquitlam RCMP’s investigation (including members of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit). Because this was not practicable, it would be unfair to engage in an extensive critique of individual conduct in what was obviously a failed investigation. Any review of this nature is incomplete if only the documentary records are relied upon, rather than complementing the documentary review with interviews of key players.

But because the Pickton investigation was so central to the Missing Women investigation, and because he was eventually charged with multiple murders, it is appropriate that analysis to the extent possible be provided, and that unanswered questions be raised for further examination. It should also be noted that the VPD was the subject of extreme criticism in the media after the Pickton charges, with obviously unfounded allegations made that the VPD failed to conduct any investigation or be responsive to the Pickton information. (In fact, as described in this report, the VPD provided all such information to the RCMP. In addition, as described later in this chapter, the RCMP legally had – and accepted – jurisdictional responsibility for the Pickton investigation, and had decision-making authority for the investigation. Further, there was considerable investigation of

the Pickton information by the RCMP, assisted by the VPD, until the investigation was derailed in late 1999.) Therefore, the VPD has an interest in identifying issues of concern that have impacted on its reputation and that of individual officers.

Although the majority of the RCMP members involved were not interviewed for this review, the documentation of the actual investigation was extensive and detailed, as set out in the chronology. In addition, VPD members were intensely involved in the Pickton investigation until the end of August 1999, so they were able to describe what occurred from their vantage point. Finally, Constable York, the investigator who took over the Pickton file from Corporal Connor in August 1999, but who is now retired from the RCMP, agreed to be interviewed for this Review. While it would have been preferable to have access to other RCMP members such as Corporal Connor and those in supervisory and management positions, Constable York's information was helpful in understanding the dynamics and pressures at work in the Coquitlam RCMP. Her cooperation was most helpful and appreciated, and the frank and direct manner in which she provided her statement – even where identifying her own investigative shortcomings – was impressive and commendable.

B. THE MEDIA RESPONSE TO THE SEARCH OF THE PICKTON PROPERTY AND SUBSEQUENT MURDER CHARGES

After the search warrants were executed on the Pickton property on February 5th and 6th, 2002, media scrutiny of the Pickton investigation was intense and sensational. Much of the reporting centred on criticism of the VPD for allegedly failing to conduct an adequate investigation into the Missing

Women case generally, and into Pickton specifically. Many allegations were made about the VPD doing nothing with information provided to it years earlier regarding Pickton. For example, the *Province* newspaper reported that despite the VPD being given a tape of Hiscox's conversation with Wayne Leng (in which Hiscox described to Leng the information he later provided to police) "[the VPD] did not investigate Robert "Willie" Pickton until February 5th, 2002, when RCMP got a search warrant."⁴³² This was obviously incorrect.

The media coverage generally inappropriately blamed the VPD for the failure to adequately investigate Pickton, despite the involvement of the RCMP throughout and despite the fact that the Pickton investigation was under the jurisdiction of the RCMP. The RCMP were generally characterized as having rescued the VPD's investigation and the theme of many media articles was that the VPD was incompetent and worse. This was in no small part due to the actions of the RCMP's media spokesperson, Constable Simmons, who made misleading statements such as those broadcast November 2nd, 2002, on "Dateline Special," a popular NBC television program seen throughout North America and elsewhere. The Dateline episode was highly critical of the VPD, and included footage of a JFO media conference at which the VPD was not represented.

One of the main themes of the Dateline episode was, in summary, that the VPD was told about Pickton and his pig farm, but did not investigate and seemed not to care, probably because the victims were just "junkie prostitutes" and because most of them were aboriginal.

432 Suzanne Fournier, "Pickton tape given to police in 1998: 'He's quite the strange character, eh, very, very strange'", in the (Vancouver) *Province*, April 25th, 1998, p. A3.

Dateline incorrectly described the reason the RCMP became involved as follows:

The marches, the vigils, the reward, and the growing number of missing women all finally got the attention of politicians outside of Vancouver. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police was brought in.

This characterization of how the RCMP became involved was patently false. In the Pickton investigation specifically (i.e., the investigation in 1998 and 1999 into the information provided by Hiscox, Thomas and others), the RCMP was involved and in command from the beginning. In the Missing Women investigation generally, the RCMP became involved because of the relentless efforts of Sergeant Field, later assisted by Inspector Spencer, not because “politicians outside Vancouver” brought them in.

Constable Simmons was shown on the Dateline program stating, “I’m not in any position to make any comment with regard to the Vancouver Police Department investigation...” The narrator then states, “But Simmons acknowledged that the RCMP found ample information to go after Pickton in the Vancouver Police Department’s very own files.” Constable Simmons is then shown saying, “Our investigators arrived at this conclusion based on a lengthy file review.” The reporter then asked, “A file review of the Vancouver Police Department?” Simmons responded, “That’s correct, and any further comment with regard to that will have to be made to Vancouver City Police.” The narrator then intones, “But they were nowhere to be found.”

The conduct of Constable Simmons was to cause many problems, from the VPD perspective, as the investigation progressed. For example, on many occasions, she violated the media policy agreed to by the VPD and the RCMP by agreeing to interviews

outside of the scheduled press conferences. This undermined the VPD media spokesperson, who abided by the policy and consequently suffered the wrath of the media. This led to much consternation, and, according to former Chief Constable Blythe and others, led to high-level discussions between the VPD and the RCMP about removing Simmons from her assignment, although in the end she was not removed. Inspector Beach was part of the discussions and later explained:

Regarding the way the RCMP treats us, at the operational level, dealing with Don Adam, Larry Killaly, excellent relationship; we’re treated like partners. At the corporate level, there’s no question that the RCMP see us as bit players and they’re the main act; they will do everything they can to protect the image of the RCMP and their failure to get rid of Simmons unless we got rid of Dreimel was an example of that; there was no way they were going to look like they’d lost on that issue.

The Dateline story was not factual, particularly with respect to the information leading to the search of the Pickton property and the arrest of Pickton coming as a result of the review of the VPD’s files. In fact, as described in the chronology, all of the information regarding Pickton had been shared with the RCMP as it was received beginning in 1998, and throughout the intense investigation of Pickton during the summer of 1999. The Coquitlam RCMP led this investigation until it was derailed by the transfer of Corporal Connor, and after the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit formed the opinion that the informant information wasn’t credible.

Further, the information leading to the search of the Pickton residence and the eventual arrest of Pickton was developed independent of the information in the VPD (and RCMP) files regarding Pickton. As described in the chronology, the RCMP-led JFO

was not targeting Pickton, and the case was actually solved because a junior Coquitlam RCMP member, Constable Nathan Wells, obtained a search warrant for an illegal firearm alleged to be on the Pickton property, based on information he received from an informant (—). JFO members only learned of this warrant the day before it was executed, and had no involvement in the investigation to that point.⁴³³

The Dateline episode spawned intense condemnation of the VPD, and generated countless venomous emails from North America and Europe where the episode was shown. The RCMP made no public statement subsequent to the episode to correct the impression left by the show generally, and the comments of Constable Simmons specifically. (This leads to the inevitable inference that Constable Simmons's original comments, or at least the RCMP's failure to correct the misinformation, were part of a planned media strategy at senior levels of the RCMP to focus criticism on the VPD and away from the RCMP.) This was extremely hurtful to the VPD, and particularly to the key VPD investigators.

The incalculable damage to the reputation of the VPD and individual members could have been at least partially mitigated if the RCMP had responded to the "character assassination" of the VPD in Dateline. The RCMP could have briefly stated that the show was inaccurate, and that the VPD had shared all information it received about Pickton in a timely manner, without discussing the investigation further. It did not do so. The lack of response by the

RCMP was not in keeping with the finest traditions of that organization.

C. THE COQUITLAM RCMP HAD JURISDICTION OVER THE PICKTON INVESTIGATION

The Crime Stoppers tips about Pickton, received on July 27th and August 6th of 1998, concerned allegations that Pickton had murdered Sarah de Vries, and possibly other women, on his property in Port Coquitlam.⁴³⁴ The informant, William Hiscox, said that Pickton picked up prostitutes from Burnaby, New Westminster and Vancouver, but Hiscox indicated that the crimes had occurred on the Port Coquitlam farm.

Because the crimes were alleged to have occurred in Port Coquitlam, the primary responsibility for the investigation of the Pickton information rested with the Coquitlam RCMP. This understanding was common to both the VPD and the Coquitlam RCMP.

The RCMP, specifically Corporal Mike Connor, led an aggressive investigation into the Pickton information. The VPD members, Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff, played a supporting role in 1999 centred around handling an informant, Thomas. Throughout the investigation of Pickton in 1998 and 1999, it was always clear to all the investigators involved that the Coquitlam RCMP was leading the investigation, with the VPD offering any assistance requested.

⁴³³ In fact, the investigative premise of the JFO was that the case would be solved by identifying suspects through DNA connected to other attacks on sex trade workers. To this day [as of August 2004], Pickton has not been connected to any of the unsolved cases the JFO had in its database; there is no evidence to date that the JFO's investigative strategy with respect to DNA, although sound, would have led the JFO to Pickton. However, Inspector Adam believed the proactive team in the Downtown Eastside, and follow-up on the Joesbury file, would have eventually led the JFO to Pickton.

⁴³⁴ Binder 29, Tab 7.

The Police Act sets out the jurisdictional responsibilities of municipal police agencies in British Columbia (the RCMP are both the Provincial Police in BC, and also provide municipal policing services by contract to those municipalities that do not have an independent police force, such as Coquitlam/Port Coquitlam).

Section 26 (2) of the Police Act sets out that the duties and functions of a municipal police department are, among others, to:

- (a) enforce, **in the municipality** (emphasis added), municipal bylaws, the criminal law and the laws of British Columbia.
- (b) generally maintain law and order in the municipality;

By law and convention, the police agency of jurisdiction is responsible for crimes that occur in its jurisdiction. When a crime occurs in one jurisdiction, e.g., Vancouver, but the investigation requires follow-up in another jurisdiction, then the original jurisdiction can request assistance from another jurisdiction, or pursue the investigation itself. Both scenarios happen regularly.

For example, if a break and enter occurred in Vancouver, but it was determined that the suspect lived in Richmond, it would be routine for the VPD to pursue the investigation in Richmond, after notifying Richmond of their activities (as required by s. 38(4) of the Police Act). This is normal police practice. If the suspect had fled to Prince Rupert,

however, because of the distance involved it is much more likely that the VPD would request assistance from the RCMP to arrest the suspects and conduct further investigation (e.g., conducting searches or interviews). This sort of cooperation occurs regularly, and the VPD has a protocol with the RCMP for assisting jurisdictions outside of the Lower Mainland with their investigations (e.g., a witness to a crime in Prince Rupert now lives in Vancouver and the VPD is requested to interview the person).

But the situation of travelling to another police force's jurisdiction to investigate a crime that occurred in that same jurisdiction would be extremely unusual. The normal process is to pass information about a crime in another jurisdiction to the agency with jurisdictional responsibility. Any other practice would be unworkable and would create chaos. Consider, for example, a scenario where the VPD receives information that a murder (perhaps of a Vancouver citizen) has occurred in a suburb outside the city. Not satisfied that the agency of jurisdiction will competently investigate the murder, VPD members drive to the suburb and begin an investigation. The citizens of Vancouver would be wrongfully deprived of police resources they are paying for, and the VPD actions might very well compromise a confidential investigation in the suburb (for example, an undercover operation). Conversely, if a suburban agency receives information about a murder that has occurred in Vancouver, clearly that agency is not going to put its (smaller) resources into a significant investigation of a crime for which it has no jurisdictional responsibility. This is the reality of policing in a region with a patchwork of many police agencies/detachments.

The fact that many of the Missing Women lived and/or worked in the Downtown Eastside has no legal bearing on the responsibility of the RCMP to investigate crimes believed to have taken place within their jurisdiction; the determining factor is where the crime took place. (This does not, however, take away from the fact that VPD senior management could have advocated at a high level for a better investigation by the RCMP and also offered resources for a well-run joint force operation, considering the VPD's interest in a successful resolution.)

It should also be noted that other sex trade workers (i.e., not the Missing Women group) from the Downtown Eastside were also victimized in other jurisdictions. For example, [Anderson](#) was a Downtown Eastside sex trade worker who Pickton picked up and seriously wounded on his property in 1997; the RCMP took total control of that investigation and the VPD had no involvement in it.

Similarly, sex trade workers Pipe, Olajide and Younker were associated to the Downtown Eastside, but because they were found murdered in the Agassiz/Chilliwack area, the case was the responsibility of the RCMP in that jurisdiction. The same was true of Lidguerre, who was found in North Vancouver. If a sex trade worker (or anyone else) from a jurisdiction outside Vancouver visited Vancouver and was killed there, the VPD would be responsible for the investigation, regardless of where the victim regularly lived or worked.

On the basis of the above, there is no question that the Coquitlam RCMP had jurisdictional responsibility for the Pickton investigation (although the VPD could have done more to urge the RCMP to conduct an adequate investigation, as will be discussed later).

D. THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING CONTINUED AGGRESSIVE INVESTIGATION OF PICKTON

i. Introduction

What is now clear is that in the RCMP there was a lack of effective analysis of the available information regarding Pickton. Although Corporal Connor, Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff were very familiar with the information in the file, the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit members were either not aware of all the evidence pointing to Pickton, or did not understand it. Even Constable [York](#), who took over the file from Corporal Connor, only knew Hiscox's name, but wasn't familiar with the information Hiscox had provided, which involved hearsay information but also direct evidence.

In addition, as was the case in the VPD, there is a question about whether information became diluted as it went up the ranks in the RCMP; without interviewing RCMP supervisors and managers involved in the Pickton investigation, this is difficult to know with any certainty.

When Ellingsen was interviewed by the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit members, she denied telling anyone that she had witnessed a murder, and they apparently believed her. Rather than relying on the totality of evidence available, too much credit was given to the opinions of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit investigators.

As Detective Constable Chernoff described:

It seemed like [Unsolved Homicide] were looking for justification not to do it, rather than reasons to do it. [Thomas](#) was a flake, everyone knew that, but they didn't want to look at what he said and compare it to other things and piece it together. It seemed to

me they formed an opinion very early and found reasons to discount everything after that. That's the frustration Ron and I had with them.

In retrospect, the information pointing to Pickton as a strong suspect in the Missing Women case was convincing. The Pickton investigation is detailed in the chronology, and will not be repeated here, but key information is summarized below:

ii. The Anderson Incident

In 1997, Pickton was charged with an extremely violent attack on Downtown Eastside sex trade worker [Anderson](#) during which he attempted to handcuff her and almost fatally attacked her with a knife. The fact that he had committed a recent act of extreme violence against a sex trade worker was important information, the basic facts of which were not in dispute.

iii. The Informant Information

Hiscox

- In 1998, the informant Hiscox reported that [Quinn](#) had described pieces of women's identification, purses, and bloody clothing in Pickton's trailer;
- Hiscox reported that Pickton told him directly that he could dispose of a body, as well as receiving this information indirectly from [Quinn](#);
- Hiscox was willing to be an agent, and thought anyone he introduced to [Quinn](#) would be trusted.

Thomas

- Independent of Hiscox, in August 1999, a second informant, [Thomas](#), reported that Ellingsen described to him the incident in the barn with the woman being butchered;
- Pickton told [Thomas](#) directly that if he ever needed to dispose of a body, it could be done without a trace;
- [Thomas](#) observed handcuffs in Pickton's bedroom, and reported eating meat that he thought was human flesh;
- [Thomas](#) reported that in Pickton's presence, Ellingsen showed him night vision binoculars and a semi-automatic rifle with a big magazine;
- [Thomas](#) reported that Pickton was becoming concerned by the police investigation, and [Thomas](#) further reported that Ellingsen and others were discussing turning Pickton in for their own financial gain;
- [Thomas](#) was willing to be an agent, or assist the investigation in any other way he could.

Stevens

- A third witness, [Stevens](#), made statements to both [Thomas](#) and Corporal Connor indicating that Ellingsen had also told him about the murder in the barn.

Wood

- A fourth witness, [Wood](#), reported to police that Ellingsen also told her the story of the murder in the barn.

iv. Ellingsen's Denial

Ellingsen denied to Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit members that she had ever told anyone of the murder in the barn. This was apparently accepted by the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit members who interviewed her, or conversely, they believed she fabricated the story while on drugs. Ellingsen was not believed by Corporal Connor, Detective Lepine, or Detective Constable Chernoff. Her denials were patently self-serving, and lacked credibility. Had she admitted telling the barn story to the multiple witnesses, but denied that the story was true, then there might have been some basis to believe her. But the fact that she denied telling a story that multiple witnesses reported to the police with remarkable consistency, independent of each other, should have been a red flag that she was lying. And if she fabricated the story while on drugs (and then repeated it on multiple occasions with different witnesses), then why would she lie about it later?

As Detective Constable Chernoff stated regarding Ellingsen's denials:

I said, how about all this other information, that she had a reason to lie, because she had assisted in bringing women home. One of [the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit investigators] told me he had years and years of experience as an investigator and he was sure she was telling the truth. But of course she was going to lie, she had a reason to! There was too much consistent information for this to be wrong. But right from the beginning, with PUHU it was just disbelief. Thomas said some bizarre things like eating meat that might not have been meat, and he believed it. Someone coming from the outside, being skeptical, not hearing everything, looking at pieces of it, I think they had tunnel vision and weren't listening to everything...

We had a series of different pieces of information as to why it made sense. We had information from Thomas that Stevens was saying that Pickton was talking about leaving because the police were too close, and Stevens was considering the reward money, and they had even discussed the option of Stevens and Thomas and Ellingsen coming together to the police and claiming the reward. The whole idea was to further the investigation, not to prove he'd done something if he hadn't. We talked about using Thomas as an agent but that got poo poo'd because he was a flake.

When Ellingsen subsequently refused to take a polygraph test regarding her denial of the barn incident, that left her credibility unresolved, and should have resulted in a re-examination of her statements against the other information available.

v. The New Westminster Incidents

- In March 1999, Pickton was checked on the sex trade worker "stroll" on 12th Street with Ellingsen. This was consistent with the informant information that Pickton was finding it difficult to get sex trade workers in his vehicle when he was alone.
- On March 27th, 1999, a sex trade worker in New Westminster was violently attacked and strangled, but was able to escape. The New Westminster police's prime suspect was Pickton (but the victim subsequently failed to identify him).

- On June 1st, 1999, Constable Jennifer Fraser of the New Westminster Police Service conducted a street check of a known prostitute and showed her a photograph of Pickton. The sex trade worker immediately identified Pickton as a man who had tried to pick her up in New Westminster on May 29th, and that he had threatened to assault her if she refused. She described him as “having a creepy smile and that he wanted to devour her in an evil way.”

vi. Means of disposal

Pickton had the demonstrated ability, the means, and a private property on which to dispose of bodies. Hiscox’s and Thomas’s information was that Pickton had explicitly stated he could dispose of bodies.

vii. The Pickton Interview

Pickton admitted to having handcuffs in his January 2000 interview with Constables York and Fox. This corroborated Thomas’s information. Pickton did not want to take a polygraph test. Most importantly, when asked if human DNA would be found on his property, he responded with an evasive and non-committal answer (as described later).

viii. The Cumulative Impact of the Pickton Information

The cumulative effect of all the information about Pickton, while not conclusive, absolutely demanded that investigative efforts be made to authoritatively prove or disprove his involvement in the murder or murders of women on his property.

As it turns out, all the information from Thomas appears to have been completely accurate. Ellingsen testified under oath in the preliminary hearing as to the incident she witnessed in the barn; DNA and some body parts belonging to numerous of the Missing Women have been found on the Pickton property; human remains were found in Pickton’s freezer packaged like ground meat; and on and on.

E. WHAT WENT WRONG IN THE COQUITLAM RCMP’S INVESTIGATION OF PICKTON?

The RCMP’s Corporal Connor and all the key VPD investigators – Detective Lepine, Detective Constables Chernoff and Shenher, and Sergeant Field – strongly believed that Pickton was a viable suspect, and that strategies to get investigators on the property, including using Thomas as an agent, were essential to further the investigation.

However, the responsibility for what was clearly a Coquitlam homicide investigation properly rested with the RCMP, and after the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit discounted the credibility of Thomas’s information, the investigation languished.

Detective Lepine provided his assessment of the situation:

We thought PUHU was really quick to write off our informant because they believed Ellingsen, and she was the horse’s mouth...Thomas was thinking we’re going to bring in the troops and it wasn’t happening; it looked like we weren’t taking him seriously. We discussed at the PoCo briefings about him going from being an informant to being an agent...and PUHU shot us down in flames because they would have had to approve Thomas being an agent and they thought he was a flake.

So we had kind of a “my flake’s better than your flake” argument... Connor was totally on board with us. He felt strongly that our information was legitimate. And by this time another witness I think had come forward who reported the exact same story that Thomas said Ellingsen had told him. We also learned that Ellingsen was blackmailing Pickton for money. We found Thomas to re-interview but he wasn’t in good shape. The cameras were rolling and everyone was watching, but he was stoned and it was embarrassing. Mark and I were interviewing and they were all looking like, “this is your star witness?” and we were going down in flames. Connor was being promoted right at this time and a new investigator was sent in to replace him, York. She replaced him and that was a real problem because she didn’t know anything...so Ballantyne’s partner, Walters, the Mountie, went in with her [to interview Ellingsen]. She denied that she’d ever said or saw anything like our informant had reported. Then it went downhill from there.

After the interviews with Ellingsen and Thomas, we talked about bringing in Pickton but the RCMP were really worried about what their grounds were. Thomas had already told us about seeing women’s purses, but he didn’t see names on them, and Connor had already tried to get a warrant and wire and Crown said no. And the concern was that you couldn’t just go in there and look around, it was all or nothing, you had to go in there like they eventually did, with a fence and lots of bodies and a digger. Because we knew he could dispose of things well and evidence would be scarce, so it would have to be a big operation. So when we got to the point where we’d done everything we could, couldn’t get a warrant, the RCMP wouldn’t agree to use Thomas as an agent to introduce an undercover. So we were left with it being their area, their jurisdiction,

we thought he was good for our Missing Women, but we had to go with what they wanted to do with it, and they said they were going to wait for an opportunity to talk with him. By this time we [Chernoff and Lepine] were getting real pressure to help with Homicide because they had lots of cases backing up, we weren’t being on call for Homicide, so what we were doing just sort of died a natural death.

Shortly after that we were back in Homicide, Connors was gone, and the Coquitlam RCMP were just losing interest. I think when we left, they sort of lost interest too...In the RCMP, it was Connor pushing that thing, and without him pushing it no one could justify putting the resources into it. Because what they’re doing today is what would have been needed then.

Detective Constable Shenher later described her perception of the investigation after Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff returned to the VPD:

Every couple of months I’d phone Coquitlam and ask who’s handling the Pickton thing and it would be nobody, or nothing much was happening...It was basically that in the absence of more information they weren’t going to do anything... ——— was definitely part of the Ellingsen debacle and was well aware of the information and what transpired... York was now assigned, but the file just kind of died in the water...My impression was that since Mike Connor had left, no one was really managing the file at all. I made the suggestion at various times to Staff Sergeant Keith Davidson, Corporal Scott Filer, Corporal Marg Kingsbury and Constable Dave ——— that they should try to get the consent of the City of Coquitlam to go on the property to search and take soil samples as I had learned the

pieces of Pickton land parcelled off were sold to the City of Coquitlam. This suggestion was met with enthusiasm, but never acted upon to my knowledge.

Constable York gave a similar assessment of the effort put into the Pickton investigation after Corporal Connor left. As described in the chronology, almost no investigation was conducted between September and December 1999, because of other competing demands on Coquitlam's small Serious Crimes Section, and because of the low priority given to the investigation. Constable York's notes describe what was essentially a game of "telephone tag" with Pickton in the fall of 1999, as she juggled trying to arrange an interview with Pickton around other competing demands.

i. The RCMP Interview of Pickton

On January 19th, 2000, RCMP Constables York and Fox conducted an unproductive interview of Pickton that did not demonstrate the level of planning – particularly given the months that had passed since the first effort to interview him – and skill necessary for such an important interview. As Constable York forthrightly stated, she "flubbed" the interview, and that it should have been conducted by investigators with greater interviewing expertise and only after careful planning. There were many problems in the Pickton interview, and a best practice approach was

not demonstrated.⁴³⁵ (And despite Pickton being the VPD's top suspect for the Missing Women case, the RCMP didn't notify the VPD in advance of the interview. In fact, the RCMP did not inform the VPD that the interview had occurred until months later, in response to a VPD inquiry for an update on the status of the Pickton investigation, demonstrating a highly concerning lack of coordination and communication.)

It clearly was not productive to have Constable Fox present with Constable York. There was cross talk, and a lack of focus. Unless two interviewers are highly practiced at interviewing together, only one interviewer should be present with a suspect, otherwise the flow of the interview is interrupted, and the subject can avoid one interviewer by giving his attention to the other. At the very least, only one interviewer should take the lead, with the second interviewer only becoming involved when invited to do so by the lead interviewer.

Pickton's friend, Gina Houston, should not have been allowed to be present for the interview. Pickton used her as a "security blanket," and she rescued him from

435 The author has received advanced training in interviewing, interrogation and statement analysis, had extensive experience conducting interviews and interrogations of sex offenders and other types of offenders in the 1990s, and instructed hundreds of police officers in interviewing and interrogation from 1994-2001. For this analysis, the author also benefited greatly from the expert comments of Sergeant Lawrence Rankin, a polygraphist and lead member of the VPD's Forensic Interviewing Team. For comprehensive information regarding police interview and interrogation methods, the "bible" of the "Reid Technique" of interviewing and interrogation is "Criminal Interrogation and Confessions," Fourth Edition, 2001, by Fred Inbau, John E. Reid, & Joseph P. Buckley.

questions he had difficulty answering. As Constable York identified, she should have “coerced” Houston out of the room. There are various ruses regularly used by interviewers that could have been used to remove Houston from the room, if she could not be convinced from the outset.

There is no indication in the transcript that Pickton was provided his s. 10 Charter rights, the standard police warning, and a “secondary warning” (regarding any other police officers he might have spoken to prior to the interview). There were no other efforts to explicitly establish that Pickton was making the statement voluntarily. The failure to provide the appropriate warnings to Pickton would likely have been fatal to the admissibility of any inculpatory statements he made.

Constable York was vague with Pickton in her description of the purpose of the interview, referring to “rumors” that had surfaced about Pickton, and she then launched right into questions about Pickton’s relationship with Lynn Ellingsen. The purpose of the interview should be clearly defined, and interviewers should make an effort to distance themselves from the investigation at the outset of the interview, i.e., appear objective and fair. Neither Constable York nor Constable Fox asked extensive background questions to establish a baseline of verbal and non-verbal cues to non-threatening questions. Too little time was spent on establishing any rapport with Pickton by discussing his background in a coherent manner. In good interviewing practice, once the subject has been asked a series of background questions, the interviewer can compare the “baseline cues” with cues displayed when asked “behavioral observation questions” (BOQs). BOQs are designed to elicit verbal and non-verbal cues that allow the interviewer, to a certain degree, to assess the subject’s truthfulness.

For example, a subject might be asked BOQs such as:

- “It’s natural when you are interviewed by the police, especially about a matter as serious as this, to play arm chair detective. One tries to figure out how and why something happened. What are your thoughts and feelings as to how and why these women have disappeared?”
- “What do you think should happen to a person who murders sex trade workers? Do you think they deserve a second chance?”

Experience has demonstrated that a guilty suspect will often express sympathy for the “unknown” offender and suggest he deserves another chance, or minimize his conduct. In contrast, an innocent party will invariably have an extremely harsh response in terms of describing what the appropriate consequences should be.

If a clear purpose for the interview of Pickton had been established, then a “pure version statement” could have been requested. A pure version statement is one in which the subject provides an uninterrupted verbatim statement responding to an open-ended question. The statement must be either taped, or the subject must write it himself, to ensure it is completely verbatim. Even words crossed out are important. To an expert in forensic statement analysis, a pure version statement provides a very rich source of information upon which to make judgements about the presence of deception. Without a pure version statement, it is very difficult to analyze a statement (i.e., having to rely on a question and answer interview. It likely would have also been very difficult to obtain a pure version statement with Houston present.) In an interview such as this, good

interviewing practice would have been to say to Pickton:

As a result of information the investigators have received, you have been identified as a possible suspect in the disappearance of sex trade workers from throughout the Lower Mainland. Tell me everything you know about the Missing Women from the Downtown Eastside. No detail is too small.

If the subject were to resist by being vague in his responses, as Pickton was, the interviewer may become more specific in their request and provide specific names of victims. It is not good practice to enter into a question and answer session at the very outset of an interview because the subject often will glean more information from the investigator than the investigator will from the subject.

Constable York never asked Pickton the “hard questions.” In the circumstances, the appropriate questions would have been:

- “Did you murder a woman on your property?”
- “Did you have anything to do with the murder of a woman on your property?”
- “Did you have any involvement in the murder of a woman on your property?”
- “Do you have any knowledge of the murder of a woman on your property?”

An interviewer should be as specific as possible when asking this type of question. If the subject answers “no,” then the normal follow-up question

should be: “Why should I believe you?” A truthful subject will often respond with conviction and state, “Because I’m telling the truth,” or “I didn’t do it”, where a guilty suspect will often be evasive and non-committal. In any event, the subject clearly understands why he is being interviewed. Further, the interviewer can assess the subject’s response cues.

Pickton was asked whether human DNA would be found on the farm. His response was:

Hmm, if you do I mean, I gotta give you credit because the problem is not that I’m aware of.

This response was evasive, as Pickton did not answer a direct question. This sort of response would be a significant cue for a skilled interviewer, if not during the interview, certainly after upon reviewing the transcript. This particular response absolutely demanded further investigation.

In addition, Pickton admitted to being in possession of handcuffs. This corroborated Thomas’s information, which would have been helpful in assessing Thomas’s credibility. Further, on several occasions in the interview, Pickton agreed to a search of his trailer and property, and to having soil samples taken. Constable York followed up on this issue in the interview, saying she would have to get approval to conduct the search with his consent and discussed doing it the following week. (Tragically, the search was not attempted.)

Constable York did ask Pickton if he would be willing to take a polygraph test. However, after he declined, Pickton was not asked any appropriate follow-up questions. For example, good practice would have been to ask: “If you did take a polygraph what questions would you like to be asked that you could answer ‘no’ to and be completely truthful?” A

truthful person would tend to reply with something like: “Did I murder those women.” A deceptive person will often reply with an evasive, non-committal response such as, “I don’t know...I’m not a polygraph examiner.”

As Constable York forthrightly admitted, the interview of Pickton was flawed. Constable York had received interviewing and interrogation courses in the course of her duties in the RCMP, and had extensive investigative experience in a variety of investigative units; no doubt she had considerable investigative skill. However, interviewing was obviously not an area in which she had expertise. This is not unusual. Interviewing and interrogation is a skill at which relatively few police officers excel, and there has been recognition of this fact in recent years. With effective major case management, key interviews and interrogations are now typically assigned to the police officer in the investigative team with the greatest skills, who may not be the primary investigator. Alternatively, key interrogations are often assigned to an expert interview/interrogation team whose only involvement in the investigation may be to conduct the interview/interrogation. Both the RCMP and the VPD have expert teams that are brought into serious investigations to conduct suspect interviews, and have done so with great success.⁴³⁶

It is unfortunate that Constable York didn’t feel she was able to bring in the appropriate personnel to interview Pickton. An expertly conducted interview, even if no admissions were obtained, may well have produced ample information to justify follow-up investigation, including a well-planned interview/interrogation where a “script” or structured forensic interview format is used to guide the interview process.

In this case, Pickton did give at least one evasive answer, regarding whether human DNA would have been found on his property. This should have triggered follow-up questions, or a follow-up interview that was better planned and conducted by an expert interviewer, considering the seriousness of the case. If the interview videotape or transcript had been provided to an expert at interviewing and interrogation, such as a polygraphist, this evasive response would likely have suggested further investigation was required.

ii. The Pickton Investigation After the January 2000 Interview

After the unfortunate Pickton interview, very little investigation occurred. Constable York described what occurred after the January 2000 interview of Pickton, and her assessment of the reasons more effort wasn’t applied.

After that [the Pickton interview], not a lot happened. All these other files came in and they wouldn’t give any priority to the Pickton file. There was a Jane Doe file, an informant who said a prostitute had been murdered in a house, and to this day, my feeling is this informant conned the member, a junior member, I don’t think it ever happened. It was the Staff Sergeant in charge of the plainclothes section who would decide. Headquarters, Special “O,” wouldn’t give us any surveillance, we couldn’t convince Unsolved Homicide to take it. Unsolved Homicide thought Ellingsen was a storyteller. We believed her information because the average person doesn’t know human fat is yellow, there was the Anderson thing, there were too many loose ends.

⁴³⁶ In fact, Inspector Don Adam, who became head of the JFO, was at the time of the Pickton interview one of the RCMP’s expert interviewers who might have been requested by Constable York. Inspector Adam was to eventually obtain key admissions from Pickton when he interrogated him after his February 2002 arrest.

The important things were the [Anderson](#) case that never went forward, the information from Lepine's informant that the average person couldn't know, women's ID and personal belongings from other females there in Pickton's place. I'd heard the name Hiscox, but I didn't know about his information. [Wood](#), we'd tried to get her on board and she indicated some level of co-operation and then I think she didn't come through. I can't recall why more information wasn't drawn out of her, I think it took a long time locating her.

I think the biggest problem was that [Walters](#) [from the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit] convinced —, the polygraph guy, that Ellingsen was a big storyteller. But there were too many things that Ellingsen knew about: that [Pickton] would wear a wig, that he would use her or Houston to get women into cars because they wouldn't get in the car otherwise. Pickton told me he still saw Ellingsen and he continued to give her money, and he said she didn't tell me anything anyhow, and I asked what was she supposed to not tell me and he got mad. The interview was a cluster. [Fox](#) should have never been in there. We should have coerced Houston not to be in there. It was useless, produced nothing, went on longer than it should have for what we got out of it. It should have been [Sergeant] Pollock and I doing it and we should have planned better but he wasn't available. It should have been planned better.

Regarding Pickton's offer to come and look around his place, I was told that if we found anything we'd need a warrant. Everyone was so leery about getting on board with the investigation, worried about his rights. There was a real lack of experience out there in Coquitlam, and when [Walters](#) got involved, it really shut it down.

...We needed to work this file until there was nothing left to work. But the section was fragmented because three members were gone, people were seconded, Strachan didn't have much experience but had a lot of brains, he went North to G Division with his wife. So we lost a lot of experience.

I could go to [Inspector —] — to fully brief him and did, but he didn't have the power...I don't know that — felt there was enough to make this happen. Maybe we didn't give him enough details, or it was because he felt [Walters](#), — and Ballantyne knew more. — was very effective for the most part but he became very opinionated and he just thought we were little grunts from Coquitlam and he thought [Walters](#) had the experience to read these people. But right from the point [Walters](#) went to Ellingsen's door banging on it and calling her names, he was so arrogant about it and you just don't do that. He was so arrogant about things and we were just little nothings. I think this was the point that the file got sidelined because [Walters](#) was believed. Connor was so passionate about it, and he had a lot of credibility in Coquitlam because of all his experience, but when he left the file he just washed his hands of it...

Constable [York](#) also explained that with the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit declining to take on the Pickton file, the Coquitlam RCMP detachment's Serious Crime Unit was severely under-resourced for the number of investigations they had:

We should have had a task force from the start and we never did. We were down to 4 constables, a corporal and a sergeant in all of serious crimes – doing everything, robberies, homicides, sex assaults, extortions, absolutely everything. Pollock was a super guy, great policeman, but he didn't have a lot of experience with serious files, and he wasn't blustery like Mike [Connor], with years of

experience in a plainclothes division. Pollock was quiet, not a forceful personality like Connor.

Unsolved Homicide didn't believe it, and so therefore those above us may have been disbelievers and also just didn't think they had enough to put resources into this file.

We went up twice in the helicopter and we took great aerial shots to get the lay of the land. A year later we went up and everything had changed. I was worried that he was getting rid of evidence because he knew we were suspicious. I told Pollock and... Brad Zalys, who was the Staff Sergeant of all the plainclothes units.⁴³⁷

I'd go up there to the new development and look from this hump where the barn was and I kept saying we should get out there, we needed to get out there at night. The new housing development was getting closer to the barn and it was easier to see from there. We needed to do it at night but we couldn't get the manpower or the money for OT to do it. We would have meetings to discuss our cases and this would be brought up, I'd say this is what we could do and they'd say, there's no bodies available. We couldn't get bodies from other sections, General Duty was short, Drugs had a big project, we couldn't get any wiretaps because there were no lines available. An arson came in and we wanted a wiretap on that, which we did eventually, but there were no lines available for the Pickton investigation, even if we'd got one authorized.

We didn't think he was responsible for all the Missing Women but we thought there was a good possibility, Mike [Connor] particularly, that he was responsible for some of them. We had a tip line for an arson, but not for the missing women, there was no interest. When we lost Lepine and Chernoff to other things, we lost our source info, Thomas. That was a gap. But what more could we do with him when someone says we don't believe him, when Walters said that. There were a lot of things that we should have followed up on but we couldn't get approval.

We should have done more surveillance on him. He never did anything when we were surveilling him, never saw him go downtown. We should have been on him more. We shouldn't have left it at that one interview. We should have pursued all the names, Lynn, Wood, given her some assurance, I don't know whether we could have got Houston on board because she was loyal to Pickton. We needed the assistance of a homicide squad to help us. We should have done a more in depth background on him. There was a lot of [intelligence] on him, but it wasn't knitted together. Different people had different information. People would say I knew this and this about him, but kept it to themselves. There should have been a mini task force on it full time. Even three members if they were full time on it could have done a lot...This just wasn't treated as a serious case. We tried to move it to Unsolved Homicide because we didn't have the resources. It should have gone to them and they should have run with it until they saw there was nothing else to run with. Everyone was protecting their turf and not willing to give up people and it restricts the job you're required to do.

437 Neither Sergeant Pollock nor Staff Sergeant Zalys were interviewed for this review. However, it is noteworthy that Sergeant Randy Hundt, the Site Commander for the Pickton investigation, reported to the author that in early 2000, Sergeant Pollock and Zalys presented Pickton at a Major Case Management course in Vancouver. Sergeant Hundt advised that his recollection was that Pollock and Zalys made a compelling case that Pickton was deserving of further investigation, but that the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit didn't agree so the investigation didn't proceed.

F. OPPORTUNITIES MISSED

The circumstances of the Pickton investigation clearly called for the creation of a JFO, but even without the creation of a proper JFO, there were investigative strategies that could have been pursued by the Coquitlam RCMP, assisted by the VPD.

i. Reopening the [Anderson](#) Case

Apparently Corporal Connor made some inquiries with Crown to recommence proceedings against Pickton for the [Anderson](#) incident. Those discussions were clearly unsuccessful, although the reasons are unknown to this review. Had Pickton been convicted of the [Anderson](#) attack, he may very well have been incarcerated during the time he was allegedly murdering women.

The issue of why the [Anderson](#) case wasn't proceeded with in the first instance is worthy of further attention. According to now-Inspector Ward Lymburner, who was initially in charge of the Disclosure Unit for Evenhanded (but now has taken over as team commander), the [Anderson](#) case was stayed because of her perceived lack of dependability due to her drug dependency. These factors are the reality of prosecuting cases involving drug addicted sex trade workers, and are not insurmountable, as the VPD has demonstrated in numerous cases (some of which are summarized in Appendix 1). Drug addicted sex trade workers require additional attention and support through the court proceedings if their cases are to be successfully prosecuted. It should be noted that [Anderson](#) was certainly available

and assessed as a credible witness in 1998 when Detective Constable Shenher interviewed her in custody in a correctional facility.

There is nothing in law that would have prevented a new charge being laid against Pickton to recommence proceedings after the 1997 charge was stayed by Crown. Section 597 of the Criminal Code addresses this issue, and does not necessarily prohibit charges simply because charges were once laid and stayed. While the Crown could no longer proceed on the original Information or Indictment, it could likely have laid a new Information or Indictment. The application of the Charter, i.e., the abuse of process doctrine, would no doubt have been an issue raised by defence, but several cases suggest that section 11(b) Charter issues could have been overcome.⁴³⁸ This is an issue that should at least have been carefully considered.

ii. Arrest of Pickton for the Alleged Murder in the Pickton Barn

There is an argument that Pickton could have been arrested, as an investigative strategy, for the murder alleged to have been witnessed by Ellingsen. While there clearly was insufficient evidence to charge Pickton, there seems to be a widespread belief among police officers that the standard to arrest is the same as the standard to charge. This is incorrect.

It is entirely appropriate in some circumstances to effect an arrest when there clearly is NOT sufficient evidence to lay a charge. The authority for the police

⁴³⁸ See *R. v. G.W.R.* [1996], 112 C.C.C. (3d) 179 (Ont. C.A.) and *R. v. G.C.B.* [1998] O.J. No. 1184 (Ont. Court of Justice)

to arrest is set out in s. 495 of the Criminal Code. Unless found committing an offence, the standard is that there be reasonable grounds to believe the person has committed an indictable offence. It is not necessary that there be a substantial likelihood of conviction, or even a case sufficient for a charge to be laid (a prima facie case).

The Supreme Court of Canada, in *R. v. Storrey*⁴³⁹ specifically examined the issue of effecting an arrest where there was insufficient evidence to lay a charge. The case involved a robbery investigation where the investigating officer hoped to gain further evidence as the result of making the arrest. The Court stated as follows:

...[t]he police officer need not demonstrate anything more than reasonable and probable grounds and specifically is not required to establish a prima facie case for conviction before making the arrest... Following the arrest there was nothing improper in the officer continuing the investigation. The essential role of the police is to investigate crimes. That role and function can and should continue after they have made a lawful arrest. The continued investigation will benefit society as a whole and not infrequently the arrested person.

Similar comments were made in the Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba [into] the Deaths of Helen Betty Osborne and John Joseph Harper. The two Commissioners, an Associate Chief Justice and an Associate Chief Judge in the Manitoba courts, were critical of the police for not arresting, as an investigative technique, a suspect in the murder of a young Aboriginal woman, even though

there were insufficient grounds for a charge. The Commissioners stated as follows:

We presume that the police refrained from arresting any of the suspects because they did not believe they had sufficient evidence on which to base a charge, and we agree they did not. On the other hand, police may arrest if they have reasonable and probable grounds to suspect the involvement of an individual in an offence. Arresting someone and taking him or her in for questioning is a well-established police practice. It is a valid investigative technique and we do not know why it was not employed in this case.⁴⁴⁰

Had Pickton been arrested, after a skillfully conducted, well-planned interview to stimulate conversation, an undercover police officer could have been put in the cell with him to hear any incriminating statements he might make, followed by another interview/interrogation. Such strategies were employed when Pickton was eventually arrested, and were effective in eliciting incriminating statements. The RCMP has demonstrated great skill and commitment, and had great success, using a “dream team” of skilled interrogators and other experts to conduct interrogations of murder suspects.⁴⁴¹ (The VPD has enjoyed similar success with its “Forensic Interview Team”.)

This strategy should have been seriously considered in the fall of 1999. But as Constable York described:

We did talk about arresting him, like to throw him with a cellmate. But we wanted someone experienced, like a Don Adam, and that never went beyond chatter into an official plan. There were so

439 *R. v. Storrey* (1990), 53 C.C.C. (3d) 317, S.C.C.

440 Manitoba (1991). *Public Inquiry into the Administration of Justice and Aboriginal People*, Volume II, p. 33.

441 For example, an expert interview team was used to obtain the confession from Shayne Ertmoed, who was convicted in 2002 of the 2001 murder of 10-year-old Heather Thomas of Surrey.

many things that should have been done in hindsight and they just didn't get the priority.

iii. A Search of the Pickton Property

When Constables York and Fox interviewed Pickton on January 19th, 2000, Pickton consented several times to a request that the police be allowed to search his property. While he might have withdrawn this consent if the officers had pursued it, the effort should have been made; an informed consent search is a perfectly valid investigative technique. Had Pickton given his consent and then withdrawn it, this would have been another piece of information from which it could have been inferred that Pickton had something to hide. (In fact, Constable York did consider a consent search, as described earlier, and noted this on a "to do" list in her notes. Her notes also included a "Consent to Search" form from the RCMP "Ops Manual," although it was obviously never used.⁴⁴²)

In addition, Pickton had originally requested that the interview be conducted at his trailer. While it was good practice for Constable York to seek to control the interview environment by conducting it at the RCMP office, there was nothing to stop the investigators from subsequently visiting his trailer and asking to speak to him there and making careful observations. These observations, coupled with the other information available, may have provided the grounds necessary to obtain a search warrant authorizing a thorough search.

iv. Negotiating a Deal with Ellingsen

Ellingsen eventually became an important witness

for the Crown against Pickton, and testified as to the events of which she denied any knowledge to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit investigators. Clearly the potential existed for her to become a cooperating witness. This begs the question of whether, with sufficient attention to the matter, she could have been persuaded in 1999 or later to cooperate. It was clear to Detective Constable Chernoff that she had a reason to lie, because it was believed she assisted Pickton. Had consideration been given to discussing an immunity deal with Ellingsen's lawyer, perhaps the barrier to her cooperation could have been removed in 1999; clearly Evenhanded investigators and the Crown were able to reach agreement with Ellingsen after Pickton was arrested. But as Constable York later said, there was insufficient follow-up investigation after the summer of 1999 with respect to the various potential witnesses, including Ellingsen.

There were many other investigative strategies that could have been employed as well, but arresting Pickton and employing various interviewing and interrogation strategies might have provided incriminating evidence, or at least provided indications to an expert forensic interviewing team that Pickton was worthy of further investigation.

G. THE JFO – PROJECT EVENHANDED

There are important questions to ask as to why the JFO didn't target Pickton at the beginning of its active investigation in 2001. Sergeant Field reported that she was "shocked" that the JFO wasn't going to target Pickton as its first task. But, as Inspector Adam later explained, the JFO had compiled a list of 600 suspects to look at, many of whom had very serious histories of violent assaults on sex trade

442 Binder 33, Tab 2.

workers. Inspector Adam advised that the criminal profilers believed in the one serial killer theory (although he didn't necessarily), and Pickton had been eliminated by DNA from the Valley murders sometime in early 2001. As Inspector Adam explained in his testimony at the Pickton preliminary hearing, referring to the belief that one suspect was responsible for the Valley Murders and Vancouver's Missing Women:

Finally, there was the fact that the investigation was keyed on one suspect DNA, to me, that was problematic, that when I went out and looked at where those bodies were located, I wasn't convinced that you could make the jump that that killer was... had refined his technique to the state that he was now completely causing these women to disappear.

...They had obtained his [Pickton's] DNA and eliminated him as the person who killed those in '95. And so, from the perspective, Your Honour, of course, given that some of the experts were saying that the likelihood of multiple serial killers operating in Vancouver was very low, that there would be one serial killer, then he'd be, you know, he moved significantly down in the suspect pool, obviously, having been eliminated from that serial killing situation.

Also, with Mr. Pickton, of course, is that he had... there had been work done on him by the Coquitlam RCMP and that had basically gone nowhere.⁴⁴³ So he was a person, we considered him a priority one because of his sort of background. However, as far as, he didn't rate any higher than sort of many, many others at that early stage.

Q: Okay. And I understand that that continued to be the case until February the 5th when a search warrant was executed by members of the Coquitlam detachment on Mr. Pickton's property and certain items were located; is that correct?

A: That's correct.

While some officers strongly believed in Pickton, Inspector Adam later noted other officers had different suspects they believed in. For example, Inspector Adam advised that Detective Constables Cruz and James "kept coming to Inspector Beach with new suspects who MUST be the guy, insisting it was him and Evenhanded [the JFO] was letting a killer go free." Regarding Pickton, Inspector Adam noted that there was information about other suspects that made them seem even more likely to be the killer. For example, unlike other likely suspects, Pickton didn't have a "tricked out" vehicle that would make it difficult for victims to escape. Most importantly, as Inspector Adam explained:

We had a structured approach and didn't want to deviate from that or we would be running around from one suspect to another trying to eliminate them, which was what the VPD had already been through. We couldn't have Evenhanded break from the game plan.

The JFO was well-resourced and staffed by highly skilled and experienced investigators. But their level of knowledge about the 1998/1999 Pickton investigation was incomplete; Inspector Adam's understanding of the information was that it was

443 One could argue that the reason the Coquitlam RCMP's work had gone "nowhere" was because the investigation was derailed by PUHU's assessment of the informants' credibility; by the transfer of Corporal Connor at the height of the investigation in 1999; and by the failure of the RCMP to give adequate priority or resources to the investigation, or to work effectively with the VPD following Corporal Connor's transfer.

“all hearsay,” when he discussed it with the author, who had a fuller understanding of the 1998/1999 investigation. This is no reflection on Inspector Adam’s investigative and case management skills, which aren’t in question. What it does point out is how important it is to have excellent analysis in order to make informed investigative decisions. One of the obstacles to that analysis was posed by the incredible information management challenges that the JFO had to deal with.⁴⁴⁴ For example, Constable York pointed out that:

I was on leave for July of 2001, and when I left [the RCMP in August] 2001, the file still hadn’t gone to Evenhanded. They knew about it because they were calling for copies of files. Marg Kingsbury was calling and assessing it, but they couldn’t find the Anderson file, no one interviewed me or anything like that. As far as I knew, my file stayed in Coquitlam.

If the JFO had had possession of all the relevant information on Pickton when it began its work in early 2001, and if a proper analysis had been conducted, or, in the alternative, had Detective Constables Chernoff and Shenher, Constable York, and Sergeant Connor been brought into a room together to provide a review of the Pickton information, the chances that Pickton would have received a higher priority in 2001 seem likely.

Unfortunately, based on the information the JFO had knowledge of, the JFO investigators concluded there was no more reason to bring the investigators in from the Pickton file than the investigators familiar with any of the hundreds of other suspects. The volume of information and the number of suspects made this prospect overwhelming.

H. CONCLUSION

The media response to the events following February 5th, 2002, was unfairly critical of the VPD for its alleged botching of the investigation of Pickton. The RCMP did not correct the misinformation, despite the fact that it had been in possession of all relevant

information, had led the Pickton investigation, and had jurisdictional responsibility for the Pickton investigation.

The investigation of Pickton prior to February 2002 was inadequate and a failure of major case management. The level of information available was such that the investigation had to continue to either eliminate Pickton, or gather evidence against him. There were many potential investigative avenues had the resources been applied, including, but certainly not limited to:

- continuing to use Thomas as an informant, and possibly using him as an agent;
- making efforts to conduct a “consent” search to develop grounds to obtain a search warrant;
- continuing to pursue co-operation from Ellingsen (who eventually did become a cooperating witness against Pickton);
- seeking information that could have assisted the investigation from other

444 As late as September 2004, Evenhanded was seeking copies of documents relating to the Missing Women investigation from the author, because of concerns that its own voluminous records weren’t complete.

potential witnesses, such as the truck drivers who frequented the Pickton property, like Scott —, who provided the firearms information to Constable Wells that broke the case open. (Thomas had already provided information about an illegal firearm, and had that been pursued sufficiently to obtain a search warrant, for example, by having Thomas make “fresh” observations, a search may have been possible years earlier.);

- conducting a second interview/interrogation of Pickton using a highly skilled police interrogator;
- revisiting the potential for charges to be laid in the Anderson incident; and
- arresting Pickton and employing a sophisticated interview and interrogation strategy using a cellmate and a highly skilled police interrogator.

The opinion of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit investigators that the informant information was not credible was not backed up by evidence; it was an opinion only, and should never have been sufficient to derail an investigation when the allegations were so serious. While any single piece of the information available, in and of itself, was not sufficient to conclude that Pickton was a murderer, the totality of the information available was so compelling that the failure to aggressively pursue it is difficult to understand, considering the seriousness of the allegations.

The fact that Pickton was excluded by DNA from the Valley murders was not known until sometime in 2001, so this fact obviously provided no justification to not continue the investigation in 1999 and 2000. Even when Pickton was excluded from the Valley murders, there was already skepticism among investigators – including Inspector Adam – that the same killer was responsible for the Missing Women, i.e., that a killer who left his victims in plain view suddenly switched to hiding their bodies without a trace. In addition, the Valley murders occurred in 1995. It was an error to assume that only one serial killer could have operated in a geographical area as large as the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley, over the span of time involved. As retired RCMP Inspector Ron MacKay, Canada’s first criminal profiler, said in 2001 in reference to the murders of prostitutes in the Lower Mainland and the Missing Women case:

It is “quite feasible” there could be more than one serial killer operating in the Lower Mainland. “The possibility of two organized offenders operating in an area as densely populated as the Lower Mainland? I would say the probabilities are quite good – particularly when you spread that over – what? – nine or ten years or more.”⁴⁴⁵

It should be noted, however, that the conclusion that only one serial killer would be operating in the Lower Mainland was reached by “some of the experts,” (referring to criminal profilers) according to Inspector Adam’s testimony at the Pickton preliminary hearing and in later comments to the author.

Those in positions of authority in the Coquitlam RCMP and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit must bear primary responsibility for the failure to effectively manage this investigation. Although the

445 Lori Culbert, Lindsay Kines and Kim Bolan, “Killer could be getting smarter: profilers say he may have refined his technique, going from leaving bodies to hiding them,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, November 23, 2001, p. A10.

Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit didn't believe in the veracity of the informant information and declined to assist, the Coquitlam RCMP did not conclude their investigation into Pickton, although their subsequent investigation was inadequate. But if resources were the issue (and clearly that was part of the problem), then the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit was not the only resource available to the Coquitlam RCMP. For example, staff could have been requested from the VPD to continue the Pickton investigation, had there been a commitment to furthering it. The Coquitlam RCMP maintained control over the file, but did not treat it with the seriousness it demanded, nor did it seek assistance from the VPD, which had a vested interest in its success. There was a lack of effective high-level communication between the RCMP and the VPD regarding the management of the Pickton investigation.

There is no evidence to suggest any crime connected to the Missing Women occurred in Vancouver. Therefore, the legal responsibility for the investigation clearly lay with the Coquitlam RCMP. However, the VPD is not blameless in this tragedy. Management-level pressure could have, and should have, been applied from the VPD to the RCMP to re-invigorate the investigation, rather than acquiescing to the RCMP's position that they were continuing the investigation, but it "wasn't a high priority." Although resources were tight, it was never disputed that given compelling information of a murder, the VPD could have, and would have, applied more resources to the Missing Women investigation.

Although it would have been unusual, it would not have been unprecedented for the VPD to have contributed significant resources to an investigation in another jurisdiction (as it did for the Abbotsford Killer investigation). The VPD could have driven

the agenda of creating a Coquitlam RCMP – VPD Task Force, and focused the MWRT and other resources onto the Pickton investigation based on the assessment of Detective Lepine and others as to the strength of the information pointing to Pickton. Unfortunately, no such efforts were made.

In retrospect, it is arguable that there was sufficient information in late summer of 1999 to justify implementing a "coordinated investigative team" to manage this multi-jurisdictional investigation, as set out in the major case management model. A properly managed coordinated investigation team – run by an experienced major case manager – would have helped ensure that all appropriate investigative strategies were pursued in Coquitlam.

Further, there was much that could have been done in Vancouver to advance the investigation. The entire MWRT could have been re-focused onto seeking information about Pickton (with Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff also continuing to handle Thomas). Detective Constables Cruz and James demonstrated in April 2000 that information about Pickton could be obtained to link him to the Downtown Eastside. Even something as simple as submitting information about Pickton for the DEYAS "bad date" bulletins might have generated information, an oversight that Detective Constable Shenher volunteered she should have taken care of, and took responsibility for. (While her willingness to accept responsibility was commendable, and completely in character, no one investigator can think of or accomplish everything – that is why a properly managed and focused team is so important, with constant brainstorming of ideas.)

What was learned later about the number of sex trade workers who had been visitors to the Pickton

property demonstrated that there was the potential to gather much more useful information. Based on the information that Pickton was using female friends to help him get sex trade workers to his property, targeted interviews and surveillance of female associates is an example of just one investigative strategy that may have borne fruit had there been a properly coordinated and resourced investigation. That was a responsibility of both RCMP and VPD management.

By October 1999, Acting Inspector Matthews, who had very limited knowledge of the Pickton file, had replaced Inspector Biddlecombe, and the MWRT had essentially given up on the Coquitlam RCMP. Sergeant Field, mostly through the RCMP profilers, Keith Davidson and Scott Filer, focused her energies on convincing the RCMP to enter into a JFO – always identifying Pickton as a prime suspect – rather than pressuring the Coquitlam RCMP to continue the investigation.

A thorough analysis of the evidence pointing to Pickton would have been extremely helpful. If that analysis had been taken at a high level to the RCMP to pressure it to aggressively pursue the investigation with an offer of continued assistance, the outcome might have been much different. As Sergeant Field later stated:

If we'd had someone at a higher level than me putting pressure on the RCMP, I think it would have made a huge difference. I convinced people at my level, but I couldn't go to Bass and tell him what the RCMP should be doing. If Fred had done that, it would have made a difference.

However, Inspector Biddlecombe later recalled that he did not have detailed knowledge of the Pickton investigation but wished that Sergeant Field had come to him with concerns about the investigation “getting off track.” He pointed out that he was only at work in the VPD three weeks during July, August and September of 1999, for various reasons. The

lack of consistent leadership in the Major Crime Section no doubt contributed to a breakdown in communication, as Inspector Biddlecombe later related:

Regarding whether I could have put pressure on the RCMP to get the RCMP back on track, if I'd known about it, I would have. I don't know whether the information got filtered at the Staff Sergeant level or what, I don't know. But I'm quite confident that information never came to me from the time of the meeting I was at regarding the Pickton investigation (August 3rd, 1999) until I retired...In hindsight, my absences were disruptive. But ——— was fully briefed and he would walk into my office and I expected him to carry on. When Brock was away we didn't always put an actor in. If it was long term, I'd consider it. This was again due to staff shortages. So I would like to think that if I had been there every day I would have been more aware of what was going on. I'm attributing the fact that I wasn't aware of a lot that was going on was because I wasn't there to be briefed. I think my absences created a problem for me. But I was there on some days and I obviously wasn't told some things so maybe it wouldn't have mattered if I was there, but I'd like to think that it would have.

The impact of the failed 1999 investigation into Pickton has been enormous in many ways. For example, the investigators were all deeply emotionally affected. Detective Constable Chernoff advised of his reaction to the arrest of Pickton:

I got called in by Inspector Beach just before the news broke about what they'd found on the pig farm...I was just devastated. I was so sure that Pickton was a good suspect, and I was devastated that quite a few women had gone missing after we had worked on the information in the summer of 1999 and I just felt like the RCMP had let it drop, they hadn't followed up on it. When Connor was promoted, other people came in that weren't knowledgeable and it just seemed to fall apart. I

broke down, they called Human Resources, I was just so choked that more hadn't been done. And all of a sudden we've got hundreds of people working on this thing and I was like, where was everyone when WE wanted more people?! I just wonder what would have happened if things had been different. Now we know that the information we had was exactly right. I went out to the pig farm and here's these investigators carrying around my notes and saying 'look at all this information,' and now it all looked so good to them because the intent was to believe it now...I [was asked to go] out to the investigation for a couple of weeks, which turned into a longer time⁴⁴⁶...I still just don't understand why a warrant wasn't obtained for the Pickton property much earlier. I thought maybe it was done and I just wasn't told about it. I just think they should have done that.

Sergeant Field recalled her response to the Pickton arrest:

The day he was arrested was the best day and the worst day. A killer had been caught, but all those women that were killed after he was identified....I almost got sick, I just went and cried for about 15 minutes. It was just awful, awful. The day they executed the search warrant, February 5th, was my birthday. I just couldn't believe one guy had done all that. I'd still be in Homicide now if it hadn't been for this. It just brought me to rock bottom, the whole case. There was so much work, what it did to Lori....I was in charge, even though I did the best I could, you still feel a responsibility.

As might be expected, Detective Constable Shenher was most affected by the news of the search of the

Pickton property:

...Mark Chernoff paged me to tell me of the search and we spoke for nearly an hour on the phone, both of us in shock. My reaction was one of disbelief and dread and I felt that this represented the very worst possible outcome to this case. I felt quite literally sick to my stomach upon learning that after so many closed doors, someone had finally believed that Pickton was a valid suspect in the disappearances... Where I might have felt a sense of victory and validation, there was only sadness. I began calculating with Mark how many of the women on the list of missing might not have been included had this search occurred in the summer of 1999 when we had strong evidence to suspect Pickton's involvement. I felt as though I had completely failed these women.

...Those days after the February 5, 2002 Pickton search were...difficult for me and reopened old wounds with respect to the efforts I had made with this file. I felt a great deal of sadness and personal failure and I suffered from depression. I found myself second-guessing the efforts I made to bring Pickton to the attention of my supervisors and the RCMP. I felt responsible for the deaths of at least ten women in that I wondered if perhaps I hadn't made enough noise about this man I felt was their killer as early as 1998. I was unable to sleep, my appetite declined and I lost weight. [My doctor] recommended I take some time away from work, but I was reluctant and hoping to avoid the stigma of a stress leave.

446 Detective Constable Chernoff was assigned the responsibility to work with Robert Pickton's brother, Dave Pickton, and conducted numerous debriefs of him, as well as associated investigative tasks.

About ten days after the search of the Pickton property began, I was speaking to Detective Steve Pranzl about an interview he had done with Quinn. He was assigned to the Pickton investigation and had conducted this interview with no knowledge of the comprehensive background I had compiled on Quinn, which was part of the material I had sent to the RCMP when we gave them the missing women file early in 2001...when I expressed how badly I felt that no one working on Evenhanded seemed to know where all our notes were,⁴⁴⁷ he suggested I come out there and work on the Pickton file because I knew it best. I felt very torn; I knew it would be best for the investigators if I did, but in terms of my own state of mind, I was afraid it would be very traumatic for me. Eventually, I agreed to come to Evenhanded for three weeks, no more.

...it seemed that every time the DNA results would come back on the remains of the women found on the Pickton farm, it would drive home, yet again, the tragedy of this investigation and the mistakes that were made. It seemed the women who were being found dead were the ones that had gone missing in the time after the summer of 1999 when I felt the file was so badly mishandled. I felt so overwhelmed and completely under supported by my workplace and booked off on stress leave sometime in May 2002.

...I became even more distraught and frustrated by my own department's lack of understanding of the seriousness of this investigation and it was then that I began to seriously consider leaving the VPD and policing entirely for another career.

Detective Constables Shenher and Chernoff, and Sergeant Field were several of the numerous investigators sent to the Pickton property to assist

with the now-massive investigation. They all commented on how many RCMP investigators – who had no knowledge of what went on during 1999 – made frequent hurtful comments about how the VPD “blew it” regarding Pickton, as described by Detective Constable Shenher:

Sergeant Geramy Field joined me working out there and it was very strange. We definitely got the impression the RCMP members either didn't know what we had done on the file or thought what we had done was sub-par work and we were not competent. Most avoided speaking to us at all. I was quite astounded that more than two weeks into the investigation, Don Adam and his investigators were continuing to question the validity of Ellingsen's information and credibility of the statements given by those people she had told her story to. This was discussed openly at the end of day, round table debriefings. I found this a stunning exhibition of the level of understanding of the facts of this case and I decided I wanted nothing more to do with it. I stayed with Evenhanded through Pickton's arrest and interview and then completed my assignment there.

But the impact on the investigators and the VPD pales in comparison to the tragedy that could potentially have been averted. After August 1999, Wendy Crawford, Jennifer Furminger, Tiffany Drew, Dawn Crey, Debra Jones, Patricia Johnson, Yvonne Boen, Heather Bottomley, Andrea Joesbury, Dianne Rock, Mona Wilson, Heather Chinnock, and Sereena Abotsway all went missing. DNA and other evidence connects eleven of these 13 women to the Pickton property, and Pickton is charged with the murders of each of these 11 Missing Women.

Steps must be taken to eliminate or minimize those barriers that derailed the original Pickton investigation so that these women's deaths were

447 Even in 2004, Evenhanded investigators had not located all the documents that had been provided by the VPD, and obtained copies from the author that had been retained by the VPD.

not in vain. What is needed is better analysis to provide “triggers” for a major investigation; better communication between RCMP detachments, RCMP “Headquarters,” and municipal departments; and better mechanisms to more quickly create Joint Force Operations run by properly trained major case managers.

Some of these issues have been addressed to some extent recently. As described earlier, the RCMP is leading an initiative to ensure there is a pool of high level major case managers available in British Columbia. The RCMP is also engaging in unprecedented integration, and the municipal police departments are doing so to a lesser extent. But integrated units are not always the answer. The Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit is an integrated unit, but the opinions of several of its investigators almost single-handedly derailed the Pickton investigation. Although the RCMP now has an Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) to investigate “fresh” murder cases, as Constable York stated:

I don’t think IHIT would have changed anything, because you needed someone to recognize that the file needed to be worked on. If you had the same people in IHIT that you had in PUHU, it would have been the same result. I think it boiled down to personalities.

The Pickton case was an extraordinary one because, like the Missing Women case generally, it concerned an allegation of murder where there was no body or other concrete evidence to confirm a murder had

actually occurred.⁴⁴⁸ Were there a body, no doubt the information would have been treated differently. But “personalities” or opinions about credibility without supporting evidence should never have derailed a murder investigation, nor should have resource problems in the Coquitlam RCMP; there were other resource options. Decisions should be made based on careful analysis of the information, and in consideration of the nature of the investigation: the more serious the allegations and the greater risk to lives, the greater care must be taken in making decisions about how those allegations will be investigated and resourced.

8. CONCLUSIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

In the mid- and late-1990s, it became apparent that there was an increase in the number of addicted sex trade workers going missing from the Downtown Eastside. As a result, Detective Constable Lori Shenher was assigned to the Missing Persons unit to investigate the disappearances. Initially, there was a justifiable belief that with sufficient investigative effort, the Missing Women could be found. However, it eventually became clear that this was not to be the case, and that the Missing Women may have fallen prey to a serial killer.

In the summer of 1998, Detective Constable Shenher received information about Robert Pickton, and

448 While unusual, prosecuting a murder without a body is not unprecedented in BC or elsewhere in Canada. For example, in May 2000, Karen Miller went missing from Vernon, B.C. Her common law husband, Donald Falkner, was subsequently convicted in 2003 of the 2nd degree murder, despite the fact that Miller’s body has never been found (Vernon court registry #35856-2).

worked with Corporal Connor of the RCMP to exploit that information. Corporal Connor took responsibility for the investigation of the Pickton information, since it referred to a crime alleged to have occurred in Port Coquitlam. Staff Sergeant Giles of the VPD attempted to advance the Pickton investigation by offering the RCMP resources for an undercover project and other investigative strategies. Considerable work was done on the Pickton file in 1998 and into early 1999, but the surveillance necessary wasn't sustained for long enough to be fruitful and that phase of the investigation was unsuccessful (although the investigation would be re-vitalized in the summer of 1999).

During this time, Detective Constable Shenher conducted a "missing persons" investigation into the Missing Women that was truly impressive in its depth. It did not take her long to determine that the disappearances were suspicious, and she reported as much in the early months of her investigation. However, it was not until May of 1999, when Detective Constable Shenher wrote a report recommending a suspect-focused investigation, that an investigative team was created.

The delay in creating the MWRT was unfortunate (although not unreasonable, given the circumstances) for several reasons. Although women went missing from the Downtown Eastside from the mid-1990s throughout 1998, by the time a more suspect-focused investigation began in May 1999, the suspicious disappearances had apparently stopped, with the last one occurring in January 1999. The fact that there were no new suspicious disappearances added to the immense challenges of the investigation, because

proactive strategies that might have led to the suspect if employed would not have succeeded; the best chance of catching the killer was in 1998 when he was active. By the time he became active again in late 2000, and throughout 2001 during which time the JFO was created, the investigative capacity to maximize the chances of catching him did not exist.

The degree of difficulty involved in the Missing Women investigation cannot be over-stated. There is no more challenging investigation than a serial murder case, partly because of the typical lack of connection between the offender(s) and the victims. According to FBI data based on 225 serial killers, the average duration of murder activity is 4.4 years.⁴⁴⁹

But in some cases, particularly where the killer is able to hide the victims' bodies, such as that of Jeffrey Dahmer or John Wayne Gacy, the killers may operate for much longer. Dahmer killed his first victim in 1978 and was only captured in 1991 after one of his intended victims escaped from his apartment, where police found the remains of other victims.⁴⁵⁰ Gacy admitted to killing over 30 young men between 1972 and 1978, hiding their bodies in the crawl space of his house.⁴⁵¹ Even where the bodies have been left behind, the case of Dennis Rader, the "BTK Killer," demonstrates how long a killer can operate without being caught; Rader pleaded guilty to 10 murders that occurred between 1974 and 1991, but was captured only when he began contacting police again in 2005 and left clues on a computer disk as to his identity.⁴⁵²

449 D. Kim Rossmo, (2000). *Geographic Profiling*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, p. 155.

450 Ibid., p. 165.

451 http://www.crimelibrary.com/serial_killers/notorious/gacy/gacy_1.html?sect=1

452 <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F3061FFE3E5E0C7B8EDDAF0894DD404482>

In the Missing Women investigation, this was not only a case where there were no bodies, there were also no witnesses and no forensic evidence, making determination of even the nature of the problem difficult. These factors created a significant barrier to an effective investigation. In addition, the victimology dramatically affected the solvability of the case: the Missing Women were often reported months and even years after they were last seen, making it impossible to engage in standard investigative strategies such as creating timelines to compare against the activities of possible suspects. The lack of physical evidence and the lifestyle of the Missing Women, in combination, created an unprecedented challenge, but were not the only reasons for the difficulties in this investigation.

Despite the challenges, the MWRT did much excellent work. They investigated over 500 leads, identified hundreds of potential suspects, and investigated many of these suspects to the extent they were able. They conducted extraordinarily detailed searches of various records trying to find the Missing Women, which resulted in the investigators resolving the disappearances of four long-missing women. They also found missing women who had been more recently reported.

The MWRT was innovative in obtaining the Missing Women's familial DNA from relatives, as well as DNA from some of the Missing Women from pap smears held at the Cancer Control Agency. Inspector Don Adam described this (DNA) work as "brilliant," and pointed out it laid the groundwork for the eventual success of the investigation at the Pickton

property, in terms of identifying the victim DNA found at the site.

Further, the MWRT investigators attempted to identify high risk offenders from various records; consulted extensively seeking investigative advice; disseminated information about the case across Canada; liaised with sex trade advocacy groups such as WISH; attempted to take advantage of suspect information from diverse sources such as the "Bad Date Sheets" and high risk offenders data; and, most significantly, they made a significant contribution to advancing the investigation into Pickton.⁴⁵³ That the original Pickton investigation failed was beyond the MWRT's control.

So although this review has found that the VPD's Missing Women investigation could have been greatly improved, the failings must be considered in the context of the incredible challenges posed by the nature of the investigation. For the most part, the inadequacies in the investigation were a product of systemic difficulties and inadequate management attention, and should not be laid at the feet of the investigators.

It should also be noted that even the most well-managed and -resourced investigation is no guarantee of success. One of the most notorious serial murder investigations in recent history is that of the Green River Killer, which began in 1982. Academics concluded that "the Green River Task Force was thought to be the best investigative team ever organized,"⁴⁵⁴ and "the Green River Task Force... is clearly one of the best organized, least politicized

453 This summary refers both to the extraordinary work Detective Constable Shenher did essentially alone from July 1998 to May 1999, and then to the work of the entire MWRT.

454 Eric W. Hickey, (1997). *Serial Murderers and Their Victims*: 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, p. 254.

and most effective units in the country.”⁴⁵⁵ Yet even with considerable physical evidence left by the killer (e.g., the bodies of his victims), and even though the person eventually convicted of the murders, Gary Ridgway, became a suspect almost immediately and was interviewed several times, it was seven years before an arrest was made in 1989, although he was released because of a lack of evidence. It would be more than a decade before advances in DNA technology led to the arrest of Ridgway in 2001 and his conviction in 2003 for the murders of 48 sex trade workers.⁴⁵⁶

Likewise, in the rural area around Edmonton, since 1998, the bodies of numerous murdered prostitutes have been dumped in plain view, five of them in a 10-month period in 2002 and 2003.⁴⁵⁷ Despite the seemingly obvious potential that a serial killer was at work, it was only in 2003 that the RCMP officially acknowledged this *possibility* and created “Project Kare” to investigate “39 unsolved homicides and the disappearance of 40 women in Western Canada.”⁴⁵⁸ And it was only in June 2005 that the RCMP announced that they believed a serial killer was responsible for some of the Edmonton area sex trade worker murders.⁴⁵⁹

Finally, it must be remembered that Project Evenhanded was well-resourced, staffed with skilled investigators, and pursuing a well-thought-out investigative strategy, i.e., solving historical assaults on sex trade workers where DNA evidence was available would lead to the killer of the Missing Women. Yet that strategy, despite its logic, would not have led to Pickton (although Inspector Adam believed that Pickton would eventually have been caught through the work of the proactive team in the Downtown Eastside, or through other information learned in the investigation).

So in light of this information, one must not be careful to ignore how much clearer things look in hindsight before criticizing those involved in the Missing Women investigation. While there were individual police officers whose performance was lacking, the true villain in this tragedy is the suspect who preyed on the most vulnerable women in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, the marginalized and addicted sex trade workers. But, as this review has determined, the VPD (and the RCMP) could have done better, as summarized below.

B. THE VPD’S LACK OF COMMITMENT TO THE SERIAL KILLER THEORY

By the summer of 1999, there was ample evidence, albeit statistical and circumstantial, to believe that a serial killer was most likely responsible for the Missing Women. The longer the Missing Women remained missing despite exhaustive efforts to find them – and despite their historically frequent contact with society in various ways – the more compelling was this evidence. There was strong evidence pointing to Pickton as the killer, which could only add to the credibility of the serial killer theory. Further, it was already known that an unidentified serial killer had murdered sex trade workers Pipe, Olajide and Younker in 1995, all of whom were associated with the Downtown Eastside.

455 B. Darrach and J. Norris (1984) quoted in Egger, Steven A. (1998). *The Killers among us: An Examination of Serial Murder and Its Investigation*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, pp. 208-209.

456 Ian Mulgrew, “Serial killer ‘lost count’ in murdering 48 women,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, November 6, 2003, p. A1, and email correspondence with Green River Task Force investigator Detective Tom Jensen of the King County Sheriff’s Office.

457 Florence Loyie, “Serial killer on loose? Bodies of 9 young women found in Edmonton-area fields,” in the *Edmonton Journal*, July 12, 2003.

458 CTV.ca print story, “Alberta task force probes sex trade slayings”, June 16th, 2004.

459 RCMP press release found at www.rcmp.ca/ab/news/2005/KARE_Reward_Jun16-05.htm

Senior police officers in charge of overseeing the Missing Women investigation didn't commit to the serial killer theory for several reasons, including an erroneous belief that the Missing Women were transient, and that other theories could explain their absence. There was a mindset among several police managers that physical evidence (i.e., a body) was required to begin a murder investigation, although this view was not shared by all the investigators. In addition, insufficient weight was attached to Detective Inspector Rossmo's statistical/epidemiological-style analysis of the Missing Women, for a variety of reasons, and key VPD personnel did not read the analysis. There was a belief that statistical evidence alone could not justify concluding that the Missing Women had been murdered, despite the compelling circumstantial evidence that supported the statistical analysis.

In addition, there was too much emphasis placed on the fact that Constable Dickson had accounted for the majority of women on a previous list in 1997, and little regard for the more concerning fact that he had accomplished this task quite easily, yet the Missing Women couldn't be located despite a much more exhaustive investigation.

Finally, by the time the MWRT got underway, and throughout the rest of 1999 and most of 2000, it appeared that no new women had gone missing from the Downtown Eastside. This lessened the perceived urgency of the problem.

Throughout 2000, there was no proper management assessment of the investigation, and it deteriorated. Various managers in the Investigation Division took a hands-off approach to the investigation, and

consequently had insufficient knowledge of the many problems within the investigative team, and with the investigative approach. The diffusion and dilution of information as it moved up in the chain of command contributed to this problem, as did the rapid turnover of management staff. In addition, there was a lack of clarity around the goals of the investigation: the problem wasn't clearly defined and so the response was erratic. Sergeant Field and the investigative team were not given the support they needed by VPD management, who did not recognize the seriousness of the problem. This case underscores the importance of proper, periodic management reviews of significant investigations.

C. BIAS AGAINST SEX TRADE WORKERS

With respect to alleged bias against sex trade workers by the VPD, the evidence demonstrates that the VPD commits extraordinary resources to the investigation of known serious offences against sex trade workers, and considering the challenges of these investigations, has had remarkable results. Bias against sex trade workers was not the reason for the deficiencies in the Missing Women investigation.

However, barriers to reporting marginalized persons as missing, and the alleged conduct of Ms. [Parker](#) prior to the Missing Women investigation, poisoned relations with the families of some of the Missing Women. These factors did compromise the investigation by creating, at the least, a lack of trust in the VPD. This problem underscores the importance of certain skills necessary in the Missing

Persons Unit (which was one of the subjects of a detailed audit of the Unit in late 2004). In addition, had there been a victim liaison – as set out in the Major Case Management model – in the MWRT, rather than Detective Constable Shenher trying to juggle this responsibility with many others, some of the damage done to the VPD’s relationship with family members of the Missing Women may have been mitigated.

The lack of a formal, unequivocal warning that a serial killer had been operating was misguided, but was not evidence of a lack of concern for sex trade workers. While making a strong public warning may have been useful as a catalyst to improve the investigation, it would not have resulted in changes to the high-risk behaviour of the sex trade workers of the Downtown Eastside, which are driven by their addictions and marginalization.

While ignorance of certain issues around the characteristics of Downtown Eastside sex trade workers, such as the belief that they were transient, affected management decisions, bias against sex trade workers was not the reason for the deficiencies in the Missing Women investigation. What is clear is that when it is known that a serious crime has been committed against a sex trade worker in Vancouver, every resource available is committed, and the efforts of the investigators at the operational level are extraordinary, often leading to successful prosecutions in the most challenging circumstances. In addition, the VPD has made great strides in improving relationships with sex trade workers, as demonstrated by the positive relationships built with sex trade worker advocacy groups through VPD-

initiated collaborative training to reduce violence against marginalized women.

D. THE IMPACT OF RESOURCE DIFFICULTIES ON THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

The VPD was chronically short of sworn officers and civilian support staff during the Missing Women investigation, due to a variety of internal and external factors. Inadequate resources contributed to the problems by encouraging the status quo; however, while insufficient resources were a significant contributing factor to the problems in the Missing Women investigation, they were not the primary cause of the root deficiencies.

It was within the VPD’s capacity to create a task force to investigate the Missing Women as victims of multiple homicides (notwithstanding that a multi-agency team was necessary to give the investigation a chance of success); however, it was clear that the resource pressures were extreme and did influence decision making. More pressure could have been applied to the RCMP and to the Attorney General to contribute resources. At the time of this writing, the VPD is still under-resourced, and this problem compromises the VPD’s ability to deliver adequate service to the public, including the investigation of serious crimes.⁴⁶⁰

460 In early 2005, independent consultants hired by the City to review the VPD’s latest staffing request recommended an immediate increase of 92 new police officers and recommended further research regarding additional positions requested. About half the positions were recommended for the Investigation Division, as well as 55 new civilian positions for various areas of the VPD. Council approved 50 police positions and numerous civilian positions immediately, and tentatively committed to 50 additional police positions and 27 civilians in 2006.

E. THE NEED FOR A MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL INVESTIGATION

Once it was recognized (or should have been recognized) that the Missing Women were likely victims of a serial killer, a multi-jurisdictional JFO should have been created. However, there was no triggering mechanism or overarching provincial framework/criteria in place, and so a JFO required the consent of both the VPD, which advocated for a JFO, and the RCMP, which resisted it.

There is much in the policing literature pointing to problems in serial offender investigations being compromised because of police departments being “linkage blind”⁴⁶¹ and having an unwillingness to share information and collaborate with other police departments.

With respect to linkage blindness, in the Missing Women investigation, the collection of evidence was not sufficiently systematic, there were ongoing difficulties in establishing and maintaining open lines of communication with the RCMP, and evidence gathered by officers in the VPD and the RCMP was sometimes not shared effectively, even within their respective organizations.

But with respect to an unwillingness to collaborate with other police departments, that was certainly not the case with respect to the VPD. In fact, the opposite was true. The MWRT consulted widely, and Sergeant Field made repeated efforts to involve the RCMP in the Missing Women investigation. But she was unsuccessful for too long, despite her resolve and well-founded determination that a JFO with the RCMP was necessary for the investigation to

succeed. The RCMP should have become involved in a JFO much earlier than it was, and Sergeant Field’s managers should have done more to advance this agenda. The case had little chance of being solved without the RCMP’s involvement, due to the volume of potential evidence located in RCMP jurisdictions, and the likelihood that a serial killer would dispose of victims’ bodies in a rural location. In addition, the RCMP has a much greater capacity to marshal the extraordinary resources necessary for a serial murder investigation, as it demonstrated in February 2002.

More attention needs to be paid to the issues of integration and amalgamation/regionalization of resources if serial offender investigations are to be successful. History has demonstrated throughout Canada that regionalization requires leadership at the provincial level or parochial interests will ensure it is unlikely to ever occur. At the least, there needs to be a mechanism to rapidly create (and fund) multi-agency responses to urgent problems such as an active serial killer. Problems in the Missing Women investigation generally, and the Pickton investigation specifically, could have been mitigated had there been better such systems in place. In addition, there needs to be a regional approach to analysis of missing persons cases (which the RCMP and the BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police committed to create in 2004, and implemented in early 2005).

461 For an analysis of “linkage blindness,” defined, in part, as the failure of police agencies to communicate effectively regarding unsolved murders, see Steven A. Egger (1998), *The Killers among us: An Examination of Serial Murder and Its Investigation*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

F. HOW THE VPD INVESTIGATION COULD HAVE BEEN IMPROVED

Pickton was not arrested earlier than he was primarily because of failures in the RCMP's Port Coquitlam investigation from the summer of 1998 through to early 2000, when it essentially ended. Regardless, the VPD investigation could have been improved in many respects. Notwithstanding that the end result may have been no different, that wasn't known at the time, and the VPD had a responsibility to properly manage the investigation, and the lessons learned from the recent review of the VPD's Home Invasion Task Force would have been instructive in this regard.

The principles of major case management were not implemented in the MWRT investigation. There were an insufficient number of VPD members trained in major case management at the time, and a lack of management understanding of the principles. However, there were several trained members available for advice, and there had been internal analysis of another investigation – with challenges strikingly similar to the Missing Women investigation – setting out proper major case management protocols. This analysis and the investigation to which it referred provided an example for proper major case management. However, the way in which the Missing Women case was defined by police managers, i.e., as a missing persons case for the most part, rather than a serial murder investigation, defined to some extent the VPD's response.

Had proper major case management protocols been implemented, the effectiveness of the investigation could have been improved in several areas. A better command structure was necessary, with a "command triangle" composed of a full time, on-site team commander, an experienced primary investigator,

and a file coordinator. In addition, the capacity to focus on suspects and initiate potentially effective investigative strategies was limited by a lack of investigators.

The team commander needed to have control over personnel issues, _____

Had they been focused on team objectives rather than their own, they may very well have contributed to a more successful investigation into Pickton in the summer of 1999 and into the spring of 2000, as evidenced by the considerable effort they put into gathering evidence against McCartney. The assignment of a full time team commander with the appropriate authority could have mitigated the problems caused by the assignment of Detective Constables James and Cruz to the MWRT.

Detective Inspector Rossmo needed to be better integrated into the investigation. Although he was not an experienced investigator, through his academic studies into predatory criminals and his subsequent geographic profiling work on numerous serial offender cases, he had exposure to serial killer cases that was unique in the VPD. He also had analytical abilities that could have contributed greatly to the investigation. For a variety of reasons, VPD management failed to exploit Detective Inspector Rossmo's talents when they were needed the most.

Inspector Biddlecombe did not trust the media and did not see it as an investigative tool. The media

strategy for the Missing Women investigation was inadequate, focused too much on finding “missing” women, and not enough on solving a murder case. A well-thought out media strategy could have been used to “drive the offender to ground”; to leverage more resources; to generate activity by the offender that might have provided leads; or to generate information from particular populations, such as those who live in the Downtown Eastside. Contrary to usual practice in the VPD, the media strategy was being driven – or at least influenced – by managers who either didn’t believe in the serial killer theory, or felt that publicly acknowledging a serial killer would only create more problems, or both. The media strategy should have flowed from an investigative strategy, rather than a public relations strategy, but the lack of clarity as to the purpose of the investigation made a focused media strategy difficult.

In retrospect, it is clear that there was considerable information held by sex trade workers and others. It will never be known whether an effective, targeted media strategy (particularly in conjunction with “on the ground” resources) might have been helpful in developing information that would have advanced the Pickton investigation in the summer of 1999.

By approving a reward in the Missing Women case against the recommendations of the VPD, the Police Board strayed into operational policing, which is outside of its role. While the decision to approve the reward may very well have been a good one, it was not the Board’s decision to make; Police Boards should not insert themselves into operational decision-making.

When the MWRT began in May 1999, it appeared that women had stopped going missing the previous January. But by early 2001, when the JFO began to review the VPD investigation, women had started to

go missing again. The VPD should have considered proactive strategies until the JFO was sufficiently resourced to take on this responsibility.

The MWRT was plagued with problems related to the management and analysis of information. This problem of “information overload,” and the inevitable inability to process, analyze, and prioritize data was to contribute to frustration and delays in the investigation. The VPD Investigation Division did not have available properly trained analysts to perform functions crucial to managing large amounts of data in a case where the offender was unknown and there were many potential suspects. Even with an effective analysis of the information, there was an organizational climate in the VPD that seemed to have discouraged Detective Constable Shenher and even Sergeant Field from forcefully expressing their professional views to management. For a variety of reasons, there was not a climate that was conducive to candid discussions and brainstorming outside of the investigative team.

Despite this reality, there is no evidence that the problems with information management and analysis contributed to a failure to identify a suspect in the Missing Women case, or that information about Pickton was “missed” because of problems with the analytical software, or that Pickton wasn’t rated as highly as he should have been as a suspect due to the problems with SIUSS; he was the MWRT’s top suspect throughout the VPD investigation. However, this in no way lessens the importance of taking steps to ensure that investigators have the benefits of an effective electronic case management system and staff trained in its effective operation. Without the adoption of common software for electronic case management throughout BC, future problems are inevitable.

Despite the weaknesses in the MWRT investigation, most of the members of the MWRT performed in what could fairly be described as a heroic manner in the face of great adversity. This was particularly true of Detective Constable Shenher, whose work was extraordinary. Detective Constable Mark Chernoff and Detective Ron Lepine demonstrated great skill and dedication in their work with informant Thomas. Detective Constable Alex Clarke was assigned a futile task in reviewing government records, but persevered without complaint, and would later do other important work for the JFO. Constable Dickson used his extensive knowledge of the Downtown Eastside to assist the investigation. Sergeant Field performed admirably, particularly with respect to advancing the case for a JFO, despite being overwhelmed and often unsupported. In being assigned the MWRT on top of full time duties as a Homicide Squad sergeant, she was, in effect, set up for failure. If she could have done anything better in the circumstances, it may have been to more forcefully articulate in writing to her superiors what was necessary for the investigation to be improved. But that is with the luxury of hindsight, and the record demonstrates that it likely would have made no difference, because of the lack of willingness for her managers to be more aggressive, both internally and with the RCMP, about the need for a better-resourced and more dynamic investigation.

The weaknesses in the MWRT investigation are attributable to both systemic issues and the lack of sufficient management attention to the case. At the middle manager level, frequent absences by one manager, combined with short-term assignments following his retirement, were contributing factors to a lack of proper attention to the investigation. The lack of knowledge of basic facts of the investigation was troubling, and demonstrated poor management controls, although a lack of resources contributed to this problem.

There was a lack of clarity around the purpose of the MWRT with the investigators believing it was a “review team,” while the initial manager felt it was a proper task force in everything but name, and that it was called a “review team” only to avoid embarrassing the Police Board, ostensibly because it had stated a task force wasn’t needed.

At the Executive level, in 1999, an unhealthy dynamic contributed to a lack of sufficient communication around the MWRT investigation. In 2000, there was a lack of attention to the investigation and it was allowed to deteriorate; the fact that no new women were known to be going missing made this deterioration easier to justify. The Deputy Chief Constable who was ultimately responsible for the Missing Women investigation was not sufficiently engaged, and took little action to ensure the investigation proceeded appropriately. However, he and Chief Constable Blythe did show leadership in ensuring that the VPD participated in the JFO, despite a lack of funding support from the City.

G. THE PICKTON INVESTIGATION PRIOR TO THE FEBRUARY 2002 SEARCH WARRANTS

When the Pickton case “broke” in February 2002, there was an intense media response that drove widespread condemnation of the VPD for allegedly failing to follow up on information about Pickton. The RCMP was characterized as having “rescued” the investigation, and of finding the information to solve the case during a review of VPD files. This was patently false. Despite many unfounded allegations made against the VPD, the RCMP chose not to issue a statement clarifying that the VPD had shared all information about Pickton, and that the

RCMP had been in charge of the investigation into that information from the beginning. The lack of response by the RCMP was not in keeping with the finest traditions of that organization.

The Coquitlam RCMP clearly had jurisdictional responsibility for the Pickton investigation. This fact was never in dispute.

The investigation of Pickton prior to February 2002 was inadequate and a failure of major case management. The level of information available was such that the investigation had to continue to either eliminate Pickton, or gather evidence against him. There was, however, a lack of effective analysis of the information that appears to have precluded an appreciation of its credibility. The investigators had evidence of Pickton's violent attack on [Anderson](#); the informant information from [Hiscox](#), [Thomas](#), [Stevens](#) and [Wood](#); Ellingsen's denial to police that she'd described Pickton committing a murder to anyone, despite several informants independently and without collusion providing that information; the series of incidents with sex trade workers in New Westminster; Pickton's ability to dispose of bodies, and the informant information regarding Pickton's statements to that effect; and Pickton's admission to having handcuffs, refusal to take a polygraph, and evasiveness regarding the likelihood of victim DNA being found on his property. In addition, the RCMP had a 1999 report from their own Behavioural Science Group which was based on the assumption that "all of the [21] missing women were the victims of a single sexually motivated offender..." Taken together, the investigators clearly had sufficient information to justify an aggressive investigation into Pickton.

The January 2000 interview of Pickton conducted by Constables [York](#) and [Fox](#) was not well done. He

was allowed to have a friend present, the interview wasn't properly planned or executed, and an evasive answer and his consent to search his property were not followed up. The failure of the RCMP to consult with the VPD or even advise that the interview was taking place was inexplicable.

After the interview, because of the lack of leadership, resources and priority applied, there was very little investigation of Pickton by the Coquitlam RCMP, which Constable [York](#) attributed to a lack of resources and a failure to give the investigation the appropriate priority.

There were many potential investigative avenues had the resources been applied, including, but certainly not limited to: continuing to use [Thomas](#) as an informant, and possibly using him as an agent; making efforts to follow up on Pickton's offer and conduct a "consent" search to find evidence or develop grounds to obtain a search warrant (such as following up on the information from [Thomas](#) about an illegal firearm in Pickton's trailer); continuing to pursue co-operation from Ellingsen, who eventually did become a cooperating witness against Pickton; seeking information that could have assisted the investigation from other potential witnesses; conducting a second interview/interrogation of Pickton using a highly skilled police interrogator; revisiting the potential for charges to be laid in the [Anderson](#) incident; and, arresting Pickton and employing a sophisticated interview and interrogation strategy using a cellmate preceded and/or followed by a well-planned interrogation.

It was an error to assume that only one serial killer could have operated in a geographical area as large as the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley, over the span of time involved. Pickton should not have been excluded as a suspect in the Missing Women

investigation just because he was not linked to the murders of Pipe, Younker and Olajide.

The Pickton investigation was an extraordinary one because, like the Missing Women case generally, it concerned an allegation of murder where there was no body or other concrete evidence to confirm a murder had actually occurred. Were there a body, no doubt the information would have been treated differently. But “personalities” or opinions about credibility without supporting evidence should never have derailed a murder investigation. Decisions should be made based on careful analysis of the information, and in consideration of the nature of the investigation: the more serious the allegations and the greater the risk to lives, the greater the care that must be taken in making decisions about how those allegations will be investigated. The opinion of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit investigators that the informant information was not credible was an opinion only. Neither that opinion, nor the lack of resources in the Coquitlam RCMP detachment, should have been sufficient to derail an investigation when the allegations were so serious. The information available was so compelling that it demanded a continued aggressive investigation.

Those in positions of authority in the Coquitlam RCMP and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit must bear primary responsibility for the failure to effectively manage this investigation. The Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit didn’t believe in the veracity of the informant information and declined to assist, thereby derailing the investigation. The Coquitlam RCMP’s investigation into Pickton was inadequate. The Coquitlam RCMP maintained control over the file, but did not treat it with the seriousness it demanded; after the summer of 1999, the only substantive work on the file was

the inadequate interview of Pickton in January of 2000. Furthermore, after the summer of 1999, the RCMP did not seek assistance from the VPD, which had a vested interest in the success of the investigation. There was a lack of effective high-level communication between the RCMP and the VPD regarding the management of the Pickton investigation.

Had the Coquitlam RCMP investigation into Pickton been successful, the future inadequacies of the VPD Missing Women investigation would have been moot because the case could have been solved within months of the MWRT beginning its work in the spring of 1999.

Although the legal responsibility for the investigation clearly lay with the Coquitlam RCMP, management-level pressure could have, and should have, been applied from the VPD to the RCMP to re-invigorate the investigation, rather than acquiescing to the RCMP’s position that they were continuing the investigation, but it “wasn’t a high priority.” Although resources were tight, it was never disputed that given compelling information of a murder, the VPD could have, and would have, applied more resources to the Missing Women investigation. However, at the operational level, the VPD made every reasonable effort to advance the Pickton investigation.

There was sufficient information in late summer of 1999 to justify implementing a “coordinated investigative team” to manage the Pickton investigation as a multi-jurisdictional case pursuant to major case management principles. A properly managed coordinated investigation team – run by an experienced major case manager – would have helped ensure that all appropriate investigative strategies

were pursued in Coquitlam. Further, there was much that could have been done in Vancouver to advance the investigation. The entire MWRT could have been re-focused onto seeking information about Pickton (with Detective Lepine and Detective Constable Chernoff continuing to handle Thomas as well). Detective Constables Cruz and James demonstrated in April 2000 that information about Pickton could be obtained to link him to the Downtown Eastside.⁴⁶²

Sergeant Field made many efforts not only to bring the RCMP into the investigation, but also to have the RCMP look again at Pickton as a suspect after the 1999 investigation was derailed. Her managers, for the most part, did not become engaged and provide her the high-level support she needed.

A thorough analysis of the evidence pointing to Pickton was needed. Had this analysis been available and taken at a high level to the RCMP, to pressure it to aggressively pursue the investigation with an offer of continued assistance, the RCMP may have applied more resources to the Pickton investigation. Unfortunately, because of a variety of circumstances, there was a rapid turnover of managers in the Major Crime Section. Due to their own lack of inquiry, none of them were sufficiently knowledgeable about the Missing Women investigation generally, and the Pickton investigation specifically. This was also true at the Executive level.

The impact of the failed 1999 investigation into Pickton was enormous in many ways, including having a severe emotional impact on the investigators involved – particularly Sergeant Geramy Field, Detective Constable Lori Shenher, and Detective Constable Mark Chernoff.

But the impact on the investigators and the VPD pales in comparison to the tragedy that could potentially have been averted: after August 1999, 13 more sex trade workers went missing, and DNA and other evidence connects eleven of these thirteen women to the Pickton property with multiple related murder charges awaiting trial.

Steps must be taken to eliminate or minimize those barriers that derailed the original Pickton investigation. What is needed is better analysis to provide “triggers” for a major investigation; better communication between RCMP detachments, RCMP “Headquarters,” and municipal departments; and better mechanisms to more quickly create Joint Force Operations run by properly trained major case managers. Some of these issues have been addressed to some extent recently, such as an RCMP initiative to ensure there is a pool of high level major case managers available in British Columbia, the creation of a provincial missing persons analysis unit, and integration of some homicide units. However, more work is needed to develop specific initiatives to address other systemic barriers identified in this review.

If anything good has come out of the Missing Women investigation, it is that it was a catalyst for an unprecedented Joint Force Operation investigation that has been described as a model of excellence in a number of respects, including inter-agency cooperation. Aggressive steps to improve policing in BC must be taken to ensure that all the harm in the Missing Women case caused to individuals, families and communities leads to more positive changes, and that the deaths of the Missing Women were not in vain.

462 In addition, later investigation, namely “off-line searches”, by the JFO, as documented in the Crown counsel brief, confirmed that Pickton’s various vehicles had been checked on CPIC on numerous occasions in the Downtown Eastside, which would have further supported his viability as a suspect.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. REGARDING THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND THE B.C. ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

The VPD should encourage the Provincial Government and the BC Association of Chiefs of Police to:

i. Multi-jurisdictional Investigations

1. Create a protocol or framework for multi-jurisdictional major case investigations to ensure the timely and seamless implementation of multi-agency teams. Reference documents should include this Review, Inspector R. Gehl's 2001 M.A. thesis on "Multi-Agency Cooperation", and Justice Campbell's Bernardo Investigation Review. The protocol should include specific guidelines, provisions for ongoing liaison between senior police officers, and reporting requirements;
2. Strike a committee to:
 - Develop a mechanism for individual police agencies faced with a "major case" with a multi-jurisdictional aspect to seek assistance, including involvement of the Provincial Police;
 - Develop specific criteria that set out the circumstances in which a JFO will be created and a process for providing ongoing review and reporting of the JFO's activities;
 - Develop an agreement allowing the rapid creation of JFOs when needed; and

- Develop a funding model for extraordinary investigations that are beyond the capacity of a municipal police department's budget for "routine" policing;
- Examine the state of provincial standards for advanced training of police officers in British Columbia.

ii. Regional Policing

3. In light of the negative impact on the Pickton investigation of the current multi-agency policing system in the Lower Mainland, examine the benefits of a regionalized police force in the Lower Mainland;

iii. Major Case Management

4. Examine the work of the 1996 Ontario Major Case Management Committee and give consideration to developing provincial standards for the management of major cases in BC;
5. Support the RCMP developing its accreditation program for high level major case managers, so that a provincial pool of highly trained managers are available to any agency, and that the municipal police departments be encouraged and supported in participating in this initiative;

iv. Electronic Case Management

6. Strike a Provincial committee of key stakeholders to study and make recommendations regarding a single uniform computerized case management system, or

suite of systems, for use by police agencies throughout British Columbia;

7. Ensure the selected system is mandatory for use in all serial predator investigations and all major sexual assault and homicide cases that could turn into a serial predator investigation;
8. Develop training to ensure that team commanders, investigators, file coordinators and analysts have sufficient training for their respective roles in using the system, and that this training be upgraded whenever substantive changes are made to the electronic case management system;
9. Ensure that if the Versadex PRIME-BC product is to be used for major case management, then the issue of complementary analytical software be studied, to ensure that all important functions of an electronic case management system are available, and to avoid a multiplicity of locally-developed products being used as is the case in British Columbia now;

v. Missing Persons Investigations

10. Continue to provide the support necessary to ensure the success of the new provincial analysis unit to examine missing persons cases, and that further attention be given to eliminating barriers to making missing persons reports;⁴⁶³

B. TO THE VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

11. THAT all VPD supervisors and managers in charge of investigative squads receive major case management training appropriate to their responsibilities;
12. THAT the Inspector in charge of the Major Crime Section (and other investigative sections) have a background in criminal investigations;
13. THAT the Executive of the Vancouver Police Department implement a policy requiring briefings at the Executive level on major cases so that adequate resources are applied;⁴⁶⁴
14. THAT whenever a task force is created for the purpose of a major case investigation, the major case management model is followed;
15. THAT a full time supervisor or “Team Commander” is assigned on a full time basis to any major case team;
16. THAT the Team Commander in consultation with the Primary Investigator have the authority to select all team members, and to release any team member who is unable to perform to a reasonable standard, or who is otherwise counterproductive;
17. THAT all major investigations consider the need for a written media strategy as a part of its operational plan, developed by the Team Commander in consultation with the Media Liaison Unit;

463 For example, the author has been advocating with the RCMP to create a 1-800 number that citizens wanting to report a missing person could call anywhere in BC, and a process would be created to ensure the appropriate jurisdiction conducts an investigation, and to ensure information is effectively shared between jurisdictions.

464 This recommendation has been addressed with the 2004 creation of the VPD’s “Strategic Plan Alignment Committee”, on which the four Deputy Chiefs sit. The committee is responsible for ensuring resources are aligned with priorities.

18. THAT the media handling protocol set out in the current Canadian Police College's Major Case Management Manual be used as a reference in major case investigations;
19. THAT the VPD implement a process whereby any replacement officers in a major case investigation team are fully briefed on all facets of the case investigation, including both in-person meetings and via case investigation documentation;
20. THAT the VPD continue developing the capacity to incorporate major case management best practices;
21. THAT the current efforts by the VPD to forge improved relationships with the sex trade workers of the Downtown Eastside continue to be strongly supported by VPD management; and

C. REGARDING THE CITY OF VANCOUVER

The VPD should encourage the City of Vancouver to:

22. Continue to support the resource needs of the VPD, both in terms of sworn staff but also civilian support staff, such as the priority positions requested in the 2002, 2003 and 2004 Reports to Council regarding civilian staffing, especially those with technical expertise, so that no future serious investigation is compromised by a lack of sufficient staff and expertise.

10. EPILOGUE

This review was substantially completed by 2005; much has happened since then.

On December 9, 2007 Robert Pickton was convicted of second degree murder in the deaths of Sereena Abotsway, Adrea Joesbury, Mona Wilson, Georgina Papin, Brenda Wolfe, and Marnie Frey. He was sentenced to life in prison with no hope for parole for 25 years. The Supreme Court of Canada upheld these convictions. As a result, charges were stayed related to the 20 additional murders of Andrea Borhaven, Heather Bottomley, Heather Chinnock, Wendy Crawford, Sarah Devries, Tiffany Drew, Cara Ellis, Cynthia Feliks, Jennifer Furminger, Inga Hall, Helen Hallmark, Tanya Holyk, Sherry Irving, Angela Jardine, Patricia Johnson, Debra Jones, Kerry Koski, Jacqueline McDonell, Diana Melnick, and Dianne Rock. In addition, DNA from six other Missing Women – Sharon Abraham, Yvonne Boen, Nancy Clark, Dawn Crey, Stephanie Lane, and Jacqueline Murdock – was allegedly found on the Pickton property, but there was insufficient evidence for Crown to approve charges. By any measure, the deaths of these Missing Women was a heart-wrenching tragedy, and one which has many lessons.

Significant improvements have been made in the VPD and in policing in BC since the Missing Women investigation. All of the VPD-relevant recommendations flowing from the Review have been implemented. Supervisors and managers of investigative squads are required to have an appropriate level of investigative experience and receive major case management training. The Inspectors in charge of the three VPD sections that focus on violent crime are all former major crime investigators and supervisors, and all have major

case management training. Both the Superintendent and Deputy Chief who oversee major investigations are experienced investigators and investigative supervisors. Since the Missing Women investigation, six VPD officers have been provincially accredited as Major Case Management Team Commanders. The current Executive has implemented a system in which it is briefed daily on current cases, and is proactive in ensuring it is fully informed and engaged so that it can fulfill its leadership responsibilities. All major case and task force investigations are guided by major case management protocols, including staffing matters and media strategies.

In terms of VPD staffing levels, since the Missing Women investigation, the VPD has received extraordinary support from the City of Vancouver and Vancouver City Council in increasing both sworn and civilian staffing. Sworn staffing has been effectively increased by 243 positions since 2003, while civilian staffing has increased by well over 100 positions over the same time period. Many of the civilian positions are crime analysts, which were severely lacking during the Missing Women investigation.

The VPD has also continued to work at improving relationships with sex trade workers and other marginalized persons via advocacy groups, and has assigned a police officer who is well-respected in the Downtown Eastside, Constable Linda Malcolm, as a full-time sex trade worker liaison.

There have been many improvements in the ability of police in the Lower Mainland to respond to multi-jurisdictional crime, as evidenced by the creation of RCMP-led integrated units such as the Integrated Gang Task Force. To their credit, the Provincial Government has significantly increased funding for such integrated units, expanding the overall policing capacity in the Lower Mainland and elsewhere. In

addition, the Province has funded and implemented province-wide the Police Records Information Management Environment (PRIME) System that the VPD introduced in 2001, so that all police agencies are able to efficiently share information. In addition, major case management training has continued and its principles have become the accepted standard for the conduct of major investigations in B.C.

As noted, a provincial missing persons analysis unit has now been in place since 2005, although more work is needed to ensure it addresses the current gaps in missing persons investigations, particularly when there are multi-jurisdictional issues, and also with respect to barriers to reporting, particularly for marginalized persons.

There are, however, still some outstanding challenges that played a role in the failures in the Missing Women investigation. For example, there is still no provincial standard for electronic case management software to support major investigations and different agencies are using different applications. The VPD continues to advocate for such a system, as its lack prevents seamless multi-jurisdictional investigations, delays the transfer of information, and requires that investigators who move to a multi-jurisdictional unit from a different agency have to adapt to new systems. There should also be more attention paid to provincial standards for training. Some progress in this regard was made in 2008, but there is more work to do.

In addition, the lack of a regional police force in the Lower Mainland means that there are competing priorities, and decisions on regional issues are delayed while consensus is sought. While the level of cooperation is usually good among police leaders in the province, this situation would be enhanced with a better structure that would support police

decision-making on a regional basis, rather than the fragmented system that exists now, and which played a key negative role in the Missing Women investigation. There are times when decision-making on major multi-jurisdictional policing issues must rest with a clear governance and executive authority, supported by a unified and accountable management team. In major multi-jurisdictional cases, decisions must not be diluted or avoided because of a lack of an appropriate structure to support such decision making. While a “Joint Management Team” approach has been adopted in BC to support some integrated units, this approach does not set out a legal or practical basis for strong, rapid, and accountable decision-making that incorporates the issues of the major stakeholders. This problem should be examined by the Ministry of Solicitor General.

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KEY PERSONS INVOLVED IN THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION REVIEW MAJOR INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SUBJECT	RANK*	RELEVANT ASSIGNMENT(S)	INTERVIEW DATE
Lori Shenher	Det/Constable	Missing Persons/MWRT	November 14, 2002
			November 19, 2002
			April 7, 2004
Geramy Powell (nee Field)	Sergeant	Homicide/MP Unit/MWRT	November 15, 2002
			February 21, 2004
Chris Beach	Inspector	i/c D2 then Major Crime Section	January 14, 2003
Dave Dickson	Constable	D2, MWRT	November 5, 2003
Ron Lepine	Detective	Homicide, MWRT	November 5, 2003
Mark Chernoff	Det/Constable	Homicide, MWRT/Evenhanded	November 6, 2003
Brian McGuinness	Deputy Chief	Cmdg. Investigation Division	November 13, 2003
Alex Clarke	Det/Constable	MWRT	November 19, 2003
Parker	Clerk	Missing Persons	November 25, 2003
Gord Spencer	Inspector	i/c Major Crime Section	February 2, 2004
Dan Dickhout	Constable	Missing Persons	February 5, 2004
John Unger	Deputy Chief	Cmdg. Investigation Division	February 11, 2004
Matthews	A/Inspector	i/c Major Crime Section	February 14, 2004
Anne Drennan	Constable	Media	February 19, 2004
Terry Blythe	Chief Constable	Vancouver Police Dept	February 26, 2004
Cruz	Det/Constable	MWRT	March 23, 2004
James	Det/Constable	MWRT	March 23, 2004
Don Adam	Inspector	Project Evenhanded	March 25, 2004
Bruce Chambers	Chief Constable	Vancouver Police Dept	April 7, 2004
York	Constable	Coquitlam RCMP	April 22, 2004
Kim Rossmo	Det/Inspector	Geographic Profiling	June 4, 2004
Fred Biddlecombe	Inspector	i/c Major Crime Section	July 16, 2004

*Rank at time of relevant involvement in Missing Women investigation.

GLOSSARIES

Inspector (Sergeant, Staff Sergeant)⁴⁶⁵ Don ADAM (RCMP) – In 2000, then-Sergeant Adam was a Special Projects Investigator in the RCMP’s Serious Crimes Unit. On January 17, 2001, the Joint Force Operation first met and began the initial phase of its investigation into the Missing Women. Then-Sergeant Adam was assigned as the JFO team commander and continued in that role until mid-2004. The JFO investigative team would eventually swell to over 280 police and civilian employees at its peak.

Ms. Gray (VPD) – From May 1999 to September 2000, [Parker](#) was a VPD civilian employee who performed clerical support and data entry for the MWRT analytical database, SIUSS.

Detective Bruce BALLANTYNE (VPD) – Detective Bruce Ballantyne, a VPD detective seconded to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, was assigned to conduct a background profile of [Thomas](#) on August 5, 1999. The following day, Detective Ballantyne and Corporal [Walters](#) (RCMP), also assigned to PUHU, interviewed Lynn Ellingsen at the Whalley RCMP office.

Assistant Commissioner (Superintendent) Gary BASS (VPD) – In 1999, Gary Bass was the Superintendent in charge of the RCMP “E” Division Serious Crime unit, of which the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit (PUHU) was a part. He was later promoted to Assistant Commissioner, Officer in Charge Criminal Operations “E” Division, responsible for operational oversight of all municipal, provincial and federal policing activities in British Columbia – and was in this position as of early-2005.

Inspector Chris BEACH (VPD) – From January 1999 to November 2001, Inspector Beach was commanding officer of District 2, which includes the

Downtown Eastside. He then became Inspector in charge of the Major Crime Section from November 2001.

[Wood](#) – In August 1998, [Wood](#) attended the Burnaby RCMP front counter and advised that she had relevant information about Pickton. She was interviewed by Coquitlam RCMP officers, provided details about Ellingsen and Pickton, and stated she was willing to be a witness against Pickton.

Inspector Fred BIDDLECOMBE (VPD) – From January 1998 to his retirement in October 1999, Inspector Biddlecombe was the Officer in Charge of the Major Crime Section.

Chief Constable (Deputy Chief Constable) Terry BLYTHE (VPD) – From August 1996 to June 1999, Deputy Chief Constable Blythe was in charge of the Operations Division. In June 1999 he was promoted to Chief Constable, a position he held until his retirement in August 2002.

Sergeant Wade BLIZARD (RCMP) – A member of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit.

Acting Inspector (Sergeant) Al BOYD (VPD) – In charge of a Homicide Squad, Sergeant Boyd was also responsible for the Missing Persons Unit from September 1998 to March 1999. He became Acting Inspector in charge of the Major Crime Section from February to November 2001.

Deputy Commissioner Bev BUSSON (RCMP) – Head of the B.C. Organized Crime Agency from May 1999 to March 2000, she then became Deputy Commissioner and Commanding Officer “E” Division.

[Thomas](#) (INFORMANT) – A resident of Surrey who contacted the Coquitlam RCMP in mid-July 1999

⁴⁶⁵ Note that for police members, their last known rank at the time of writing is listed first, followed in parentheses by any prior ranks that were attributed to the members during the Missing Women investigation.

claiming to have information about Vancouver's Missing Women. He was subsequently interviewed by VPD and RCMP officers and provided additional details about Pickton and his farm that became the catalyst for an in-depth investigation into Pickton.

Ms Parker (VPD) – A civilian employee who, from 1979 to 2001, performed clerical support for the Missing Persons Unit. In this capacity, she had contact with several friends and family members of the missing women until 1998 when Detective Constable Lori Shenher took over this responsibility.

(Former) Chief Coroner Larry CAMPBELL – A former RCMP member, Campbell established the first Vancouver District Coroner's office in 1981. In 1996, he was appointed BC Chief Coroner, a position from which he retired in 2000. He was elected to a 3-year term as Mayor of the City of Vancouver in November 2002.

Constable Fox – A member of the Coquitlam RCMP detachment. On January 19, 2000, he and Constable York interviewed Pickton.

Chief Constable Bruce CHAMBERS (VPD) – Chief Constable of the VPD from August 1997 to June 1999.

Detective Constable Mark CHERNOFF (VPD) – From May to November 1999, Homicide Squad member Detective Constable Chernoff was assigned as an investigator in the MWRT. He was later assigned to Project Evenhanded to assist with the Pickton investigation for several months in 2002. *Also see biography in Appendix B: MWRT Biographies.*

— **(INFORMANT)** – A truck driver who frequented the Pickton property and, in early 2002, provided information that Pickton was in possession of an illegal firearm to Coquitlam RCMP

member Constable Nathan Wells. Constable Wells subsequently obtained a search warrant for the Pickton property and this broke the Missing Women case open for JFO investigators.

Ms. Melissa CLARK (VPD) – A civilian employee in the position of Freedom of Information Coordinator who assisted the MWRT members in their search for the Missing Women by meeting with representatives from agencies such as the Coroner's Service and the Public Trustee regarding accessing medical services records.

Detective Constable Alex CLARKE (VPD) – Assisted the MWRT in June 1999 and was assigned to the team full-time from July 1999 through June 2000. From February to June 2001, she assisted Project Evenhanded by reviewing historical homicide files provided by PUHU and ViCLAS. *Also see biography in Appendix B: MWRT Biographies.*

Corporal Mike CONNOR (RCMP) – A member of the Port Coquitlam RCMP Serious Crimes Unit who investigated Pickton for a serious assault on a sex trade worker (Anderson) at the farm in March, 1997. From August 1998 until he was promoted out of the investigation in August 1999, Corporal Connor acted as the Pickton file coordinator and lead investigator; interviewed key witnesses including Hiscox, Stevens, Quinn and Wood; and engaged RCMP specialty units to conduct surveillance and take aerial photos of the Pickton property.

Staff Sergeant Keith DAVIDSON (RCMP) – A criminal profiler with the Behavioural Science Group of the RCMP’s “E” Division Major Crime Section. In December, 1999, he indicated to Sergeant Field that, based on his assessment of the Missing Women’s case, the bodies of the women were likely to be found in an RCMP rural jurisdiction.

Maggie DE VRIES – (VICTIM’S SISTER) The sister of Sarah de Vries, who went missing in April 1998. She advocated with the Police Board and in the media for a reward and a task force for the Missing Women case.

Detective Constable Dan DICKHOUT (VPD) – The Coroner’s Liaison officer in 1998 who assisted the MWRT with various investigative activities, including records searches, and interviews.

Constable Dave DICKSON (VPD) – Highly-regarded by the Downtown Eastside community and having many years of policing experience in the area, he was assigned in March 1997 to assist the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit to investigate 71 women purportedly murdered in or missing from the Downtown Eastside. He worked on a part-time basis for the MWRT from May 1999 to June 2000. *See also biography in Appendix B: MWRT Biographies.*

(Former) Attorney General Ujjal DOSANJH – Attorney General of British Columbia from August 1995 to February 2000. The Attorney General is responsible for, among other things, overseeing the administration of justice in the province.

Constable Anne Drennan (VPD) – Media Liaison officer for the VPD 1994 – 2001. Constable Drennan was responsible for press briefings and media releases during the Missing Women investigation until she

was re-assigned in June 2001.

Acting Inspector (Staff Sergeant) Matthews (VPD) – Assigned as Acting Inspector in charge of the Major Crime Section in October, 1999 (following the retirement of Inspector Biddlecombe). Promoted to Inspector in April 2000.

Lynn ELLINGSEN (INFORMANT) – Identified to the Coquitlam RCMP in July 1999 by Thomas as having lived on the pig farm property with Pickton during the previous year, and having witnessed Pickton murder a sex trade worker in a barn. Although uncooperative with police in 1999, she subsequently became an important witness for the Crown against Pickton.

Detective Constable Cruz (VPD) – Originally “on loan” from the provincial Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit, Constable Cruz was assigned to the MWRT on a full-time basis from May 1999 to June 2000. *See also biography in Appendix B: MWRT Biographies.*

Sergeant Geramy FIELD (VPD) – Through 1998, Sergeant Field was in charge of a Homicide Squad and also held administrative responsibilities for the Missing Persons Unit. Sergeant Field was assigned as the Sergeant in charge of the MWRT from May 1999 to May 2001, but still retained her full-time responsibilities for a Homicide Squad and the Missing Persons Unit. *See also biography in Appendix B: MWRT Biographies.*

Corporal Scott FILER (RCMP) – A geographic profiler in the RCMP “E” Division Major Crime Section who concluded in December 1999 that the Missing Women’s bodies were likely to be found in a rural RCMP jurisdiction.

————— (VPD) – A VPD civilian employee who provided clerical support to Sexual Offence Squad, Ms. ——— temporarily assisted the MWRT with SIUSS data entry.

Sandra GAGNON (VICTIM'S SISTER) – The sister of Janet Gail Henry, who went missing from the Downtown Eastside in July 1997.

Staff Sergeant Brock GILES (VPD) – Second in command of the Major Crime Section from August 1997 to January 2000.

Chief Constable Jamie GRAHAM (VPD) – A former RCMP Chief Superintendent who became Chief Constable of the VPD in August 2002.

Deputy Chief Constable (Inspector) Gary GREER (VPD) – In charge of District 2 (within which the Downtown Eastside is situated) from June 1999 to March 2000; later promoted to Deputy Chief Constable in charge of Operations, a position he held from April 2000 until his retirement in June 2003.

Constable GREIG (RCMP) – A member of the Coquitlam RCMP Serious Crime Section who, at one point, was assigned to develop a profile of [Stevens](#).

(Former) Crown Counsel Peder GULBRANSEN – In 1999, Gulbransen was a Crown prosecutor for the province of BC and has since been appointed a provincial court judge. In August 1999, Corporal Connor met with Gulbransen to discuss the Pickton case and the possibility of installing a covert camera to observe Pickton's "comings and goings." Gulbransen advised that a warrant would be required, but no warrant was ever obtained.

Acting Inspector (Staff Sergeant) Doug HENDERSON (RCMP) – On November 21, 2000, Inspector Spencer met with Staff Sergeant Doug Henderson from the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, and others, and it was agreed a JFO led by the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit was required to investigate the Missing Women case.

Corporal [Walters](#) (RCMP) – On August 6, 1999, Corporal [Walters](#) and Detective Ballantyne, members of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, interviewed Lynn Ellingsen at the Whalley RCMP office. [Walters](#) participated in a second, albeit brief, interview of Ellingsen later that month and did not believe the informant information about Pickton was credible.

Sergeant Carl HETHERINGTON (VPD) – A member of the Homicide Squad, in October 2001, Sergeant Hetherington was directed to conduct a review of the Missing Persons Unit policies, with specific attention to the conduct of [Parker](#).

Detective Constable Daryl HETHERINGTON (VPD) – A member of the Vice Unit, Detective Constable Hetherington was assigned to work with Project Evenhanded in 2001 in the role of Investigator/Exhibits.

William HISCOX (INFORMANT) – In August 1998, William Hiscox reported to Detective Constable Shenher and Corporal Connor that [Quinn](#) had described pieces of women's identification, purses, and bloody clothing in Pickton's trailer. Hiscox became an informant for Detective Constable Shenher and Corporal Connor.

Sergeant Brian HONEYBOURN (VPD) – Seconded to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit (PUHU) from the VPD. In February 1999, Sergeant Honeybourn attended a meeting to discuss any new information about Pickton and determine the viability of continuing the Missing Women investigation. At that time PUHU members stated that "the information is interesting but the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit would not be in a position to assist until there is no doubt this individual was involved in a specific homicide or group of homicides."

Gina HOUSTON – In 2000, Gina Houston, a friend of Robert Pickton, assisted the RCMP in arranging to speak to Pickton and was present during and participated in the subsequent interview in January 2001.

Detective Al HOWLETT (VPD) – The sole Missing Persons Unit investigator, until Detective Constable Shenher joined him in 1998 to investigate the increasing reports of women missing from the Downtown Eastside. Detective Howlett assisted the MWRT with various investigative activities, including records searches and interviews.

Tammy HUMENY – Willy Pickton's niece who investigators in a multi-jurisdictional meeting in April 1999 decided should be approached for additional information, although this appears not to have occurred.

—— (RCMP) – An RCMP polygraphist with the RCMP's "E" Division who was involved in the Pickton investigation in 1999 in Coquitlam.

Ms. Karen ISAAC – Communications Coordinator for the First Nations Summit in 1997, Ms. Isaac is now Operations Manager of the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society. In February 1997, Ms. Isaac wrote to Sgt. Bob Cooper of the VPD Major Crime Section with a list of 48 women the Summit described as "homicide victims believed to be of First Nations/ Aboriginal ancestry" and asked for information about these cases.

Acting Sergeant Don JARVIS (VPD) – An Acting Sergeant from Homicide, Jarvis was assigned to Project Evenhanded in 2001 in charge of File Review/ Investigations.

Detective Constable Sue JARVIS (VPD) – In September 2000 Detective Constable Jarvis was borrowed from her assignment at the Organized Crime Agency of BC and loaned to the MWRT to assist with SIUSS data entry and analysis. For medical reasons, she was able to spend only three weeks with the MWRT.

Grand Chief Edward JOHN – Grand Chief Edward John, a lawyer, is the Grand Chief of the Tl'azt'en Nation and an executive member of the First Nations Summit.

Corporal JUSTASON (RCMP) – A member of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit. In August 1999, he and Corporal Nash were assigned to develop a "Letter of Agreement" and a "Threat Assessment" regarding the informant Thomas.

Detective Trish KEAN (VPD) – In early 2001, Detective Kean, a member of the Sexual Offence Squad, assisted the MWRT by examining historical cases of assault on sex trade workers spanning 1986 through 1999 to determine if there was any evidence suitable for DNA analysis.

Superintendent (Inspector) Larry KILLALY (RCMP) – The RCMP Officer from "E" Division who met with the VPD in November 2001 to discuss a JFO proposal to field a semi-covert team of 12 officers in the Downtown Eastside. The unit was to be fielded with six VPD and six RCMP members, for the purpose of conducting semi-covert intelligence gathering work in the interests of preventing more sex trade workers from going missing, and

to hopefully identify a suspect. The unit became operational in mid-January 2002.

Corporal Margaret KINGSBURY (RCMP)

– Corporal Kingsbury attended various multi-jurisdictional Missing Women meetings in 1999 and became an active member of the JFO when it formed in January 2001.

Wayne LENG – In April 1998, Wayne Leng, a client and friend of Sarah de Vries’, became a vocal advocate for a reward for information about the Missing Women, and started a website dedicated to Sarah, and then to the rest of the Missing Women. Leng also set up a 1-800 tip line for information about the Missing Women.

Detective Ron LEPINE (VPD) – From May to November 1999, Detective Lepine was loaned from the Homicide Squad to the MWRT. *Also see biography in Appendix B: MWRT Biographies.*

Detective Phil LITTLE (VPD) – Assigned from the Homicide Squad to Project Evenhanded in the role of Suspect Review/Prioritization in February 2001.

Mr. Robert LOUIE –An executive member of the First Nations Summit and, as of early 2005, Chief of the Westbank First Nation. In February 1997, Mr. Louie, Chief Mathias, and Grand Chief John wrote to then-Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh, on behalf of the Summit, requesting his intervention regarding what they characterized as the inadequate investigation of “the brutal murders of fifty-five Aboriginal women in the Vancouver area over the last ten years.” ⁴⁶⁶

Chief Joe MATHIAS – Chief Mathias, who passed away in March, 2000, was a hereditary Chief of the Squamish Nation and an executive member of the

First Nations Summit, among other organizations.⁴⁶⁷ In February 1997, Chief Mathias, Grand Chief John, and Mr. Louie wrote to then-Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh, on behalf of the Summit, requesting his intervention regarding what they characterized as the inadequate investigation of “the brutal murders of fifty-five Aboriginal women in the Vancouver area over the last ten years.” ⁴⁶⁸

Constable Paul MCCARL (RCMP) – Constable McCarl was the lead investigator in the “Valley Murders” (of sex trade workers Pipe, Olajide and Younker) from 1995 through 2001.

Corporal David McCartney (RCMP) – Member of the Coquitlam RCMP who conducted a file review in early 2000 of the Coquitlam RCMP Pickton investigation which resulted in a “game plan” for the investigation to move forward.

Erin MCGRATH – The sister of Leigh Miner (reported missing in 1994) who raised concerns about the handling of her sister’s case in an e-mail to Detective Constable Dan Dickhout in July 2001.

Deputy Chief Constable Brian MCGUINNESS (VPD) – In charge of the VPD Operations Support Division (which included the Major Crime Section from January 1999 to March 2000.

(Acting Sergeant; Detective) Jim MCKNIGHT (VPD/RCMP) –Assigned from the VPD’s Homicide Squad to Project Evenhanded in the role of Lead Investigator/Suspect Review in February 2001. He was later assigned as Acting Sergeant and held the role of Primary Investigator for the JFO until he retired from the VPD in November 2003. Since then,

⁴⁶⁶ Binder 9, Tab 40.

⁴⁶⁷ http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/nwltr/trty/2000/mar00/mathias_e.html

⁴⁶⁸ Binder 9, Tab 40.

McKnight has been employed by the RCMP, where (as of early 2005) he continues his role in Project Evenhanded.

Stevens (WITNESS) – In August 1999, RCMP officers interviewed Stevens based on information obtained about him from Thomas. Stevens, a friend of Thomas's and ex-boyfriend of Lynn Ellingsen, made statements indicating that Ellingsen had told him about the incident in which Pickton had killed a sex trade worker in his barn.

Inspector Earl MOULTON (RCMP) – The Coquitlam RCMP's Operations Officer, who in August 1999 agreed to initiate surveillance of the Pickton farm.

Detective Frank OWEN (VPD) – In mid-1999, when he was available on an overtime basis, VPD Robbery Squad analyst Detective Owen assisted the MWRT with data analysis using SIUSS.

(Former) Mayor Philip OWEN – Mayor of the City of Vancouver from November 1993 until 2002. In 1999 Mayor Owen initially resisted the idea of a reward to help solve the disappearance of 21 women from the Downtown Eastside, but later, in response to public pressure, changed his mind.

Corporal NASH (VPD) – A member of the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, who, with Corporal Justason, was assigned to develop a "Letter of Agreement" and a "Threat Assessment" regarding the informant Thomas.

Constable Barry PICKERELL (VPD) – A Sexual Offence Squad analyst who was made available on an overtime basis in 1999 to assist the MWRT with data analysis using SIUSS. He later joined the JFO and retired in 2003.

Dave PICKTON – Willie Pickton's older brother, who, in September, 1999, convinced RCMP

Constable York to wait a few months to request an interview with Willie so that he could take advantage of the dry weather on the farm for work purposes.

Robert William (Willy) PICKTON – Pickton is charged with the murders of 27 Missing Women at his Port Coquitlam property.

Sergeant POLLOCK (RCMP) – A member of the Coquitlam RCMP's Serious Crime Unit, Sergeant Pollock was Corporal Mike Connor's supervisor during his involvement in the Pickton investigation in 1998-1999. Sergeant Pollock later assigned Constable York to the Pickton file following Connor's promotion.

Sergeant ROBERTSON (RCMP) – A member of the Coquitlam RCMP detachment who was assigned in 1999 to manage resources for surveillance and inquiries with the RCMP's Special "I" Unit.

City Manager Judy ROGERS – The top bureaucrat in the City of Vancouver, which, directly or indirectly, employs 9,000 workers, including police, firefighters, parks board, library staff and city hall workers. Among other responsibilities, the City Manager reviews departmental budgets, programs and initiatives, including those of the Vancouver Police Board and Department. In November 2001, Deputy Chief Constable Unger and Chief Constable Blythe met with Rogers seeking support for additional resources to replace those necessary to contribute to the JFO, but were unsuccessful.

(Detective Inspector) Kim ROSSMO (VPD) – The first police officer in Canada to earn a PhD in Criminology, in 1996, he developed a criminal investigation technique called "geographic profiling" and created and ran the Department's Geographic Profiling Unit. He found from an analysis of women missing from Downtown Eastside from 1995-1999 that the number of women who had gone missing in the previous 30 months was significantly higher than

what could be expected by chance and concluded that the single serial murderer hypothesis most likely explained the majority of the incidents.

Detective Constable Jim SCOTT (VPD) – A member of the Sexual Offence Squad, Detective Constable Scott met in 2001 with Staff Sergeant Adam of Project Evenhanded for the purpose of identifying women who had survived attacks where it appeared they were going to be killed.

Detective Constable Lori SHENHER (VPD) – Assigned to the Missing Persons Unit in July 1998 to actively investigate the escalating number of reports of missing women from the Downtown Eastside. Detective Constable Shenher ultimately became the key investigator and file coordinator for the MWRT until August 2000, when the MWRT ceased to exist and she returned to the MPU to work with “regular” missing persons files. In December 2000, at her request, Detective Constable Shenher was transferred to the VPD Diversity Relations Unit. *See also biography in Appendix B: MWRT Biographies.*

Inspector Gord SPENCER (VPD) – In charge of the Major Crime Section from October 1999 to April 2000, he assisted VPD Sergeant Field in advocating for a JFO with the RCMP.

Deputy Chief Constable John UNGER (VPD) – In command of the Operations Division from September 1998 to April 1999, and again from June 1999 until he took command of the Operational Support Division (now divided into the Operational Support Division and the Investigation Division) from April 2000 to December 2002.

Constable Paul VERRAL (VPD) – A member of the Forensic Identification Squad who assisted Project Evenhanded from February-June, 2001 by reviewing historical homicide files provided by PUHU and ViCLAS. In October 2001 Constable Verral was

assigned to the JFO full-time and was responsible for VPD historical file reviews, reporting to Jim McKnight.

Detective Constable Carl VINJE (VPD) – Assisted the MWRT with data analysis using SIUSS on an overtime basis in mid-1999. At the time, he was an analyst on loan from the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit to work in the VPD’s Home Invasion Task Force.

Constable Nathan WELLS (RCMP) – A junior member of the RCMP Coquitlam Detachment who obtained a search warrant on February 4, 2002, in relation to information he received that Pickton was in possession of an illegal firearm. Because Pickton was entered on CPIC as a person of interest to the JFO, Constable Wells contacted the JFO to apprise them of his information and to invite them to attend while he executed the search warrant. During the search for the firearm, the investigators observed items belonging to two of the Missing Women. As a result, the JFO investigators were called on to the property, the weapons search was suspended, the property was sealed off, and JFO investigators obtained and executed a warrant to search for evidence related to the murder of Missing Women the next day.

Detective Constable James (VPD) – A member of the District 2 “Drug Enforcement and Education Team” who was assigned to the MWRT from May, 1999 to June 2000. *See also biography in Appendix B: MWRT Biographies.*

Quinn – In September 1998, informant William Hiscox told Detective Constable Lori Shenher about Quinn and her belief that Pickton may be responsible for the Missing Women. In August 1999, RCMP Corporal Connor interviewed Quinn at her home where she assured him the Pickton was a gentle person who could not be responsible for killing prostitutes.

Constable York (RCMP) – A member of the Coquitlam RCMP Serious Crime Unit, in August 1999 she replaced Corporal Connor as the lead investigator in the Pickton investigation, continuing until August 2001 when she retired from the RCMP. She and Constable Fox interviewed Pickton on January 19, 2000.

Staff Sergeant Brad Zalys (RCMP) – In charge of all Coquitlam RCMP “plainclothes” units, including the Serious Crimes Unit, during the Pickton investigation.

POLICE UNITS INVOLVED IN THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION

DISC (The Deter and Identify Sex Consumers program) – Developed in 1998 by two VPD officers with the intent to identify and track people involved in the youth sex trade, including pimps, recruiters, johns, and workers. Core functions of the unit include: maintaining a database of individuals participating in sex trade activities; protecting at-risk youth from sex trade recruitment; and identifying and tracking pimps, recruiters, consumers, workers and others of special interest.

JFO/Project Evenhanded – The VPD and the RCMP joined forces in April 2001 to review all the reports of women missing from the Vancouver Downtown Eastside to look for any information or common link that might assist in discovering who might be responsible for their disappearances. In 2002, when Pickton was identified as the primary suspect in the Missing Women investigation via an unrelated investigation, the JFO investigative team assumed the lead role and, at its peak, involved over 280 police and civilian employees.

Major Crime Section (MCS) – The VPD Major Crime Section was based in the Operational Support (now Investigation) Division. It is led by an Inspector and, at the time of the Missing Women investigation, conducted investigations into violent crimes such as homicides, violent sex offences, domestic violence, and armed robberies, as well as missing persons cases. (The Sexual Offence and Domestic Violence/ Criminal Harassment Squads are now part of a different Section.)

Missing Persons Unit (MPU) – The MPU is part of the VPD Major Crime Section and is responsible for investigating reports of missing persons. In 1998, when the Missing Women investigation began, one Detective and a civilian clerk staffed the MPU until Detective Constable Shenher was added to the Unit.

MWRT – The VPD Missing Women Review Team was created in May 1999 to investigate the numerous cases of women missing from the Downtown Eastside in Vancouver. At its peak, the team included Sergeant Geramy Field, Detective Ron Lepine, Detective Constables Lori Shenher, Mark Chernoff, Alex Clarke, James, Cruz, Constable Dave Dickson, and Ms. Gray.

Police Board – The Vancouver Police Board is the governing body for the VPD. It provides civilian governance and oversight of policing. Under British Columbia’s Police Act, the Board consists of the Mayor as Chair, one person appointed by the municipal council, and up to five people appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The role of a municipal police board is to establish a municipal police department and to provide general direction to this department, in accordance with relevant legislation and in response to community needs.⁴⁶⁹

469 <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/police/policeboard/index.html>

The Police Board also exists to insulate police departments from the political decision-making process.

Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit (PUHU) – Created by the provincial government in 1996, this integrated police unit is staffed by up to 20 experienced investigative members from the RCMP and the VPD. The purpose of the Unit is to ensure the effective coordination of investigations into unsolved homicides that have occurred in British Columbia over the last several decades. PUHU members investigate unsolved homicides throughout BC on a case-by-case basis.⁴⁷⁰

RCMP Air Services Division – Air Services provides air support and assistance to RCMP operational personnel across the country. It conducts northern and regional patrols; transports personnel, prisoners, and supplies; and conducts searches.⁴⁷¹

RCMP Coquitlam Serious Crime Section – A small investigative unit that conducts investigations into serious crimes such as homicides (that responsibility has now been taken over by the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team), violent sex offences, armed robberies and major thefts that occur in the RCMP Coquitlam/Port Coquitlam jurisdiction.

RCMP Criminal Profiling Section – Based in RCMP “E” Division’s “Behavioural Sciences Group”, the Criminal Profiling Section provides “criminal investigative analysis” to help solve violent crimes in the province of British Columbia. Analysts are experienced investigators with extensive training in behavioural analysis.

RCMP “E” Division – “E” Division, the British Columbia and Yukon division of the RCMP,

is the largest division in Canada, representing approximately one-third of the total RCMP force. It provides provincial, federal and municipal policing to British Columbia through 126 detachments, with more than 5,000 police officers. “E” Division provides services that include Major Crime, General Investigation, Air Services, and Violent Crime Analysis Services.⁴⁷²

Special “I” Unit – This specialized RCMP unit specializes in electronic surveillance, including wiretap operations.

Special “O” Unit – This specialized RCMP unit specializes in undercover surveillance and operations.

Strike Force – Situated in the VPD’s Operational Support Division, Strike Force teams conduct covert surveillance and operations such as following and arresting violent and predatory offenders.

ViCLAS – The Violent Crimes Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS) is a Canada-wide computer system that assists specially trained investigators to identify serial crimes and criminals by focusing on the linkages that exist among crimes committed by the same offender.⁴⁷³

Geographic Profiling Unit – Originally created and overseen by former VPD Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo, this special investigative unit provided geographic profiling services within the VPD and for other police agencies. *See also* “*Geographic Profiling*” in *Key Terms*.

470 http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/police_services/publications/other_stats/homicide.pdf

471 http://www.rcmp-learning.org/history/history_mod4.htm#22

472 http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/bc/about_ediv/index_e.htm

473 http://www.rcmp.ca/techops/viclas_e.htm

OTHER POLICE UNITS AND ORGANIZATIONS

CLEU – Mandated to fight organized crime, the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit (CLEU) was a Joint Forces Operation formed in 1974 by the provincial government and staffed by the RCMP and municipal police forces in British Columbia. It was replaced in January 2000 by the Organized Crime Agency of BC (OCABC), which was subsequently absorbed into the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU).

Green River Task Force – Formed in 1984 by the King County (WA) Sheriff's Office to investigate what would become the USA's largest and longest serial murder investigation. By 1990 the team had dwindled to one member but was rejuvenated in 2001 when the Green River Homicides Investigation Team was created alongside a prosecution team. These teams became the new Green River Task Force and went on to see Gary Leon Ridgway plead guilty to 48 counts of First Degree Aggravated Murder, all of which took place in King County, WA.⁴⁷⁴

Tribal Police – In British Columbia, Tribal Police are sworn Aboriginal police forces established to assume policing responsibilities in First Nations communities.

District 2 (D2) – The VPD has divided Vancouver into 4 policing areas, or districts. District 2 focuses on the northeast corner of the city, generally bordered by Main St. to the west, Boundary Rd. to the east, the Waterfront area to the north, and East Broadway to the south. The Downtown Eastside is located within District 2.

FIU – The Forensic Identification Unit (FIU) is the VPD investigative unit, under the Investigation Division umbrella, that applies the forensic sciences to collecting evidence in support of criminal

investigations. Although most of FIU's work involves major crimes, the squad assists all VPD investigators with gathering forensic evidence for their investigations, including fingerprints, DNA, photographs, tire and shoe markings, etc.

Garage Robbery Task Force – The VPD special task force created to investigate a rash of garage invasion armed robberies in the spring of 1999, in which affluent Asians were being targeted for robbery as they entered their garages in Vancouver's West Side.

HITF – (Home Invasion Task Force) A VPD special unit created in the mid-1990s and re-invigorated in February 1999 to investigate a rash of home invasions that targeted seniors in Vancouver. Ten experienced VPD detectives were assigned to the task force in 1999, led by a sergeant trained in Major Case Management.

IHIT – The RCMP "E" Division Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) was created in November 2003 with officers from Lower Mainland RCMP detachments and several municipal forces. The team investigates homicides that occur throughout Lower Mainland RCMP jurisdictions and participating non-RCMP jurisdictions, and operates in the Major Case Management model.

Investigation Division – During the Missing Women Investigation, the Sections that now form the Investigation Division were included with several other Sections in what was known as the Operational Support Division. The investigative Sections in the Division include Major Crime (e.g., Homicide and Assault/Robbery) Specialized Investigation (e.g., Sex Offences and Domestic/Violence/Criminal Harassment), Forensic Services (e.g., Forensic Identification, Financial Crime, Computer Investigative Support), and Drugs/Vice. The Division is under the command of a Deputy Chief Constable.

474 http://www.metrokc.gov/sheriff/news/green_river/

VPD Executive – The VPD Executive is the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constables, and is sometimes referred to as the VPD Senior Management Team outside the VPD. Inside the VPD, the “Senior Management Team” generally refers to both civilian managers and police managers (Inspector and above).

VPD Senior Management Team – See “*VPD Executive*” above.

VPD SOS – At the time the Missing Women investigation began, the Sexual Offence Squad (SOS) was within the Major Crime Section, but moved organizationally in 2000 to the new “Specialized Investigation Section”, which also includes the Domestic Violence & Criminal Harassment Unit and the Polygraph Unit. SOS investigates all sexual assaults and child abuse cases in the jurisdiction of the VPD which require more in-depth investigation than can be conducted by Patrol members.

Vice Unit/Squad - The VPD Vice Unit, under the Investigation Division umbrella, is responsible for investigations into prostitution related offences, pornography, and other forms of sexual exploitation in the jurisdiction of the VPD.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES/PROGRAMS AND CIVILIAN ORGANIZATIONS

BC High Risk Offenders Identification Program – High Risk Offenders Identification Program (HROIP) is a Provincial Criminal Justice Branch program that keeps detailed files on those criminals who have been identified as High Risk Offenders/Potential Violent Offenders. HROIP assists Crown Counsel with Dangerous Offender and Long Term Offender Applications, and general sentencing and

bail applications for high-risk offenders. HROIP also facilitates an information exchange between members of the BC justice community (police, parole, probation, etc.) through close contact with each organization and flags high-risk offenders in various computer systems, including CPIC.

Coroner’s Service – The Coroner’s Service of British Columbia is responsible for the investigation of all unnatural, sudden and unexpected, unexplained or unattended deaths. It makes recommendations to improve public safety and prevent death in similar circumstances.⁴⁷⁵

CPA The Confidence Group – Based in Richmond, BC, CPA is a private investigation company that briefly attempted to involve itself in the Missing Women investigation.

Crime Stoppers – Housed in the VPD, Greater Vancouver Crime Stoppers is a non-profit organization managed by a civilian Board of Directors working to help solve crime in partnership with citizens, the media and law enforcement agencies in the Lower Mainland. Crime Stoppers runs a 24/7 anonymous tip reporting line, and works with the media to conduct unsolved crime reenactments and publish mug shots and video surveillance footage. In July and August 1998, William Hiscox contacted Crime Stoppers and provided tips about Willy Pickton.

DEYAS – The Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society (DEYAS) delivers primary outreach services to the street-involved people of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, with a priority on youth. Services encompass a range of interventions, including crisis management, advocacy, service referrals, counselling, and risk-reduction initiatives. DEYAS publishes a weekly bad date sheet for sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁵ <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/coroners/>

⁴⁷⁶ <http://www.deyas.org/>

Downtown Eastside Safety Office /Neighbourhood Safety Office (NSO) – Operating from a storefront location in the Downtown Eastside, the NSO provides support to victims of crime, referrals to other services, and a venue for residents to raise their safety concerns. The NSO collects data and works with community groups to distribute information such as missing person alerts, predator alerts, and notices of suspicious or dangerous activity.⁴⁷⁷

First Nations Summit – Composed of a majority of First Nations and Tribal Councils in BC, the First Nations Summit provides a forum for First Nations in British Columbia to address issues related to Treaty negotiations as well as other issues of common concern.⁴⁷⁸

Indigent Burial Service – The British Columbia Ministry of Human Resources provides funeral services and burial or cremation if the deceased was indigent and funds are not available from the family or other sources.

MSP – The Government of British Columbia Medical Services Plan (MSP) insures medically required services provided by physicians and supplementary health care practitioners, laboratory services and diagnostic procedures.⁴⁷⁹

Odd Squad – A non-profit organization, the Odd Squad is made up of VPD officers who have walked the beat in the Downtown Eastside. In 1999, Odd Squad Productions created the award-winning documentary *Through a Blue Lens*, which profiled the unique relationship that the police have with Downtown Eastside addicts. The Odd Squad mission

is to provide education about issues that affect the community, including drug addiction, speeding and other issues.

Public Trustee – The Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia operates under provincial law to protect the legal rights and financial interests of children, to provide assistance to adults who need support for financial and personal decision making, and to administer the estates of deceased and missing persons where there is no one else able to do so.⁴⁸⁰

Vital Statistics – An agency in the British Columbia Ministry of Health Services, Vital Statistics registers vital events, including births, deaths and marriages that occur in British Columbia.

WISH – The Women’s Information Safe House (WISH), based in the Downtown Eastside, is a non-profit drop-in-centre that aims to increase the health, safety and well-being of women working in the sex trade in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. Staff and volunteers provide hot meals, make-up, hygiene items, clothing, and showering facilities and offer on-site nursing, referrals, transition programs, and mentoring and peer counseling, among other services.⁴⁸¹

477 <http://nso.vcn.bc.ca/home>

478 <http://www.fns.bc.ca/about/about.htm>

479 <http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/msp/>

480 <http://www.trustee.bc.ca/>

481 <http://www.wish-vancouver.net/services.php3>

KEY TERMS

Bad Date Sheet – As a means of helping to protect each other, sex trade workers will report abusive “johns” and share the information through compiled Bad Date Sheets. Details listed on the sheets can include: the date; the location the person was picked up / taken to; the date’s descriptors - height, weight, ethnic origin, hair/eye colour, hair style, facial hair, scars, marks and tattoos; vehicle descriptors, including license plate; whether the date paid, and how much; and a description of what transpired. DEYAS produces a weekly Bad Date Sheet for sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside.

BC AFIS – The British Columbia Automated Fingerprint Identification System (BC AFIS) automates the capture, search and storage of crime scene and inked fingerprints. Fingerprint images and characteristics are stored in a database which investigators can use to search for possible matches. Jointly operated by the VPD and the RCMP, the BC AFIS database serves British Columbia and parts of the Yukon. The system searches that do not result in a hit in the BC AFIS database are sent to the RCMP for search against the national file. Canadian AFIS, of which BC AFIS is a part, is a system of fingerprint workstations and databases across Canada that contains approximately 2,700,000 individuals and 70,000 unsolved latent fingerprints from nationwide crime scenes.⁴⁸²

CPIC – The Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) is a national data bank, run by the RCMP on behalf of all police agencies across Canada, to provide all Canadian law enforcement agencies with information on crimes and criminals. A CPIC search can provide information such as criminal records of

an adults or young offender; probation orders; and charges pending under provincial statutes. CPIC is also linked to criminal justice agencies, both nationally and internationally.

Criminal Profiler – Through the analysis of forensic evidence, crime scenes and criminal behavioural patterns, a criminal profiler deduces the characteristics – or profiles – of unknown serial criminals.

E&R – Evidence and Reports (E&R) is a relational database program developed by the RCMP that tracks events based on the concept of “tasking”. E&R gives investigators the ability to record, organize and retrieve information efficiently.⁴⁸³

FLIR – Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) camera technology records images of thermal energy or heat radiating from a building and can detect heat sources within a home depending on the location of the source and insulation.⁴⁸⁴ This technology is used by law enforcement agencies, including the RCMP, to conduct video surveillance.

Geographic Profiling – Developed by former VPD Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo, geographic profiling is an investigative technique designed to map unsolved serial violent crimes and highlight any pattern or criminal “signature” overlooked by detectives assigned to individual cases. This technique helps to manage large volumes of information that can be generated during major crime investigations. The process analyzes the locations connected to a series of crimes to determine the most probable area in which the offender lives.⁴⁸⁵

482 <http://www.peelpolice.on.ca/FIS/FIS-AFIS.html>

483 <http://www.rcmp-learning.org/bestdocs/english/fsd/misc/major.htm>

484 <http://www.jibc.bc.ca/police/policeTrainingBulletins/bulletin12/policebulletin12.htm>

485 <http://www.txstate.edu/gii/geographicprofiling.html>

High Track – Located in downtown Vancouver, the high track is a “stroll”, or area, where sex trade workers congregate. The high and low track strolls were named to reflect the characteristics of sex trade workers found at each stroll.

Joint Forces Operation (JFO) – A JFO team is a collaborative effort between two or police agencies in which each force contributes members from its own organization to work toward a common goal. In the case of the Missing Women investigation, the JFO, named Project Evenhanded, is comprised of members of the RCMP and the VPD.

Low Track – Located in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, the low track is a “stroll”, or area, where sex trade workers congregate. The high and low track strolls were named to reflect the characteristics of sex trade workers found at each stroll. The sex trade workers on the low track tend to be the most drug-addicted and vulnerable.

Lower Mainland – In British Columbia, the term “Lower Mainland” generally refers to the metropolitan area of Greater Vancouver, or the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), which is comprised of 21 municipalities, including the City of Vancouver.

Major Case Management Model – The Canadian Police College’s Major Case Management Model was developed in 1994 and is the accepted “best practice” for managing serious, or major, investigations. Major cases are defined as those cases that necessitate a police response that falls outside the parameters of normal, substantive policing services. Some examples include serial crimes against persons and high-profile single- or multi-victim homicides. The core of the MCM model is the “command triangle,” comprised of a Team Commander, Primary Investigator, and File Coordinator.

NCIC – The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) is a database of criminal justice information that is maintained by the FBI and is available 24/7 to federal, state and local law enforcement agencies across the United States. Canadian law enforcement agencies also have access to NCIC through the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) database.

Part VI Authorization – Part VI of the Criminal Code of Canada addresses the invasion of privacy and specifies the conditions under which peace officers may apply for judicial authorization to conduct electronic surveillance in order to intercept private communications and further a criminal investigation. Once granted a Part VI authorization, peace officers may intercept private communications following the specified content and limitation (type of communication, parties involved, timeframe, etc.) of the authorization provided by the judge.⁴⁸⁶

PIRS – The Police Information Retrieval System (PIRS) is an RCMP information management system that is used by the RCMP and other police agencies to track details about events, people, vehicles and property that stem from the calls for service that they receive each year.

PRIME BC – The Police Records Information Management Environment for British Columbia is a computer database that allows municipal police departments and RCMP detachments across the province share information about crime and criminals. In March 2001, the VPD was the first agency in BC to implement the system. In 2003 the Solicitor General introduced legislation ordering all police agencies throughout BC to implement PRIME.

SIUSS – The Special Investigation Unit Support System (SIUSS) was first developed by Criminal

486 <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-46/42458.html>

Investigative Technologies Inc. (CITI), and was marketed to the police community in 1988 as a comprehensive intelligence database and analytical tool used to support criminal investigations. SIUSS is analytical software that looks for links between pieces of information, making it easier to identify potential suspects when the volume of information is large. SIUSS was used by the MWRT and other units in the VPD Investigation Division, as well as the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit.

Stroll – An area where sex trade workers congregate.

Video Warrant – Under section 487.01(1) of the Criminal Code of Canada, a judge may issue to a peace officer a warrant to conduct covert video surveillance of individuals, provided that certain conditions apply. 487

487 <http://www.canlii.org/ca/sta/c-46/sec487.01.html>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: VPD EFFORTS TO SOLVE CRIMES AGAINST SEX TRADE WORKERS AND OTHER DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN

The following are examples of the investigations of murders and very serious assaults/sexual assaults against sex trade workers during the same general period as the Missing Women investigation.

1. BAKKER, DONALD (SERIAL RAPE AND TORTURE OF SEX TRADE WORKERS)

On December 2nd, 2003, Patrol officers responded to a report of screams coming from a park located at the north end of Main Street, commonly referred to as Crab Park. As officers arrived, a male was observed exiting the bush area of the park carrying a gym bag and directly behind him was a local sex trade worker in obvious distress. The male was taken into custody and his bag searched. In the bag officers located a video camera with an eight mm video tape.

The case was turned over to the Sexual Offence Squad. A review of the tape revealed a total of eight different women, all sex trade workers, all being sexually assaulted and/or degraded with extreme violence. Search warrants were obtained for the accused's vehicle and residence, which led to the recovery of several more similar video images. Well over 60 images were captured depicting at least 46 different Downtown Eastside sex trade workers.

A task force was immediately formed, drawing resources from several different investigative units, including the Sexual Offence Squad, the Vice Squad, and even the Financial Crime Section. The task force, led by Sergeant Tom McCluskie, was comprised of thirty-four full time detectives and was aimed at identifying and locating each and

every woman depicted on the videos. Sixteen counts of sexual assault with a weapon and unlawful confinement had been laid as of February 20th, 2004, with additional counts anticipated. (Images of children being abused were also observed, and the children were eventually located in Cambodia by SOS investigators. "Sex tourism" charges were also laid, the first in Canada since the legislation was passed in the late 1990s). Bakker eventually pleaded guilty and received a 10-year sentence.

What made this case extraordinary was that not a single one of the identified victims had reported the offence to the police.

2. MILJURE, RONALD (THE "WONKY EYED RAPIST")

In a period extending from March 2003 through to November 2003, several sex trade workers working along the Kingsway corridor were viciously attacked by an unknown suspect. The cases were similar to each other in many ways, but there were also a number of differences. The Sexual Offence Squad created a task force to conduct a coordinated investigation. The task force was comprised of six investigators with one civilian clerk and the investigation continued for a year.

In many of the attacks there was evidence to strongly suggest that the vehicle driven by the suspect was stolen. As a result, the task force examined hundreds of stolen vehicle reports, hundreds of suspicious person reports, and followed up on over two hundred tips.

Several planned media interviews were conducted and a number of meetings were held with other Lower Mainland police agencies. It was quickly determined that Vancouver was not the only jurisdiction in which attacks of this nature were occurring. Similar offences were identified in Burnaby and Surrey. With consent from these RCMP agencies, the Vancouver Police Sexual Offence Squad assumed control over these outside jurisdiction offences as well. In the end, diligent police work by the task force revealed a suspect who was later confirmed by DNA as the person responsible for the series of offences. Ronald Miljure was arrested and charged by the VPD with eight counts of sexual assault and unlawful confinement. On February 2nd, 2004 Miljure entered into a plea agreement and was sentenced to eight years in custody.

3. ————— – HISTORICAL SERIAL RAPIST CASE

In 1991 a sex trade worker was located in the alley of the 100 block East Hastings Street. She was unconscious, severely beaten and had been sexually assaulted. At the time of the offence there was a suspect description but the victim was unable to provide any details because she had been knocked unconscious. In 2003 this case was re-examined and exhibits seized in 1991 were forwarded to the crime lab for forensic analysis in an attempt to determine a DNA profile (which wasn't possible at the time of the offence).

A DNA profile was obtained and then forwarded to the provincial crime scene DNA data bank. The DNA profile from this case matched the DNA profile from a sexual assault case that had occurred on the Canadian Armed Forces Base in Esquimalt. VPD investigators were sent over to follow up with the military police and in doing so identified a possible

suspect. The VPD requested the services of the Victoria City Police surveillance unit to follow the suspect around the Greater Victoria area where the suspect lived. After nearly three weeks of surveillance, a discarded DNA sample was obtained, forwarded to the RCMP lab and a positive match determined. ——— of Montreal, Quebec, a recently retired Canadian Armed Forces Sergeant, was charged with the brutal beating and sexual assault of the Downtown Eastside sex trade worker in 1991.

4. SERIAL RAPIST OF SEX TRADE WORKERS WITH FIREARM

In the summer of 2002 a lone male was picking up sex trade workers along the Kingsway corridor, driving them to remote areas of both Vancouver and Burnaby then sexually assaulting them at gunpoint. There were five such attacks in just over three weeks.

In each case the description was the same, the vehicle description was the same and the M.O. was similar in that a firearm was used each time. The suspect would commonly tell the sex trade workers as they walked away from his vehicle that he was going to shoot them in the head and told them not to look.

The Sexual Offence Squad assigned four members full time to this investigation, who spent several weeks working six to seven days a week on the investigation and coordinating the Patrol Division's efforts to catch the suspect. With overwhelming support from the Patrol Division, a suspect was identified and captured at his residence in Burnaby. A several-hundred page Report to Crown Counsel was submitted that led to Crown approving five counts of sexual assault with a weapon.

Unfortunately, the victims of these sexual assaults recanted their stories and investigators determined the suspect paid them to do so, resulting in all charges being stayed.

5. THE MURDER OF APRIL REOCH

On Christmas morning of 2000, the body of a woman was found beside a dumpster at the rear of 40 East Street. Sergeant Geramy Field and four of her Homicide Squad detectives were called out to begin the investigation. The victim was identified as April Reoch, a drug addicted sex trade worker. Coincidentally, April Reoch had been befriended by police officers and was featured in the National Film Board documentary “Through a Blue Lens,” which featured the police officers of the “Odd Squad.” April was described by a reporter as “the sort of victim that critics have accused the police of treating like throwaways.”

Initially it appeared that April Reoch had overdosed and had then been dumped in the alley, as there was no obvious cause of death; however, the attending detectives were suspicious, and treated the event as a homicide, pursuing an aggressive investigation from the start. As a result of a canvas for witnesses, the homicide investigators identified a potential suspect within 24 hours, and determined the victim had been in the suspect’s room. The investigators isolated the room, and Forensic Identification Squad members spent several days conducting an intense examination for evidence, including going through several layers of the floor in a successful search for DNA.

There was still insufficient evidence for a charge, so an undercover operation was launched to obtain further evidence from the suspect, and this operation continued for several months. Two “Part VI” applications for electronic surveillance, each about 60 pages in length, were necessary as part of the undercover operation.

The investigation determined that the suspect had killed April Reoch in his room, then carried her down to the lane where he intended to throw her

in the dumpster to prevent or delay discovery of the body. He wasn’t able to accomplish this, so he left her on the ground where the body was soon discovered.

After a nine-month investigation, Ian Mathieson Rowe was arrested and charged with second-degree murder. The lead investigator, Detective Gary Vath, obtained a confession from Rowe, and he was subsequently convicted at trial.

6. THE MURDER OF LISA GRAVELINE

On May 1st, 2000, a commercial garbage collector picked up a dumpster in the 800 block Hawks in the Downtown Eastside, at the site of a building renovation. When he was lifting the dumpster with his truck, a duffel bag fell out with some hair protruding from it. The garbage collector phoned the police, who found in the duffel bag a murdered Downtown Eastside sex trade worker, 20-year-old Lisa Graveline.

An informant was eventually identified, and it was determined that Graveline had been stabbed to death in a drug house in the 600 block East Cordova. The detectives executed a search warrant and subsequently determined the identification of a witness. Subsequent surveillance resulted in the identification of five additional witnesses who were persuaded over time to provide evidence, and a suspect was identified. (All of the witnesses had addictions and were “NFA,” creating considerable challenges for the investigators.) Investigators conducted surveillance on the suspect, and he was eventually arrested, interviewed, and charged with murder (but later acquitted due to the lack of credibility given to the witnesses in court).

7. BEATING AND SEXUAL TORTURE OF A DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE SEX TRADE WORKER

In February 1999, a woman ran from a hotel at 106 W. Hastings and flagged down two police officers. She told them she had been “lured to the hotel, bound with duct tape, chained and severely beaten and sexually assaulted over a nine-hour period.”⁴⁸⁸ Police identified a suspect, Malcolm Bruce Leach, and a search of his room revealed photographs of other women bound with duct tape, chains, and other ligatures undergoing similar sadistic torture. An investigation identified five other victims of Leach, and he was successfully charged with nine offences relating to all six of the women. The police warned the public that Leach was extremely dangerous after a provincial court judge made a controversial decision to release Leach on bail.

8. VIOLENT ATTACK ON SEX TRADE WORKER BY DWIGHT ALLAN ———

In 1997, a woman hitchhiking was picked up at Main and Hastings and transported to a remote area of Vancouver by Swanson. There he violently sexually assaulted her, as a result of which she suffered severe fractures to her left leg. The subsequent investigation by Detective Constable Tom McCluskie resulted in the arrest, charge and conviction of Swanson. Prior to his conviction, police took the unusual step of making a public notification about him, after a controversial decision to release him on bail pending the trial.

This incident was the catalyst for an intense investigation into Swanson’s background. Detective Constable Tom McCluskie was loaned by the VPD to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit to work

exclusively on the Swanson case. His investigation revealed other violent sexual offences that had not been reported. As a result of this information and Swanson’s previous convictions for violent sex offences, the Crown successfully applied to have Swanson designated a “Dangerous Offender” and he received an indeterminate sentence.

9. ——— – VIOLENT ASSAULT OF SEX TRADE WORKER

In August of 1996, ——— picked up a sex trade worker near Kingsway and took her to 23rd and Main. They negotiated a price for sex, then he suddenly struck her in the head with an electrical insulator with sufficient force to partially sever her left ear, then began smashing her head on the ground as she tried to escape. A passerby intervened and the victim was able to escape. Police arrested ——— and charged him with multiple offences, including attempted murder and aggravated sexual assault. In his car they found a packsack containing a T-shirt, plastic bag, latex gloves, a brown cotton glove, a roll of fibre tape, a length of white cord, a galvanized metal pipe, glue, a knife with snap-off blades, a couple of screwdrivers, and plastic fasteners, which the Crown and police described as “slipcuffs.” Police also found a large plastic sheet in the trunk of the car. In a controversial decision, the Court convicted ——— of the assault, but not the attempted murder or any sexual offence. ——— had recently served an eight-year sentence for sexual attacks on four women in Toronto and Vancouver.

488 Ian Mulgrew, “Tougher action needed on violence against women: Police were angry when a suspect charged with nine offences involving six different women was released from jail,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, April 6, 1999, p. B1.

10. THE MURDER OF MICHELLE FIDDICK

On July 21st, 1996, the charred body of a woman was found on a bank of the Fraser River at the west foot of W. 75th Avenue. No identification was found but items nearby suggested the victim could have been a sex trade worker. Initial investigation indicated that the body had been brought to the scene and set on fire there, using some sort of accelerant. There were no witnesses and no leads. With the assistance of the forensic pathologist, Homicide Squad detectives were able to put together a basic physical description of the victim, and provided this and a piece of fabric from the victim's dress that had survived the fire to the media in hopes of identifying the victim.

Further investigation led to the identification and arrest of two suspects, and the location of a crime scene. The two suspects, _____ and _____, were determined to have picked up the victim off an East End Vancouver street after a day of drinking. Wilson began stabbing the victim in the back seat of the car as they drove over the Knight Road Bridge. When they arrived at a yard on Garden City Way in Richmond, Wilson dragged Fiddick out of the car and slit her throat. They then drove to a gas station with the victim's body in the trunk, purchased some gasoline, then drove to the riverbank and set the body on fire.

_____ cooperated with investigators, but the only evidence against _____ was _____'s statement, and it appeared _____ would be released on bail as a result, putting other sex trade workers at risk. The key to developing further evidence lay in DNA analysis of 18 exhibits, which was routinely taking two years at the RCMP lab at that time when DNA analysis was relatively new. The only other facility was a private lab in Seattle, which offered ten-day day turnaround

for a price of \$18,000.00 U.S., a huge cost to the VPD for a single case. VPD management decided that based on the danger that _____ presented to other prostitutes should he be released that the money simply had to be paid. The analysis was done, _____ remained in custody and was subsequently convicted of killing Fiddick.

11. THE MURDER OF SHERYL ANN JOE

In 1992, the body of Sheryl Ann Joe was found near the waterfront in the Downtown Eastside. Joe was a sex trade worker who had been seen working in the area earlier the night before. She had been bludgeoned to death and her breasts and vagina had been cut out and taken away by her killer. Information from a railway police officer who had noticed a van parked earlier at the spot where Joe's body was found led Detectives Rick Crook and Al Cattley to the East End Vancouver home of a junior hockey coach. A van parked in the driveway had been cleaned but small traces of blood were found in the door wells. This led to a more extensive search, recovery of additional evidence, and the laying of a charge of 1st degree murder against Brian William Frederick Allender. Allender was subsequently convicted and is currently serving a life sentence.

At a memorial service, members of Joe's family presented Detectives Crook and Cattley with a single feather as a token of thanks for their efforts and their compassion.

12. THE KILLING OF VANESSA LEE BUCKNER

In 1987 VPD staff noticed a spike in cases involving women, mainly Aboriginal, from the Downtown Eastside who had died with unusually high blood

alcohol levels. No foul play was suspected in any of the cases. However, analysis of the seemingly unconnected cases determined that a common thread was the presence of a barber named ———. Through extensive police surveillance, it was determined that ——— would pick the women up when they were already intoxicated then virtually force large amounts of vodka down their throats. It was a very difficult case to work as in many cases police had to break the surveillance and intervene in order to save a victim's life. Eventually, sufficient evidence was gathered to enable the laying of a charge of 1st degree murder in the death of Vanessa Lee Buckner. ——— was believed to have been involved in several other similar deaths and was eventually convicted of manslaughter.

APPENDIX B: MWRT BIOGRAPHIES

In this appendix, the skills and experience of the MWRT members are summarized. In considering this information, it is important to recognize that there had never been an investigation in Vancouver like the Missing Women case. Not only was it a serial murder case, but there were no bodies, no witnesses, no body dump sites, and no forensic evidence. In most cases, the Missing Women were reported long after they had gone missing, and the information about the date, time and location they had last been seen was vague. These circumstances created challenges very few investigators, even in very large police departments, have an opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge to face. So it is that context that the skills and experience of the investigators in the MWRT must be considered.

Detective Constable Lori Shenher

Detective Constable Shenher had seven years' police experience by the time of her July 1998 assignment to the Missing Persons Unit. She had spent several years in the Downtown Eastside, both on a foot beat, and in a patrol car. As well, during that time, for six months she was assigned to a prostitution unit and had been an undercover operator on "John sting" operations. She had also worked in the Communications Centre, Patrol in the west side of the city, and in her most recent assignment, had spent two and a half years in the "Strike Force," a covert surveillance and arrest team focused on active criminals. This is high intensity work and required an extremely high work ethic. In addition to her basic training at the Police Academy, Detective Constable Shenher completed the Level II (advanced) Investigators Program at the Justice Institute while she was assigned to the Missing Women investigation.

Detective Constable Shenher was well qualified for her role as a Missing Persons Unit investigator. Although she did not have the experience or training

necessary to take on the role of primary investigator or file coordinator on a major file, particularly a serial murder file, given the circumstances, her performance was remarkable and commendable.

Sergeant Geramy Field

Sergeant Field was a very experienced police officer with 23 years' service by the time she was assigned as a Homicide Squad sergeant with administrative responsibilities for the Missing Persons Unit in 1998. She was held in very high regard in the VPD.

In her varied career, she had worked several years in Patrol, then was the first female police dogmaster in Canada when she was assigned there in 1978. She had another assignment in Patrol, then was promoted to Detective and transferred to the former Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit from 1984 to 1986. Following that assignment, she worked as a Drug Squad detective for several years, a Patrol supervisor, and a detective in the Internal Investigation Section, then was promoted to Sergeant. From 1993 to 1998, she spent five years as a sergeant in charge of the Sexual Offence Squad, and had supervised the investigation of literally thousands of sexual offences.

In 1997, Sergeant Field was the team leader for "Project Hope," a highly successful major investigation into the sexual assault and attempted murder of a mentally ill woman who was brutally beaten and sexually assaulted by two stranger attackers. Supported by highly experienced detectives, she led a well organized investigation that employed wiretaps, a media strategy, surveillance, a listening device, and coordinated interviews and interrogations. The eventual result was that both offenders pleaded guilty and received multi-year sentences. Sergeant Field and her investigative team received a Chief Constable's Commendation for their exceptional work. Sergeant Field later received an

individual Chief Constable's Commendation for her outstanding work in the Sexual Offence Squad over the five years she was assigned there.

After five years in the Sexual Offence Squad, Sergeant Field was successful in a competition for the Homicide Squad and was transferred there in 1998.

Sergeant Field had completed courses relevant to her assignment in the MWRT such as the Senior Police Administration Program at the Canadian Police College, and various investigative courses at the JIBC and BCIT, including "Forensic Behavioral Science." (Sergeant Field did not receive the Major Case Management program until 2000, but she had some experience working in the Major Case Management model during Project Hope when she solicited advice from a team member who had received the training.)

Sergeant Field was a highly respected, highly experienced police officer with a strong background supervising serious investigations when she became involved in the Missing Women investigation. While she herself identified that she would have been better prepared for the Missing Women investigation had she received major case management training prior to her involvement, the problems in the investigation were mainly not attributable to her lack of skill, ability and dedication, as described in the analysis.

Detective Ron Lepine

Detective Lepine was a highly experienced detective by the time he became involved in the Missing Women investigation in 1999. He had worked in Patrol, the Dog Squad, and in the mid-1980s worked "Car 86," a partnership of a police officer and a social worker to deal with family violence and child protection issues. He was promoted to Detective and worked for over three years as a detective in the Vice Squad in the late 1980s, and so was very familiar with the issues around sex trade workers. He

developed great empathy for the sex trade workers, and when he left the Vice Squad, he was approached by a young sex trade worker's social worker for help in finding the girl a stable home. As a result, he and his wife took in the girl as a foster daughter.

After leaving Vice, Detective Lepine went to the Sexual Offence Squad where he stayed for seven years, investigating hundreds of cases. Notably, he was the lead investigator into a serial rape case where the victims were sex trade workers, and successfully concluded the case with charges. He was also the lead investigator in the "Project Hope" file described above.

After leaving the Sexual Offence Squad in 1997, Detective Lepine transferred to the Homicide Squad, where he remained until he retired in July of 2000.

Detective Lepine had completed a number of relevant courses prior to his assignment to the MWRT, including the Major Crimes Investigative Techniques program. With his extensive investigative experience in Vice, SOS, and Homicide, Detective Lepine was ideally suited as an investigator for the Missing Women investigation. His work in the MWRT, particularly around the Pickton investigation in the summer of the 1999, was exemplary. But by his own admission, Detective Lepine had no interest in the supervisory aspects necessary in the role of primary investigator, much preferring to be a full time field investigator. His reluctance to accept a supervisory role, along with his responsibilities both in the MWRT and the Homicide Squad, left Detective Constable Shenher as the de facto primary investigator as well as the file coordinator.

Detective Constable Mark Chernoff

Prior to joining the VPD, Detective Constable Chernoff was a civilian employee of the provincial Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit, working as

a wiretap “interceptor.” He joined the VPD in 1984, and by the time he became involved in the Missing Women investigation, he had 15 years’ police experience. In that time he had worked several assignments in Patrol, including plainclothes work; the Strike Force; the Emergency Response Team; and the Training Unit. While he did not have extensive investigative experience when he joined the Homicide Squad, he had considerable and varied policing experience and a strong work ethic, and was partnered with the very experienced Detective Lepine. He was an excellent choice as an investigator in the MWRT. His work on the Pickton investigation in the summer of 1999 was exemplary.

Constable Dave Dickson

Constable Dickson joined the VPD in 1980 and spent his entire career working in the East End or the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. He built up an extraordinary relationship with the community in the Downtown Eastside, and has been frequently cited in the media and by advocacy groups as an example of the kind of police officer the community needs. He provided his pager number to anyone in the Downtown Eastside and committed to returning their calls 24 hours a day. One example of his connection to the community was that in the 1994, the Inquiry into Policing in British Columbia (the Oppal Commission) specifically addressed the community’s concern about the previous transfer of Constable Dickson from his assignment in the Native Indian Liaison Unit, where he had been working.⁴⁸⁹ Even assigning Constable Dickson to the MWRT and taking him away from his work in the Downtown Eastside spawned great concern in the community, to the point that an agreement was reached that he would only work half-time in the MWRT to avoid community concern.

Although Constable Dickson’s experience in conducting extensive follow-up investigations was

limited prior to joining the MWRT half-time, he had considerable operational experience, and an invaluable relationship with sex trade workers, advocacy groups, Aboriginals and others in the Downtown Eastside. This experience was important for the MWRT and his talents complemented other skill sets in the team.

Detective Constable Alex Clarke

Detective Constable Clarke had seven years’ policing experience when she joined the MWRT. She had spent almost her entire service in “District 2” which includes the Downtown Eastside, during which time she had been loaned to a “General Investigation Team” and conducted follow-up investigative work because of a back injury that prevented her from working in Patrol. During her time in District 2, she had worked in a police community office and had extensive contacts with sex trade workers in the area. She had also worked in a woman’s prison where she came to know many sex trade workers before joining the VPD.

Detective Constable Clarke was selected to conduct searches of various records, such as the Glenhaven burial records search, and other possible sources of information, which required patience and dedication. Because of her back injury, it was never envisioned that she would be doing field work such as investigating suspects. Her experience, great enthusiasm, and willingness to work in a team made her a good choice for the MWRT. She demonstrated this with, for example, her tenacity and success in tracking down one of the Missing Women, Karen Smith, in Edmonton (and in her later work reviewing historical sex assault files with Constable Paul Verral for Project Evenhanded).

489 Government of British Columbia (1994). *Policing in British Columbia Commission of Inquiry Final Report*, p. G11.

Detective Constable James

Detective Constable James joined the VPD in October 1984. He worked in Patrol in nine different squads in several areas of the City before joining the newly formed Drug Enforcement and Education Team in 1998, where he was active in street level drug enforcement. He had completed a surveillance course, a drug investigator's course, and a basic investigator's course, as well as a forensic interviewing program before joining the MWRT. Detective Constable James had a reputation in the VPD that was not flattering, in terms of his policing style, but he also had considerable street-level experience, and was known to be tenacious, which resulted in him making positive contributions to several high profile cases, including helping to solve the historical murder of an — girl in —. His assignment to the MWRT was to prove highly problematic.

Detective Constable Cruz

Detective Constable Cruz joined the VPD in October 1984. He worked in several Patrol Squads, and was also assigned for several months to the "North Crime Unit," a plainclothes squad focused on property crime, for several months. He had no relevant investigative training, other than his basic recruit training at the Police Academy. He had been partners with Detective Constable James previous to the MWRT assignment. Like Detective Constable James, he had considerable street policing experience, and was involved in helping to solve the Toronto murder case described above, but his assignment to the MWRT was also to prove problematic.

Ms. Gray

Gray was a Clerk Typist in the Robbery Squad when she was loaned to the MWRT. She was qualified to perform routine clerical functions, including data entry, but had no experience around intelligence analysis. This would compound problems with the SIUSS database during the investigation, and contributed to her leaving the VPD on stress leave before resigning and going to another employer.

APPENDIX C: VPD MISSING PERSONS POLICIES

VPD Missing Persons Policy: 1998 MISSING PERSONS/CHILDREN

- (1) When the Communications Centre notifies a NCO of a missing persons report that requires immediate investigation, the NCO shall:
 - (a) obtain all pertinent information from the Communications Centre;
 - (b) have the Communications Centre assign a field unit;
 - (c) meet the assigned member(s) at the reportee's location;
 - (d) fully assess the situation;
 - (e) when appropriate, supervise a thorough search of the missing person's residence, other premises and the surrounding area;
 - (f) ensure that upon the completion of their investigation, the assigned member(s) submit a detailed VPD 19 to the Missing Persons Detective, Violent Crime Section; and
 - (g) submit a VPD 19 to the Missing Persons Detective in the Violent Crime Section outlining his/her actions.
- (2) When deciding whether or not to continue the initial investigation, the field NCO shall:
 - (a) consult the Duty Officer; and
 - (b) consider all pertinent factors, such as age, mental and physical condition of the victim, weather, length of absence and time of day.
- (3) When the investigation continues beyond the initial stage, the NCO shall:
 - (a) notify the Violent Crime Section if there are suspicious circumstances or signs of foul play;
 - (b) notify the Duty Officer and keep him/her informed of the progress of the search;
 - (c) if necessary, broaden the investigation by assigning additional members;
 - (d) brief members as they are assigned to the investigation;
 - (e) consider using civilian resources such as volunteers and commercial radio station broadcasts;
 - (f) set up an operational command post at the scene and coordinate all aspects of the investigation; and
 - (g) maintain a log of all action taken (e.g., areas searched, names of searchers, search teams, times).
- (4) All missing persons reports, including the VPD 565 Missing Persons Report and the VPD 19 Miscellaneous and Supplementary Report, shall be forwarded to the Missing Persons Detective, Violent Crime Section.
- 5) When a missing person is located and the investigation is concluded, the member shall forward the information on a VPD 19 to the Missing Persons Detective, Violent Crime Section.

Amendment to VPD Missing Persons Policy, May 2001 (underlined portions are new amendments)

34.06 Missing Persons/Children

Policy

The Vancouver Police Department recognizes the need to investigate missing persons reports in a timely fashion. This is particularly important when children, elderly persons or persons with mental/physical handicaps are involved. To this end, effort shall be made to avoid delay and to facilitate the investigation by avoiding jurisdictional disputes. When such disputes occur, the safety and welfare of the missing person shall be paramount.

Procedure

1. A Missing Person Report shall normally be taken after the person has been missing for a period of 24 hours unless immediate investigation is necessary because of special circumstances, such as, but not limited to:
 - a. Age of missing person (child or senior citizen);
 - b. Mental or physical state of missing person that may place them or others at risk; and
 - c. Suspicious circumstances or signs of foul play.
2. The police agency in which the missing person normally resides shall generally be responsible for the investigation, including entering or amending CPIC records. This does not prevent a police agency from requesting assistance from other agencies or jurisdictions that may be linked to the missing person's movements.
3. If the missing person was last seen (i.e. confirmed by an identifiable witness) in another jurisdiction, the police agency having jurisdiction where the last sighting took place is responsible for the investigation. However, if that jurisdiction fails to investigate, members are again advised that the safety and welfare of the missing person shall be the paramount consideration.
4. When a missing person report is taken over the telephone by ECOMM:
 - a. The call taker shall complete a VPD 565 Missing Person Report;
 - b. The ECOMM CPIC operator shall fax a copy of the VPD 565 to Vancouver CPIC operator for entry;
 - c. When a missing person has been located, the call taker or dispatcher shall memo the original CAD incident with the "found" information including:
 - date, time and location of finding;
 - person reporting; and
 - the PIN number of any police members involved.This CAD information will then be routed to the 'MISS' terminal (VPD Missing Persons Unit).
 - d. The Missing Persons Unit shall be responsible for updating the investigative files from the CAD information and removing the CPIC entries.
5. When ECOMM notifies a Supervisor of a missing person report that requires immediate investigation, the Supervisor shall:
 - a. Obtain all pertinent information from ECOMM;
 - b. Have ECOMM assign a field unit;
 - c. Meet the assigned member(s) at the reportee's location;
 - d. Fully assess the situation;
 - e. When appropriate, supervise a thorough search of the missing person's residence, other premises and the surrounding area;
 - f. Ensure that the assigned members submit a detailed GO report. The report will be auto-routed by the system to the Missing Persons Investigator, Major Crime Section; and
 - g. Submit a supplement to the GO report
6. When deciding whether or not to continue the initial investigation, the Field Supervisor shall:
 - a. Consult the Duty Officer; and
 - b. Consider all pertinent factors, such as age, mental and physical condition of the victim, weather, length of absence and time of day.

7. When the investigation continues beyond the initial stage, the Supervisor shall:
 - a. Notify the Major Crime Section if there are suspicious circumstances or signs of foul play;
 - b. Notify the Duty Officer and submit regular updates on the progress of the search;
 - c. If necessary, broaden the investigation by assigning additional members;
 - d. Brief members as they are assigned to the investigation;
 - e. Consider using civilian resources such as volunteers and commercial radio station broadcasts;
 - f. Set up an operational command post at the scene and co-ordinate all aspects of the investigation; and
 - g. Maintain a log of all action taken (e.g., areas searched, names of searchers, search teams, times). The log may be maintained as a supplement to the GO report.
8. All reports, including the VPD 565 (Missing Persons Report) shall be forwarded to the Missing Persons Investigator, Major Crime Section.
9. When a missing person is located and the investigation is concluded, the member shall submit the information on a supplement to the original GO report. The supplement will be auto-routed by the system to the Missing Persons Investigator, Major Crime Section.
(Amended 2001.05.24)

APPENDIX D: VPD MISSING PERSONS AUDIT

VPD MISSING PERSONS AUDIT (2004) MANDATE AND SCOPE

Methodology:

- Establishing the scope and mandate of the audit;
- Entrance conference(s);
- Collecting all applicable policies and procedures (VPD, CPIC, E-Comm etc.);
- Collecting missing person's procedures from comparable jurisdictions;
- Examining sample VPD investigative files and the investigative steps taken to determine compliance to the VPD MP reporting process;
- Operational audit interviews of staff involved throughout the process;
- A CPIC 'audit' to determine how many of our outstanding missing persons are in fact still missing;
- A PRIME 'audit' to determine how many of our outstanding missing persons files are documented;
- A paper file review to determine accuracy and completeness of file documentation (could a follow-up investigator, perhaps years later, pick this up and determine what has been done and 'pick up the pieces?');
- Transaction testing;
- Analysis of the findings;
- Creation of the report;

- Recommendations;
- Exit conference (presentation of the report and recommendations).

Questions to be answered by this review:

1. A review of available training and transfer of skills to new investigators (ie: Do we train our sworn and civilian staff adequately?)
2. Are available investigative, public and technical resources used to the best advantage to clear Missing Person file (especially chronic runaways, wanderers)?
3. Is there sufficient staff assigned to this function (especially police investigators)?
4. The relationship of Missing Persons Unit to MCS
5. Is a VPD Missing Person file adequately investigated?
6. Is a VPD Missing Person file adequately documented?
7. Is VPD able to adequately distinguish possible foul play (especially serial crimes) from the current Missing Person file investigation process?
8. Is there a consistent method to assign degree of risk to files?
9. Selection criteria for MPU staff
10. Level of harmonization of policies of other agencies (E-Comm) and jurisdictions (RCMP and other municipal departments).
11. Unanticipated issues that may arise that are appropriate for audit review.



APPENDIX E: MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION KEY EVENTS TIMELINE 1997 TO FEBRUARY 2002

THE MISSING WOMEN INVESTIGATION KEY EVENT TIMELINE: 1997 – 2002

JANUARY 1997

- January 23, 1997 – Tanya Holyk reported missing

FEBRUARY 1997

- Mid-February, 1997 – First Nations Summit submits a list of 55 female alleged homicide victims. Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit (PUHU) increased the list to 71 names unaccounted for women from the Downtown Eastside.

MARCH 1997

- Early March 1997 – VPD Constable Dave Dickson investigates the 71 women on the list, accounts for all but 2 women, suspects foul play for these two.
- March 11, 1997 – Stephanie Lane reported missing.
- March 23, 1997 – Robert “Willie” Pickton violently assaults sex trade worker [Anderson](#). Charges were laid but subsequently stayed.

JUNE 1997

- June 28, 1997 – Downtown Eastside sex trade worker Janet Gail Henry reported missing.

JULY 1997

- July 4, 1997 – Olivia William reported missing.

JANUARY 1998

- January 29, 1998 – Kerri Koski reported missing.

MARCH 1998

- March 3, 1998 – Inga Hall reported missing.
- March 21, 1998 – Sherry Irving reported missing to the Pemberton RCMP. (Not reported to the VPD.)
- March 1998 – Ada Prevost reported missing. (She was found in — in 1999.)

APRIL 1998

- April 2, 1998 – Constable Dickson raised concerns about two missing women, Janet Henry and Ada Prevost.
- April 14, 1998 – Sarah de Vries went missing.
- April 30, 1998 – Cindy Beck reported missing.

JULY 1998

- July 1998 – Detective Constable Lori Shenher assigned to actively investigate the Missing Women from the Downtown Eastside.
- July 27, 1998 – William Hiscox anonymously phoned Crime Stoppers and Wayne Leng’s 1-800 tip line about Pickton.

AUGUST 1998

- August 5, 1998 – Sheila Egan reported missing, last seen July 1998.
- August 6, 1998 – Hiscox called Crime Stoppers again with more information about Willie Pickton.

- August 1998 – Missing Women “Working Group” formed by VPD Inspector Gary Greer and VPD Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo.
 - August 18, 1998 – Shenher met with Corporal Connor of the Port Coquitlam RCMP to discuss the Pickton tips since Pickton lived in Port Coquitlam.
 - August 18, 1998 – Shenher interviewed Wayne Leng regarding Sarah de Vries and his tip line caller.
 - August 19, 1998 – Leng gave Shenher a recording of conversation with the tipster. Shenher phoned the number of the tipster but did not make contact.
 - August 19, 1998 – Connor entered Pickton on CPIC in the observation category, advised Sergeant Blizard of PUHU, and requested intelligence about Pickton from CLEU.
 - August 21, 1998 – Shenher interviewed [Anderson](#) and found her to be credible and very frightened of Pickton.
 - August 26, 1998 – Connor received a Pickton intelligence package from CLEU.
 - August 27, 1998 – Constable Dickson submitted a list of 35 women reported missing between the years 1975 to 1998 who were still missing.
 - August 27, 1998 – Shenher submitted an overview of her investigation of the Missing Women to that date.
- SEPTEMBER 1998**
- September 1, 1998 – Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness updated Deputy Chief Constable Blythe about the Missing Women investigation and advised that all sections in his Division would cooperate.
 - September 2, 1998 – Shenher spoke with Hiscox, who mentioned “[Quinn](#)” (later identified as [Quinn](#)).
 - September 4, 1998 – Marnie Frey reported missing.
 - September 4, 1998 – Missing Women Working Group held its initial meeting.
 - September 4, 1998 – Shenher left a message for Hiscox wanting to arrange to meet him and “[Quinn](#).”
 - September 5, 1998 – Hiscox paged Shenher and when she returned his call Hiscox agreed to a meeting on September 8, for which he failed to show. Another meeting was arranged for September 16.
 - September 8, 1998 – Connor noted that the [Anderson](#) incident was Pickton’s only entry in ViCLAS.
 - September 9, 1998 – Shenher advised Connor of information about Pickton seeking to “finish off” [Anderson](#).
 - September 14, 1998 – Inspector Biddlecombe expressed concerns about the Working Group and a proposed press release to Inspector Greer. Press release never issued.
 - September 16, 1998 – Missing Women Working

Group met. Present were Inspector Biddlecombe, Constable Dickson, Detective Inspector Rossmo, Inspector Greer, and Detective Constable Shenher.

- September 16, 1998 – Hiscox again failed to meet with Shenher.
- September 18, 1998 – The *Vancouver Sun* story on the Working Group ⁴⁹⁰ quoted Biddlecombe saying he wasn't ruling out the possibility of a serial killer, but that there was no evidence of one.
- September 18, 1998 – Shenher met Hiscox, confirmed that Hiscox was the Crime Stoppers and Wayne Leng tipster and found he was credible. Hiscox believed Pickton to be a killer.
- September 22, 1998 – Shenher briefed Connor on Hiscox. Connor advised [Anderson](#) that Pickton wanted to “finish her off.”
- September 22, 1998 – Connor reviewed the [Anderson](#) incident, researched [Quinn](#).
- September 23, 1998 – Helen Hallmark reported missing, last seen October 1997.
- September 24, 1998 – Connor requested surveillance of Pickton by RCMP's “Special “O” Section.

- September 24, 1998 – Sergeant Field, who had administrative responsibility for the Missing Women investigation, was assigned on loan to CLEU.

OCTOBER 1998

- October 13, 1998 – Shenher interviewed Hiscox again.
- October 14, 1998 – Shenher gave Connor a copy of her contact log with Hiscox.
- October 15, 1998 – Shenher and Connor met Hiscox. Connor had Hiscox go through his information in detail.
- October 30, 1998 – Jacqueline Murdock reported missing, last seen January 1997.

NOVEMBER 1998

- November 3, 1998 – Connor requested aerial surveillance of the Pickton property by the RCMP's Air Services Division.
- November 4, 1998 – Shenher advised Connor that the VPD, as per Staff Sergeant Giles, was willing to provide financial resources to support the RCMP's investigation of Pickton.
- November 5, 1998 – Dickson again expressed concern about “the growing number of women missing from the Downtown Eastside.”

⁴⁹⁰ Lindsay Kines, “Missing women cases probed: Vancouver police will review 40 unsolved cases dating from 1971, but they doubt a serial killer was involved in any disappearances,” in the *Vancouver Sun*, September 18, 1998, p. B1.

- Fall of 1998 – Shenher worked on source information related to Pickton and pursued a variety of unrelated investigative strategies regarding the Missing Women.

DECEMBER 1998

- December 1998 – Shenher learned of the 1995 “Valley Murders”, which she and other investigators came to believe were related to the Missing Women.
- December 11, 1998 – Hiscox called Shenher and advised he hadn’t seen Quinn, but he still wanted to help and would get back in touch with her if police wanted it.
- December 6, 1998 – Angela Jardine reported missing, last seen November 1998.
- December 21, 1998 – Michelle Gurney reported missing, last seen December 1998.

JANUARY 1999

- January 11, 1999 – Marcella Creison reported missing, last seen December 1998.

FEBRUARY 1999

- February 9, 1999 – Shenher gave a public presentation on the Missing Women investigation at the Carnegie Centre in the Downtown Eastside.
- February 10, 1999 – Detective Inspector Rossmo provided Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness his first analysis of missing persons from the Downtown Eastside.

- February 10, 1999 – Shenher attempted to contact Hiscox and learned he’d recently been charged with assaulting his ex-wife and ordered to undergo a 30-day psychiatric assessment.

- February 10, 1999 – Connor, Shenher and other Pickton investigators attempted to involve the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit, which declined assistance. Coquitlam and VPD investigators agreed to canvas Downtown Eastside sex trade workers with Pickton’s photo.

- February 13, 1999 – Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness requested from VPD managers the implications of the increase in missing females in the Downtown Eastside.

- Mid-February 1999 – Shenher’s investigation became more suspect-based: she worked on Pickton, and other suspects she thought capable of being responsible for the Missing Women.

- February 17, 1999 – Shenher completed the sex trade worker canvas using VPD members, as Coquitlam members were diverted to another priority; none of the 130 sex trade workers admitted knowing Pickton.

- February 18, 1999 – Shenher submitted a report on the Missing Women investigation to Chief Constable Chambers.

- February 22, 1999 – Jaqueline McDonnell reported missing, last seen January 1999.

- February 25, 1999 – Detective Constable Shenher left a message for Hiscox with his father in Chilliwack, but there was no call back.

MARCH 1999

- March 3, 1999 – Media speculation prompted VPD spokesperson to respond that “there is a cause for real concern...[but] there is not a single piece of evidence to suggest a serial killer.”
- March 8, 1999 – Sergeant Field returned to the Missing Women investigation and learned the investigators believed there was a serial killer.
- March 10, 1999 – Shenher obtained a new address for Hiscox and wrote him a letter asking him to call her.
- March 22, 1999 – New Westminster Police Service checked Pickton on the sex trade worker “stroll” on 12th Street in the company of a female friend. Connor and Shenher updated.
- March 27, 1999 – A New Westminster sex trade worker was violently attacked and strangled, but was able to escape. The New Westminster police’s prime suspect was Pickton but the victim failed to identify him.
- March 1999 – Shenher confirmed that Ada Prevost, reported missing in March 1998, was alive and living in —.
- March 30, 1999 – Friends and relatives of the Missing Women, as well as politicians, wrote to the Police Board applying pressure for a task force and/or a reward.
- March 31, 1999 – A Province story described the frustration of Wayne Leng regarding his feeling that there should be a \$100,000 reward for information about the Missing Women.

APRIL 1999

- April 4, 1999 – Sex trade worker Linda Jean Coombes was reported missing (later identified as an overdose victim).
- April 4, 1999 – Karen Anne Smith was reported missing (later determined to have died of medical causes).
- April 6, 1999 – The Vancouver Sun reported that Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh agreed that the Provincial Government contribute to a reward to help solve the disappearance of 21 women from the Downtown Eastside if the VPD asked for it.
- April 6, 1999 – Hiscox phoned Shenher, advised he was still seeing “those people” and was willing to meet Shenher at his home.
- April 9, 1999 – Shenher briefed the Attorney General and others on the Missing Women investigation.
- April 9, 1999 – Constable Dave Dickson was provided to assist in the Missing Women investigation.
- April 9, 1999 – An ABPnews.com article reported that Mayor Owen was resistant to a reward for information about the Missing Women.
- April 12, 1999 – The Vancouver Sun published a lengthy Op/Ed piece about the Missing Women by Maggie de Vries in which she continued pressure to set up a task force and to offer a reward. She was complimentary of the efforts of Shenher and her then-partner, Detective Howlett.

- April 13, 1999 – Connor arranged a multi-jurisdictional meeting to discuss Pickton.
- April 16, 1999 – Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness advised the Missing Women investigators that a Police Board meeting to discuss the Missing Women case would be held on April 21.
- April 19, 1999 – Shenher and Howlett met Hiscox who said he had no new information about Pickton or Quinn, and that he hadn't seen Quinn in a while, but had spoken to her on the phone a few weeks previously.
- April 21, 1999 – Connor and Constable Greig from the Coquitlam RCMP hosted a multi-jurisdictional meeting about Pickton. It was agreed that Pickton's picture would be shown to sex trade workers in each jurisdiction; surveillance of Pickton should be conducted; and, Pickton's niece should be approached to gather information.
- April 21, 1999 – Sergeant Field was directed to prepare a report for the Police Board on the Missing Women investigation, which she completed the next day.
- April 26, 1999 – The Vancouver Sun reported that Mayor Owen, responding to 'an outpouring of "great concern" from the public,' would recommend a \$100,000 reward in the Missing Women investigation.
- April 28, 1999 – The Vancouver Police Board held a meeting on the progress of the Missing Women investigation and resolved to seek a reward but turned down a request for a task force.
- April 28, 1999 – Hiscox contacted Shenher and left a phone number of a friend who would forward any messages to Hiscox.
- April 29, 1999 – Sergeant Field noted that "information control is becoming difficult," and advised that misinformation was being distributed through a website, possibly set up by Wayne Leng.

MAY 1999

- May 3, 1999 – Connor noted that aerial photographs of Pickton's property had been obtained to establish any possible burial sites.
- May 7, 1999 – An RCMP Special "O" Unit had been conducting surveillance of Pickton since April 30th, as time permitted, but nothing of value had been observed.
- May 11, 1999 – Connor noted that Pickton surveillance revealed him going to/from work, but little else. Unless further information developed, the surveillance would be discontinued.
- May 11, 1999 – Shenher continued to pursue a wide variety of other investigative strategies.
- May 12, 1999 – Shenher attended the first memorial service for the Missing Women.
- May 13, 1999 – The "Odd Squad" proposed to create a documentary on the Missing Women, but the project failed to come to fruition due to a lack of support.
- May 13, 1999 – Shenher submitted a plan to move from an individual file focus to a suspect-based one and requested additional resources.

- May 14, 1999 – Shenher submitted a report further setting out resource needs and said she was concerned that “without proper resources in place to handle this information and to properly investigate these tips, valuable intelligence could be lost or not dealt with in a timely manner.”
- May 18, 1999 – Sergeant Field submitted Shenher’s reports to Inspector Biddlecombe and advised that the investigators had “exhausted all victim-based enquiries” and that they continued to consult internally and with RCMP.
- May 18, 1999 – The Vancouver Sun quoted Detective Inspector Rossmo as saying that there was no conclusive evidence of a single predator, “but we have to consider that as a definite possibility.”
- May 18, 1999 – Andrea Borhaven was reported missing, last seen March, 1997.
- May 18, 1999 – Shenher asked PUHU for copies of several of their sex trade workers homicide files, advising that Vancouver had 28 street-involved women missing, and that the cases were possibly related.
- May 19, 1999 – Inspector Biddlecombe supported the requests from Constable Shenher and Field for two additional investigators, an “on loan” analyst, and equipment.
- May 19, 1999 – Sergeant Field hosted a multi-jurisdictional brainstorming session regarding the Missing Women case, to canvas for investigative suggestions.
- May 20, 1999 – The Missing Women Review Team was created.
- May 21, 1999 – Field and Shenher were guests of Peter Warren on the “Bill Good Show” on CKNW to talk about the Missing Women case.
- May 25, 1999 – Detective Inspector Rossmo completed a statistical analysis of the Missing Women and found that “the single serial murder (sic) hypothesis (which would include partner or team killers) was the most likely explanation for the majority of these incidents.”
- May 27, 1999 – Rossmo submitted his analysis to Deputy Chief Constable McGuinness, Inspector Biddlecombe, and Inspector Beach.
- May 30, 1999 – Shenher left a message for Hiscox to call her but it appears they didn’t make contact again.

JUNE 1999

- June 1, 1999 – Acting Deputy Chief Constable Doern requesting that Inspector Biddlecombe and Sergeant Field see him about Detective Inspector Rossmo’s report submitted May 27th and its impact on the investigation.
- June 1, 1999 – A New Westminster sex trade worker identified Pickton as the man who had tried to pick her up and had threatened to assault her if she refused. The New Westminster Police advised Connor.
- June 1, 1999 – MWRT investigators checked public records for links to the Missing Women and checked for links with known but unsolved homicides in North Vancouver, Aggasiz, Richmond and Pemberton.

- June 3, 1999 – Shenher requested from Patrol members any information on prostitution-related assaults, violent “Johns,” etc., to assist in the investigation.
- June 4, 1999 – A Vancouver Sun article described that police were consulting with other police agencies, including the Green River killer investigators, and police in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
- June 8, 1999 – MWRT members distributed a questionnaire to about 60 sex trade workers at WISH.
- June 9, 1999 – CPA Confidence Group Enterprises, a private investigation firm, joined the hunt for the Missing Women with its eyes on the \$100,000 reward, and said it would go ahead whether police welcomed its efforts or not.
- June 14, 1999 – Sergeant Field identified the “absolutely essential” need for a full-time police analyst to manage the MWRT’s analytical database, SIUSS.
- June 15, 1999 – Missing Women investigators met with Spokane homicide investigators to learn from their task force into prostitute murders.
- June 16, 1999 – Inspector Biddlecombe advised that a SUISS analyst was not available as a permanent assignment.
- June 16, 1999 – Staff Sergeant Keith Davidson, an RCMP criminal profiler, completed and submitted to Sergeant Field a “Case Assessment” of the Missing Women investigation.
- June 22, 1999 – Shenher requesting six additional investigators to handle the new files and 140 pieces of information that required follow-up.
- June 23, 1999 – Sergeant Field proposed an off-site Joint Forces Operation, and noted that Inspector Biddlecombe would speak to Superintendent Bass of the RCMP.
- June 23, 1999 – A Missing Women segment was taped for “America’s Most Wanted” with John Walsh.
- June 24, 1999 – The MWRT met with many family members of the Missing Women to discuss obtaining familial DNA, and to go over the investigative efforts to date.
- June 24, 1999 – Inspector Biddlecombe, and Staff Sergeants Matthews and Giles, met with representatives of CPA who offered to assist the Missing Women investigation with dog teams and a dive team.

JULY 1999

- July 5, 1999 – Constables Alex Clarke, James and Cruz were added to the MWRT. Constable Dickson would be shared “50/50” with the Downtown Eastside Neighborhood Safety Office.
- July 6, 1999 – Julie Young was reported missing.
- July 16, 1999 – Coquitlam RCMP passed on a new Pickton informant (Thomas) to the MWRT. Coupled with the other information received previously, Thomas’s new information was the catalyst for an intensive investigation into Pickton.

- July 19, 1999 – Chernoff interviewed Thomas and confirmed that his information referred to Pickton. And concerned Pickton killing a woman in his barn, witnessed by Lynn Ellingsen, who reported it to Thomas.
- July 20, 1999 – Connor and Chernoff discussed the Anderson investigation, Hiscox and Thomas’s information, and other Pickton information.
- July 22, 1999 – Chernoff sought information regarding a recent police check of Pickton in New Westminster.
- July 23, 1999 – Thomas contacted Chernoff and they arranged to meet on July 26.
- July 26, 1999 – Chernoff met Thomas and was provided additional information about Pickton and a woman named “Lynn”.
- July 26, 1999 – Chernoff briefed Sergeant Field, requested a meeting with Inspector Biddlecombe, and called Detective Lepine who, though on vacation, said he was coming back to work.
- July 27, 1999 – The VPD released its Missing Women reward poster, with photos of 31 women who had gone missing from the Downtown Eastside since 1978.
- July 28, 1999 – Chernoff met with Field, Lepine, Shenher, and Biddlecombe to discuss Thomas’s information.
- July 28, 1999 – Missing Woman Linda Coombes possibly identified by the MWRT as an overdose victim.
- July 29, 1999 – MWRT investigators held a meeting to discuss the progress of the case.
- July 29, 1999 – Chernoff and Lepine met with Coquitlam RCMP members to discuss Thomas’s information about Pickton. The group discussed possible strategies to implement as part of a joint investigation.
- July 29, 1999 – Clarke began searching the provincial government’s indigent burial service records at Glenhaven Memorial Chapel.
- July 30, 1999 – Thomas missed the scheduled meeting with Chernoff and Lepine.
- July 30, 1999 – Connor requested RCMP Special “O” surveillance of Pickton and research into electronic surveillance with RCMP Special “I”. Special “O” was busy but VPD’s “Strike Force” was available and assisted.
- July 30, 1999 – Chernoff and Lepine met with New Westminster Police and spoke to Homicide Sergeant Colin Burrows about the activities of Pickton in New Westminster.
- July 30, 1999 – Chernoff and Lepine met with Thomas for third debrief. Thomas provided extensive details about the Pickton property and his discussions with “Lynn”.
- July 31, 1999 – Chernoff and Lepine met with Connor and Justasen to review the latest interview with Thomas and to discuss possible tactics.

- July 31, 1999 – America’s Most Wanted episode on the Missing Women case was broadcast.
- July 31, 1999 – The Vancouver Sun ran a lengthy article about the suspect in the Aggasiz/Mission “Valley” murders, Tremblay.
- August 4, 1999 – Chernoff updated Connor regarding the latest meeting with Thomas.
- August 5, 1999 – The Pickton investigators met at the Coquitlam RCMP office to discuss the Pickton investigation and next steps regarding informants.

AUGUST 1999

- August 3, 1999 – Laura Mah reported missing, last seen August 1985.
- August 3, 1999 – Coquitlam RCMP held briefing on the Pickton investigation during which it was agreed that an investigative team would be formed and an operational plan put in place.
- August 4, 1999 – Pickton investigators met at the Coquitlam RCMP office to discuss investigative tactics, e.g., surveillance hours of operation on the Pickton property, and an undercover or police approach on Lynn Ellingsen.
- August 4, 1999 – Connor met with Crown Counsel Peder Gulbransen to discuss the possibility of installing a covert camera to observe Pickton’s “comings and goings.”
- August 4, 1999 – Chernoff and Lepine met with Thomas for a fourth debrief during which he provided more details about Pickton, Ellingsen and Stevens.
- August 4, 1999 – Chernoff and Lepine presented Thomas with the possibility of becoming a “Police Agent” in the investigation, and Thomas agreed.
- August 5, 1999 – Chernoff and Lepine attempted a taped interview with Thomas; however, his physical condition was of concern, as he appeared to be falling asleep during the interview. Thomas would need to be re-interviewed.
- August 6, 1999 – Burnaby RCMP referred a new informant, Wood, with information about Pickton to the Coquitlam RCMP.
- August 6, 1999 – Pickton was observed picking up a female child while under surveillance. Further investigation revealed that the child’s mother knew Pickton and was not at all concerned.
- August 7, 1999 – Connor and Constable Marenychuk interviewed Wood, the reportee who had attended the Burnaby RCMP. Wood reported that Ellingsen had also told her of witnessing Pickton murder a woman in his barn, and stated she was willing to be a witness.
- August 9, 1999 – Pickton investigators met at the Coquitlam RCMP office to review the investigation, including Wood’s information, and develop an investigative strategy.

- August 10, 1999 – Chernoff and Lepine met Thomas for his 6th debrief which was a two-hour audio taped interview of Thomas in which Thomas again provided the information about Ellingsen witnessing Pickton murder a woman in his barn.
- August 10, 1999 – Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit investigators interviewed Lynn Ellingsen who denied seeing, or ever telling anyone about seeing, a woman strung up in Pickton’s barn.
- August 10, 1999 – Inspector Biddlecombe documented the status of the Missing Women investigation, noting that the Pickton investigation was active.
- August 11, 1999 – Pickton investigators met at the Coquitlam RCMP office to review the interviews of Thomas and Ellingsen. PUHU investigators and Coquitlam RCMP/VPD MWRT investigators disagreed on Ellingsen’s and Thomas’s credibility.
- August 12, 1999 – Connor interviewed Stevens, who indicated he was aware of the Ellingsen information, and Quinn, who assured Connor that Pickton was “gentle and wouldn’t be responsible for violence towards prostitutes.”
- August 13, 1999 – Connor followed up on Ellingsen’s information regarding the butchered woman (could a pig be mistaken for a woman?)
- August 14, 1999 – Thomas advised Chernoff that Stevens had contacted him and advised that Pickton wasn’t concerned and that the police wouldn’t find anything on his property.
- August 16, 1999 – Connor continued following up on the issue of whether Ellingsen may have mistaken a pig for a human.
- August 17, 1999 – Pickton investigators met at the Coquitlam RCMP office to discuss the Pickton file. It was decided at this meeting that Stevens and Ellingsen would be re-interviewed when possible.
- August 17, 1999 – Chernoff and Lepine again met with Thomas, who said Pickton reportedly discussed with Stevens that Pickton might be “over his head” as a result of the police investigation and that he should perhaps leave the country and go to the Bahamas.
- August 24, 1999 – Sergeant Pollock advised Chernoff that Corporal Connor had been promoted out of the Pickton investigation, and the information obtained in the interview of Stevens was inconsistent with Thomas’s statement regarding Stevens’s knowledge of the homicide at Pickton’s residence.
- August 24, 1999 – Constable York was assigned to be the new file coordinator for the Pickton investigation, replacing Corporal Connor.
- August 24, 1999 – Thomas contacted Chernoff and said that Pickton offered him a job working at P & B Demolition.
- August 25, 1999 – Thomas failed to show for a pre-arranged meeting with Chernoff and Lepine or respond to their pages.

- August 26, 1999 – Ellingsen interviewed, denied any knowledge of the homicide in Pickton’s barn, and denied telling anybody about the incident as described by [Thomas](#) and [Wood](#).

SEPTEMBER 1999

- September 1, 1999 – RCMP investigators attended Pickton’s residence but they weren’t able to determine his location. Pickton later phoned Sergeant Pollock and agreed to speak to him the next day to “clear the air.”
- September 2, 1999 – Pickton told Pollock he wasn’t available and wanted to meet with the RCMP that night. Sergeant Pollock wasn’t available so plans were made to schedule the interview the following week.
- September 22, 1999 – Dave Pickton convinced [York](#) to wait for rainy weather to interview Robert Pickton because he and his brother needed to take advantage of the dry weather for work.
- September 17, 1999 – MWRT investigators concluded that the unidentified female who died in 1994 was Linda Coombes and notified her mother by phone in Ottawa that day.
- September 19, 1999 – Missing Women investigators held a meeting to review the investigation and noted the challenges being presented by the Pickton investigation in Coquitlam, i.e., that the Unsolved Homicide Unit “Don’t agree with Coquitlam on the veracity of [Ellingsen’s] story.”

OCTOBER 1999

- October 5, 1999 – MWRT investigators held another meeting and various investigative strategies were discussed.
- October 22, 1999 – Sergeant Field submitted a status report on the Missing Women investigation and suggested that a full-time sergeant was required.
- October 27, 1999 – MWRT members met at Surrey RCMP offices to discuss the case with RCMP officers.

NOVEMBER 1999

- November 1999 – VPD publicly acknowledged that there were too many missing women for it to be coincidence and acknowledged that there could be one or more serial killers. [McCartney](#) had been eliminated by DNA from the Valley Murders.

DECEMBER 1999

- December 9, 1999 – Sergeant Field’s update on the Missing Women investigation indicated that there had been no missing women reported since January 1999 and the RCMP’s prime suspect in the Fraser Valley murders – [Tremblay](#) – had been eliminated by DNA.
- December 7, 1999 – Shenher requested a full-time sergeant for the MWRT but was later turned down.
- December 14, 1999 – Wendy Crawford reported missing, last seen December 1999.

- December 15, 1999 – the MWRT located missing women — and — in Ontario through Ministry of Health records.
- December 21, 1999 – MWRT investigators met with Coroner Larry Campbell to discuss access problems regarding medical records.
- December 29, 1999 –York noted that the Pickton file was still under investigation; however, it had not been actively investigated for 2 months.

JANUARY 2000

- January 10, 2000 – Sergeant Field’s status report noted problems with data analysis and resources.
- January 13, 2000 – Sergeant Field met again with RCMP profilers during which the profilers proposed a Joint Forces Operation Task Force to investigate “a significant number of homicides involving prostitutes.”
- January 19, 2000 – The Coquitlam RCMP interviewed Pickton, but the interview was not well done and was unproductive.
- January 20, 2000 – Sergeant Field outlined a proposal to conduct a formal review of files involving persons of interest such as Pickton and others to examine unsolved prostitute homicides throughout the province.

FEBRUARY 2000

- February 10, 2000 – RCMP Profilers hosted a meeting with MWRT members and advised that they would seek funding and resources from the RCMP or the Attorney General to re-open the Pickton file and form a Joint Task Force.
- February 10, 2000 – Coquitlam RCMP held a meeting to assign tasks pursuant to a “file review” of the Pickton investigation by Corporal David McCartney. Tasks such as taking aerial photos of the Pickton property, preparing an affidavit for an “intercept” of Pickton’s phones, and checking into the feasibility of obtaining a video warrant for Pickton’s pig barn were assigned.
- February 11, 2000 – Shenher’s status report stated there was “no shortage” of other persons of interest, but nothing concrete to link them to the disappearances of the Missing Women.
- February 14, 2000 – Corporal McCartney, Corporal Filer, Sergeant Davidson, Constable. St. Mars and Corporal Kingsbury met to discuss the Pickton file. Of this meeting, Corporal McCartney later wrote that “we were just getting ready to push on the file.” But when an unrelated murder occurred on February 19th in Coquitlam, “everything went into the dripper. From here on out, we had a string of attempted murders...”
- February 14, 2000 – The Police Board was advised of the Missing Women investigation status and the pending reduction of the MWRT’s resources.

MARCH 2000

- March 14, 2000 – The MWRT lost Detective Constable Clarke and —, who both returned to previous assignments.
- March 18, 2000 – The second annual memorial service was held for the Missing Women.
- March 30, 2000 – Jennifer Furminger reported missing, last seen December 1999.

APRIL 2000

- April 10, 2000 – Sergeant Field's status report to the Police Board noted that the MWRT had been reduced by one investigator, and that the two Homicide investigators, had returned to regular duties but would continue to assist on an "as needed" basis.
- April 5 and 12, 2000 – James and Cruz showed suspect photos – including Pickton's – to several sex trade workers and their notes indicate three different sex trade workers selected Pickton's photo. James and Cruz did not report on this information to Shenher or anyone else in the MWRT.
- April 14, 2000 – Corporal D. Thompson of Coquitlam RCMP took a series of aerial photos of the Pickton Dominion Street property at the request of Constable York.
- April 18, 2000 – Staff Sergeant Zalys (i/c plainclothes investigators in Coquitlam) met with Constable York re: Pickton and was advised she hadn't been able to conduct any investigation since the January interview because of another homicide case. He advised her he had spoken to

Inspector Moulton and no further resources were forthcoming so they were to "do the best we can when we can. He would deal with matters down the road should they arise."

- April 21, 2000 – James and Cruz, with the assistance of the — police, executed an arrest warrant and a search warrant on McCartney in —. McCartney was subsequently convicted of multiple offences against sex trade workers and sentenced to five years plus time served.
- April 25, 2000 – Brenda Wolfe reported missing, last seen February 1999.

MAY 2000

- May 9, 2000 – Sergeant Field advised Inspector Spencer that the VPD investigation would be concluded and passed on to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit or a task force to continue the investigation.
- May 9, 2000 – Because of performance issues, Detective Constables Cruz and James were advised to finish up their existing files and that they would be leaving the MWRT. With their removal from the team, the capacity to focus on suspects was virtually eliminated.
- May 10, 2000 – Shenher's status report briefly summarized Thomas's information on Pickton, said that the Coquitlam RCMP and the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit had worked extensively on the file, and cautioned that there was more follow up to be done with Pickton.

JULY 2000

- July 7, 2000 – Shenher requested a computer software utility to allow “data mining” of information not then compatible with SIUSS, such as DEYAS bad date sheets and traffic ticket data.
- July 25, 2000 – Shenher noted that SIUSS had been at a “standstill all week,” that the import feature wasn’t working, and that no one was trained to use the new Oracle-based system that had been imposed.
- July of 2000 – Shenher was burned out and requested to leave the Missing Persons Unit.

AUGUST 2000

- August 10, 2000 – Acting Deputy Chief Spencer made a formal request to the RCMP to conduct a review of the VPD Missing Women investigation.

SEPTEMBER 2000

- September 28, 2000 – Jennifer Furminger was added to the list of Missing Women and several others who had been reported missing did not fit the profile or timeline of the women who had gone missing from 1995 to 1999 so would be deleted from the list.
- September 29, 2000 – Field advised that a lack of investigative staffing, and a lack of trained SIUSS data entry and analysis personnel resulted in a “setback in our plans to have the RCMP assist with the Missing Persons Review Team investigation.”

OCTOBER 2000

- October 10, 2000 – MWRT members attended a presentation of the Spokane Homicide Task Force following the arrest of Robert Lee Yates, Jr., the previous April for a series of murders of sex trade workers.
- October 11, 2000 – Field and Shenher accompanied Detective Constable McCluskie and the former wife of a “person of interest” to the Missing Women investigation to several locations in the Fraser Valley.
- October 12, 2000 – Field requested Detective Inspector Rossmo’s assistance to further review the available material/data to determine if there was any new theory or conclusion that could be drawn relating to the Missing Women.
- October 2000 – Shenher appeared with Maggie de Vries on the televised Vickie Gabereau Show.
- October 20, 2000 – Shenher advised family members of the Missing Women that she would be leaving the Missing Women investigation.
- October 17, 2000 – Field advised that their recently arrived SIUSS analyst, Constable Jarvis, would have to leave the next day for medical reasons and would be absent for three to five weeks.
- October 19, 2000 – Jennie Lynn Furminger was added to the Missing Women list, bringing it to 28.

NOVEMBER 2000

- November 7, 2000 – Shenher submitted a summary of the Missing Women investigation to date and described problems caused by an unexpected upgrade to SIUSS.
- November 21, 2000 – Field advised that BC homicide investigators agreed that a serial killer was likely responsible for the Missing Women and that a joint VPD/RCMP investigation was the only way to investigate and conclude the files properly.
- November 21, 2000 – The RCMP agreed a joint forces operation (a “JFO”) led by the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit was required.
- November 21, 2000 – Pickton was excluded by DNA from being a suspect in the Valley Murders and the Coquitlam RCMP investigation into Robert Pickton ended.

DECEMBER 2000

- Beginning of December, 2000 – Pursuant to her request in the summer, Shenher was transferred from the Missing Persons Unit (and the Missing Women investigation) to the VPD’s Diversity Relations Unit.
- December 2000 – Detective Inspector Rossmo, unable to negotiate a mutually agreeable renewal to his five-year contract, resigned from the VPD and initiated unsuccessful legal proceedings for wrongful dismissal.
- December 11, 2000 – Dawn Crey reported missing, last seen November 2000.

- December 12, 2000 – RCMP JFO created and immediate goals and strategies were defined by Field and then-Sergeant Don Adam, the Special Projects Investigator from the RCMP’s Serious Crimes Unit.
- Christmas Day, 2000 – Deborah Jones reported missing, last seen December 2000.

JANUARY 2001

- January 8, 2001 – Cynthia Feliks reported missing, last seen December 1997.
- January 17, 2001 – The newly formed Joint Force Operation task force (Project Evenhanded) met.
- January 25, 2001 – Field provided a comprehensive report summarizing the status of the MWRT, the progress made in creating a JFO with the RCMP, and the “many problems” in the VPD investigation.
- January 31, 2001 – JFO members met again and continued to review the investigation and further their strategy, which centred around solving historical assaults against sex trade workers to identify potential suspects for the Missing Women.

FEBRUARY 2001

- February 9, 2001 – Detective Constable Alex Clarke and Constable Paul Verral of the VPD were assigned to review historical cases of assaults against sex trade workers that might include exhibits suitable for re-submission to the RCMP Crime Lab.

- February 9, 2001 – The *Province* reported that the VPD was about to add Dawn Theresa Crey and two more unnamed women to the list of Missing Women.
- February 26, 2001 – Detectives Jim McKnight and Phil Little, VPD Homicide detectives, were assigned to the JFO.
- February 27, 2001 – Sergeants Field and Adam discussed their next steps for the JFO.

MARCH 2001

- March 6, 2001 – Field reported that a number of issues were being examined and predicated on the belief that the Valley Murders were related to the Missing Women cases, noting there was DNA available from those crime scenes.
- March 14, 2001 – Georgina Papin reported missing, last seen March 1999.
- March 20, 2001 – Sergeant Adam proposed an operational mandate setting out that the RCMP and the VPD “jointly resolved to...investigate the Missing Street Trade Workers.”
- March 21, 2001 – Yvonne Boen reported missing, last seen March 2001.

APRIL 2001

- April 2001 – Work developing the JFO continued.
- April 2001 – The VPD Missing Persons Unit advised the JFO that several more Downtown Eastside sex trade workers were missing, despite significant efforts made to locate them: Dawn Crey, Deborah Jones, and Brenda Wolfe.

MAY 2001

- May 1, 2001 – The RCMP released a media “briefing note” regarding the creation of a “Joint Forces File Review of Street Trade Workers.”
- 16, 2001 – Elsie Sebastian reported missing, last seen June 1992.
- May 16, 2001 – Field briefed the VPD’s Senior Management Team and advised it was generally suspected that the Missing Women were the work of a serial killer.
- May 31, 2001 – Patricia Johnson reported missing, last seen March 2001.
- End of May 2001 – A formal Memorandum of Understanding between the RCMP and the VPD had been developed which set out the investigative strategy for the JFO and resource commitments from each agency.

JUNE 2001

- June 8, 2001 – Angela Joesbury reported missing, last seen June 2001.
- June 16, 2001 – Heather Chinnock reported missing (in Surrey), last seen April 2001.
- June 20, 2001 – Clarke and Verral completed the initial phase of their review of historical cases searching for DNA evidence.
- June 2001 – Former Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo's lawsuit against the VPD commenced in BC Supreme Court.
- June 25, 2001 – The third memorial ceremony for the Missing Women was held at Crab Park in the Downtown Eastside.

JULY 2001

- July 3, 2001 – The VPD provided an inconsistent message about the serial killer theory to the sister of one of the Missing Women: “we believe that it is possible but as yet there is no evidence that supports or refutes this theory.”

AUGUST 2001

- 14, 2001 – A search on CPIC for all Missing Women in the province had revealed up to 22 more Missing Women unknown to the JFO.
- August 22, 2001, Sereena Abotsway reported missing, last seen August 2001.

- August 23, 2001 – Brian Oger, a VPD civilian data entry employee who had been assigned to a SIUSS data entry function for the JFO, submitted a critical analysis of the Missing Women investigation.
- August 30, 2001 – Staff Sergeant Adam cited problems in the VPD investigation, provided details on the progress of the JFO investigation to date with recommendations to address problems identified, and advised that women continued to go missing.

SEPTEMBER 2001

- September 7, 2001 – Al Boyd summarized the Missing Women investigation to date and requested more resources for the JFO, which were approved. Don Adam was later to say, the VPD “provided everything requested, forthwith.”
- September 10, 2001 – Deputy Chief Constable Unger requested that the Executive of the VPD approach the City Manager/Council to seek funding so that the VPD staff assigned to the JFO could be replaced.
- September 21, 2001 – The Vancouver Sun published a major piece on the Missing Women investigation.
- September 23, 2001 – A *Province* article reported that the new VPD spokesperson warned that “it's premature to conclude a serial killer is running loose, terrorizing hookers and junkies.”

- September 24, 2001 – The Vancouver Sun published another extensive article and quoted family and friends of the Missing Women who were critical of the VPD investigation, and also the RCMP – VPD investigation, for lack of results.
- September 26, 2001 – The Vancouver Sun published a major story focusing on police investigators' belief in the need for regionalization, major case management training, and a provincial standard for major case management computer systems that allow easy sharing of information, and that the impetus must come from the provincial government.

OCTOBER 2001

- October 3, 2001 – VPD members Constable Paul Verral, Detective Constable Daryl Hetherington, and Acting Sergeant Don Jarvis all assigned to the JFO, with two civilian members committed as well.
- October 10, 2001 – Pickton was considered a possible suspect in an August 3, 2001 violent sexual assault and was eventually excluded on the basis of the victim's failure to identify him from a photographic line-up.
- October 14, 2001 – JFO investigators met 35-40 family members of the Missing Women to brief them on the status of the investigation.
- October 24, 2001 – JFO determined it needed to create a "here and now" team to deal with the new missing sex trade workers.

NOVEMBER 2001

- November 5, 2001 – Members of the JFO travelled to Spokane and met with investigators assigned to the Green River Task Force.
- November 6, 2001 – JFO investigators met with members of the Spokane Sheriff's Department who were investigating the murders of sex trade workers found on Mount Spokane.
- November 14, 2001 – The JFO proposed fielding a team of 12 officers in the Downtown Eastside which was to be comprised of six VPD and six RCMP members, for the purpose of conducting semi-covert intelligence gathering work in the interests of preventing more sex trade workers from going missing, and to hopefully identify a suspect.
- November 23, 2001 – The Vancouver City Manager declined to provide additional funding to replace the VPD resources committed to the JFO project.
- November 25, 2001 – Members of the JFO again met with the families of the Missing Women at a four-hour information meeting in Surrey to outline the status of the investigation.
- November 29, 2001 – Heather Bottomley reported missing, last seen April 2001.
- November 30, 2001 – Mona Wilson reported missing, last seen November 2001.
- November 29, 2001 – The Vancouver Sun published an article describing the request for funding for the staff and resources already committed to the JFO.

DECEMBER 2001

- December 4, 2001 – The JFO released a new Missing Women poster with the photos of an additional 18 Missing Women; in addition, the media release advised that the “review team” then consisted of 16 investigators (seven from the VPD and nine from the RCMP) and five support staff (two VPD and three RCMP).
- December 13, 2001 – Dianne Rock reported missing, last seen October 2001.

JANUARY 2002

- January 15, 2002 – The JFO issued a press release advising that the names of another five women were being added to the Missing Women list.

FEBRUARY 2002

- February 4, 2002 – RCMP Constable Nathan Wells obtained a search warrant in relation to information he received that Pickton was in possession of an illegal firearm. Because Pickton was entered on CPIC as a person of interest to the JFO, Wells contacted the JFO to advise and to invite them to attend while he executed the search warrant the next day.
- February 5, 2002 – JFO investigators attended as observers, although they stayed off the Pickton property while the warrant was being executed. During the search for the firearm, the investigators also observed other items, including a piece of identification and an inhaler belonging to two of the Missing Women. As a result, the JFO investigators were called on to the property. The weapons search was suspended and the property was sealed off.
- February 6, 2002 – JFO investigators executed a warrant to search for evidence related to the murder of Missing Women. This investigation turned into the most massive serial murder investigation in Canadian history.

APPENDIX F: EVENHANDED ORGANIZATION CHARTS PRE- AND POST-FEBRUARY 2002

APPENDIX G: PROJECT EVENHANDED ORGANIZATION CHARTS

LARGE FORMAT GRAPHICS/SCHEMATICS (ON FILE)

MISSING WOMEN BY DATE REPORTED MISSING

1978	1983	1984	1985	1986	1989	1990	1991	1992
<div>O'DARE, LILLIAN JAN 8, 1944</div> <div>78-048509</div> <div>SEPT 12, 1978</div> <div>SEPT 12, 1978</div> <div>*VANC000000-00</div>	<div>GUNO, REBECCA MAY 25, 1960</div> <div>83-040409</div> <div>JUNE 22, 1983</div> <div>SEPT 16, 1983</div> <div>*VANC000000-00</div>	<div>RAIL, SHERRY SEPT 8, 1956</div> <div>86-96208</div> <div>NOV 21, 1983</div> <div>JAN 30, 1984</div> <div>*VANC000000-00</div>	<div>DONAHUE, SHERYL JULY 4, 1963</div> <div>85-024993</div> <div>MAY 30, 1985</div> <div>AUG 31, 1985</div> <div>*VICT000000-00</div>	<div>ALLENBACH, ELAINE APRIL 26, 1965</div> <div>86-18762 and 86-188228</div> <div>MAR 13, 1986</div> <div>APRIL 10, 1986</div> <div>*VANC000000-00 & SEATTLE-00</div>	<div>WILLIAMS, TARESSA FEB 14, 1973</div> <div>99-057168 and 98-06471, 98-01321</div> <div>JULY 1 1988</div> <div>JAN 17, 1989</div> <div>* VANC000000-00 & BUREAU-BACK-STOP</div>	<div>SOET, INGRID JULY 13, 1959</div> <div>90-301877</div> <div>AUG 28, 1989</div> <div>DEC 21, 1990</div> <div>*VANC000000-00</div>	<div>CLARK, NANCY JULY 29, 1966</div> <div>91-030048</div> <div>AUG 22, 1991</div> <div>AUG 23, 1991</div> <div>*VICT000000-00</div>	<div>WATTELY, KATHLEEN OCT 20, 1959</div> <div>92-172368</div> <div>JUNE 18, 1992</div> <div>JUNE 29, 1992</div> <div>*VANC000000-00</div>

PROTECTED "B"

Prepared by: S/Cst Ryan Prox #2148
Vancouver Police Department
Criminal Intelligence Section
March 29th, 2004
Missing Women Report Date Timeline
Chart Contains Privileged Solicitor Information

LEGEND

•

POLICE AGENCY REPORTED TO

MISSING WOMEN

VPD reported file

Reported to agency other than VPD

1994

MINER, LEIGH
MAR 24, 1958

94-049611

DEC 12, 1993

FEB 24, 1994

• UNCOVERED PD

1995

SPENCE, DOROTHY
SEPT 6, 1962

95-290934

AUG 6, 1995

OCT 30, 1995

• UNCOVERED PD

1996

GRANT, LINDA
MAR 18, 1953

96-00698

OCT 1, 1984

FEB 02, 1996

• PORT WOODY PD

1997

HOLYK, TANYA
DEC 8, 1975

97-019529

OCT 29, 1996

JAN 23, 1997

• UNCOVERED PD

1998

KOSKI, KERRI
AUG 14, 1958

98-022017

JAN 7, 1998

JAN 29, 1998

• UNCOVERED PD

1999

CRESOL, MARCELLA
JUNE 2, 1978

99-008101

DEC 27, 1998

JAN 11, 1999

• UNCOVERED PD

2000

FURMINGER, JENNIFER
OCT 22, 1971

00-69916

DEC 27, 1999

MAR 30, 2000

• UNCOVERED PD

2001

FELIX, CYNTHIA
DEC 12, 1954

01-634

NOV 26, 1997

JAN 8, 2001

• NEW HAVEN/STORR PD

2002

DREW, TIFFANY
JAN 31, 1975

2002-033219

MAR 10, 2000

FEB 08, 2002

• UNCOVERED PD

ARSENault, ANGELA
MAR 20, 1977

94-47424

AUG 19, 1994

AUG 29, 1994

• BURBURY RCMP

KNIGHT, CATHERINE
MAY 5, 1966

95-303014

JAN 1, 1995

NOV 11, 1995

• UNCOVERED PD

GONZALEZ, CATHERINE
SEPT 22, 1968

96-034215

MAR 1, 1995

FEB 7, 1996

• UNCOVERED PD

LANE, STEPHANIE
MAR 28, 1976

97-61038

JAN 10, 1997

MAR 11, 1997

• UNCOVERED PD

HALL, INGA
JAN 25, 1952

98-47919

FEB 26, 1998

MAR 03, 1998

• UNCOVERED PD

MCDONELL, JACQUELINE
JAN 6, 1976

99-039699

JAN 6, 1999

FEB 22, 1999

• UNCOVERED PD

WOLFE, BRENDA
OCT 20, 1968

00-90848

FEB 17, 1999

APRIL 25, 2000

• UNCOVERED PD

PAPPL, GEORGINA
MAR 11, 1964

01-52564 and
01-02788

MAR 2, 1999

MAR 14, 2001

• UNCOVERED PD & WESSEX RCMP

LALIBERTE, MARIE
JULY 11, 1949

2002-054237

JAN 1, 1997

MAR 08, 2002

• UNCOVERED PD

MELNICK, DHANA
AUG 26, 1974

95-348364

DEC 27, 1995

DEC 29, 1995

• UNCOVERED PD

YOUNG, FRANCES
JAN 7, 1960

96-091205

APRIL 6, 1996

APRIL 9, 1996

• UNCOVERED PD

LITTLE, RICHARD "KELLIE"
MAR 12, 1969

97-1351

APRIL 23, 1997

APRIL 30, 1997

• AGASSIS RCMP

RYVING, SHERRY
MAR 19, 1973

98-179 AND
97-764

APRIL 1, 1997

MAR 21, 1998

• TRIBAL PD & FARMINGTON RCMP

BORHAVEN, ANDREA
JAN 10, 1972

99-105703

JAN 1, 1997

MAY 18, 1999

• UNCOVERED PD

CREY, DAWN
OCT 26, 1958

00-280034

NOV 1, 2000

DEC 11, 2000

• UNCOVERED PD

BOIN, YVONNE
NOV 30, 1967

2001-027949

MAR 16, 2001

MAR 21, 2001

• LEBREY RCMP

TRIFE, TERESA
AUG 17, 1969

02-063592

APRIL 15, 1993

MAR 21, 2002

• UNCOVERED PD

HENRY, JANET
APRIL 10, 1961

97-158127

JUNE 25, 1997

JUNE 28, 1997

• UNCOVERED PD

DEVRIES, SARAH
MAY 12, 1969

98-088486

APRIL 13, 1998

APRIL 21, 1998

• UNCOVERED PD

YOUNG, JULIE
JULY 17, 1967

99-147110

OCT 9, 1998

JULY 6, 1999

• UNCOVERED PD

JONES, DEBRA
DEC 31, 1957

00-286991

DEC 21, 2000

DEC 25, 2000

• UNCOVERED PD

SEBASTIAN, ELSIE
JAN 11, 1952

01-103725

JAN 1, 1992

MAY 16, 2001

• UNCOVERED PD

HARDY, RUBY
MAR 23, 1965

2002-068936

JUNE 1, 1997

MAR 31, 2002

• UNCOVERED PD

WILLIAM, OLIVIA
JAN 19, 1975

97-163182

DEC 6, 1996

JULY 4, 1997

• UNCOVERED PD

DUMBA, ELAINE
MAR 12, 1955

98-13017

JAN 1, 1989

APRIL 21, 1998

• COQUITLAM RCMP

MAH, LAURA
MAR 23, 1943

99-177996

AUG 1, 1985

AUG 03, 1999

• UNCOVERED PD

JOHNSON, PATRICIA
DEC 2, 1976

01-116403

MAR 3, 2001

MAY 31, 2001

• UNCOVERED PD

ALLEN, WENDY
DEC 10, 1945

02-074947

MAY 30, 1979

APRIL 05, 2002

• UNCOVERED PD

BECK, CINDY
APRIL 17, 1965

98-095800

SEPT 1, 1977

APRIL 30, 1998

• UNCOVERED PD

CRAWFORD, WENDY
APRIL 21, 1956

99-26961

NOV 27, 1999

DEC 14, 1999

• CHALMERS RCMP

JOSEBURY, ANDREA
NOV 6, 1978

01-158211

JUNE 5, 2001

JUNE 08, 2001

• UNCOVERED PD

ABIGOS, YVONNE
NOV 23, 1957

02-112467

JAN 1, 1984

MAY 22, 2002

• UNCOVERED PD

EGAN, SHEILA
AUG 4, 1978

01-634

JULY 14, 1998

AUG 03, 1998

• NEW HAVEN/STORR PD

CHIRNOCK, HEATHER
NOV 10, 1970

01-061304

APRIL 1, 2001

JUNE 19, 2001

• LEBREY RCMP

FREY, MARINIE
AUG 30, 1973

98-209922

AUG 29, 1997

SEPT 4, 1998

• UNCOVERED PD

ABOTSWAY, SKEENA
AUG 20, 1971

01-189664

AUG 1, 2001

AUG 22, 2001

• UNCOVERED PD

HALLMARK, HELEN
JUNE 24, 1966

98-226384

OCT 1, 1997

SEPT 23, 1998

• UNCOVERED PD

BOTTOMLEY, HEATHER
AUG 17, 1973

01-274282

APR 17, 2001

NOV 29, 2001

• UNCOVERED PD

MURDOCK, JACQUELINE
JAN 28, 1971

98-261602
and 97-17557

AUG 14, 1997

OCT 30, 1998

• UNCOVERED PD & PRINCE GEORGE RCMP

WILSON, MONA
JAN 13, 1975

01-275141

NOV 25, 2001

NOV 30, 2001

• UNCOVERED PD

JARDINE, ANGELA
JUNE 23, 1971

98-286097

NOV 12, 1998

DEC 06, 1998

• UNCOVERED PD

ROCK, DHANNE
SEPT 2, 1967

01-285108

OCT 19, 2001

DEC 13, 2001

• UNCOVERED PD

GURNEY, MICHELLE
FEB 11, 1969

98-297035

DEC 11, 1998

DEC 21, 1998

• UNCOVERED PD

LARGE FORMAT GRAPHICS/SCHEMATICS (ON FILE)

MISSING WOMEN BY DATE LAST SEEN

1977	1978	1979	1983	1984	1985	1986	1988	1989	1991	1992	1993
<div>BECK, CINDY APRIL 17, 1965</div> <div>98-095800</div> <div>APRIL 30, 1998</div> <div>SEPT 1, 1977</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD</div>	<div>O'DARE, LILLIAN JAN 8, 1944</div> <div>78-048509</div> <div>SEPT 12, 1978</div> <div>SEPT 12, 1978</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD</div>	<div>ALLEN, WENDY DEC 10, 1945</div> <div>02-074947</div> <div>APRIL 05, 2002</div> <div>MAR 30, 1979</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD</div>	<div>GIUNO, REBECCA MAY 25, 1960</div> <div>83-040409</div> <div>SEPT 16, 1983</div> <div>JUNE 22, 1983</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD</div>	<div>ABIGOSIS, YVONNE NOV 23, 1957</div> <div>02-112467</div> <div>MAY 22, 2002</div> <div>JAN 1, 1984</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD</div>	<div>DONAHUE, SHERYL JULY 4, 1963</div> <div>85-024993</div> <div>AUG 31, 1985</div> <div>MAY 30, 1985</div> <div>• VICTORIA PD</div>	<div>ALLENBACH, ELAINE APRIL 26, 1965</div> <div>86-19762 and 86-168228</div> <div>APRIL 10, 1986</div> <div>MAR 13, 1986</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD & SEATTLE PD</div>	<div>WILLIAMS, TARESSA FEB 14, 1973</div> <div>99-057168 and 88-06471, 98-01321</div> <div>JAN 17, 1989</div> <div>JULY 1, 1988</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD & WHITE ROCK RCMP</div>	<div>DUMBA, ELAINE MAR 12, 1955</div> <div>98-13017</div> <div>APRIL 21, 1998</div> <div>JAN 01, 1989</div> <div>• COQUITLAM RCMP</div>	<div>CLARK, NANCY JULY 29, 1966</div> <div>91-030048</div> <div>AUG 23, 1991</div> <div>AUG 22, 1991</div> <div>• VICTORIA PD</div>	<div>SEBASTIAN, ELSIE JAN 11, 1952</div> <div>01-103735</div> <div>MAY 16, 2001</div> <div>JAN 01, 1992</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD</div>	<div>TRIFE, TERESA AUG 17, 1969</div> <div>02-063592</div> <div>MAR 21, 2002</div> <div>APRIL 15, 1993</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD</div>
			<div>RAIL, SHERRY SEPT 8, 1956</div> <div>86-96208</div> <div>JAN 30, 1984</div> <div>NOV 21, 1983</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD</div>	<div>GRANT, LINDA MAR 18, 1953</div> <div>96-00698</div> <div>FEB 02, 1996</div> <div>OCT 01, 1984</div> <div>• PORT MESSY PD</div>	<div>MAH, LAURA MAR 23, 1943</div> <div>99-171996</div> <div>JULY 03, 1999</div> <div>AUG 1, 1985</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD</div>		<div>SOET, INGRID JULY 13, 1959</div> <div>90-301877</div> <div>DEC 21, 1990</div> <div>AUG 28, 1989</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD</div>		<div>WATLEY, KATHLEEN OCT 20, 1959</div> <div>92-172368</div> <div>JUNE 29, 1992</div> <div>JUNE 18, 1992</div> <div>• VANCOUVER PD</div>		


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Prepared by: S/Cst Ryan Prox #2148
Vancouver Police Department
Criminal Intelligence Section
March 15th, 2004
Missing Women Report Date Timeline
Chart Contains Privileged Solicitor Information


LEGEND


MISSING WOMEN
<hr/> VPD Reported File
<hr/> Reported to Police Agency other than VPD


2001


JOHNSON, PATRICIA DEC 2, 1976	
	01-116403
MAR 03, 2001	
MAY 31, 2001	


BOEN, YVONNE NOV 30, 1967	
	2001-027949
MAR 21, 2001	
MAR 16, 2001	


CHINNOCK, HEATHER NOV 10, 1970	
	01-061304
JUNE 19, 2001	
APRIL 01, 2001	


CRAWFORD, WENDY APRIL 21, 1956	
	99-26961
DEC 14, 1999	
NOV 27, 1999	


BOTTOMLEY, HEATHER AUG 17, 1973	
	01-274282
NOV 29, 2001	
APR 17, 2001	


FURMINGER, JENNIFER OCT 22, 1971	
	00-69916
MAR 30, 2000	
DEC 27, 1999	


JOSEBURY, ANDREA NOV 6, 1978	
	01-158211
JUNE 08, 2001	
JUNE 05, 2001	


JARDINE, ANGELA JUNE 23, 1971	
	98-286097
DEC 06, 1998	
NOV 12, 1998	


ABOTSWAY, SEREEENA AUG 20, 1971	
	01-189664
AUG 22, 2001	
AUG 01, 2001	


GURNEY, MICHELLE FEB 11, 1969	
	98-297035
DEC 21, 1998	
DEC 11, 1998	

ROCK, DIANNE SEPT 2, 1967	
	01-285108
DEC 13, 2001	
OCT 19, 2001	

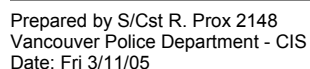
CREISON, MARCELLA JUNE 2, 1978	
	99-008101
JAN 11, 1999	
DEC 27, 1998	

WILSON, MONA JAN 13, 1975	
	01-275141
NOV 30, 2001	
NOV 25, 2001	

HALLMARK, HELEN JUNE 24, 1966	
	98-226384
SEPT 23, 1998	
OCT 1, 1997	

FELIX, CYNTHIA DEC 12, 1954	
	01-634
JAN 8, 2001	
NOV 26, 1997	

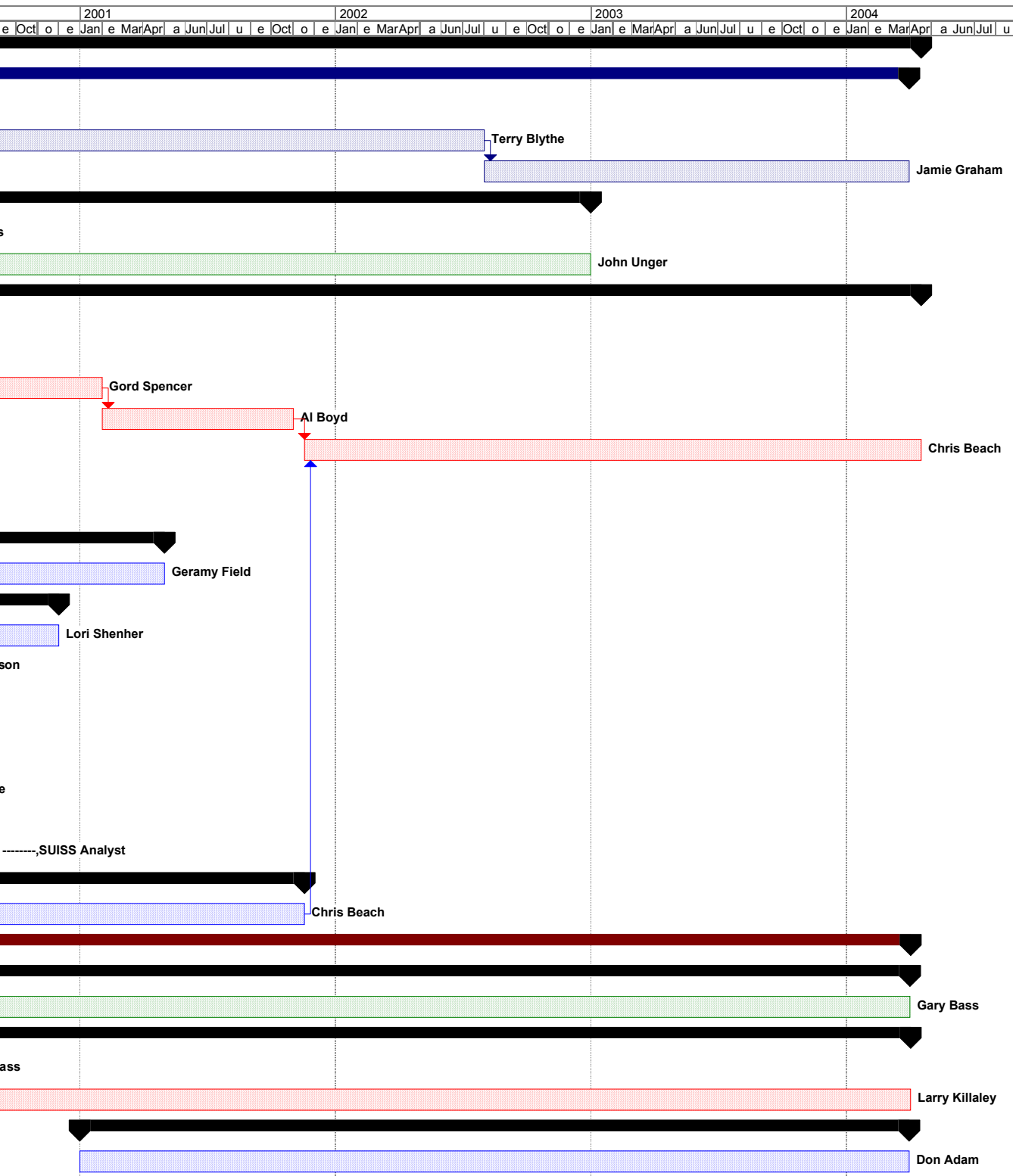
KEY STAFF ASSIGNMENT TIMELINE



PROTECTED

LARGE FORMAT GRAPHICS/SCHEMATICS (ON FILE)

KEY STAFF ASSIGNMENT TIMELINE





VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
Beyond the Call