

Shibut 75



**VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
OPERATIONAL SUPPORT DIVISION
VIOLENT CRIME SECTION**

Date: 1998.02.07
To: Brian McGuinness, Deputy Chief Constable
Cmdg. Operational Support Division
From: Insp. F. Biddlecombe, i/c Violent Crime Section
Subject: *Research & Recommendations - Homicide Squad*

On 1998.01.01 I was assigned to the position of Inspector in charge Violent Crime Section of our Department. At that time I established as one of my priorities the need to examine the method that we were utilizing in conducting Homicide investigations. This need was brought about due in part to the declining clearance rates that we were experiencing in our Homicide Squad. Our Department had observed clearance rates drop from the historical levels of 80-90% prior to 1992 to less than 60% by the end of 1997.

This research was conducted by interviewing a number of individuals from various Canadian Police agencies along with a review of a number of printed articles.

The following individuals were interviewed:

- Insp. Dave Bowen - Hamilton-Wentworth Police Service
- Det./Sgt. Steven Hrab - Hamilton-Wentworth Police Service
- Det. Ray Rikic - Hamilton-Wentworth Police Service
- Det. Aivers Jekabson - Hamilton-Wentworth Police Service

- Insp. Gary Bass - R.C.M.P. Serious Crime Section
- S/Sergeant Don Rinn - R.C.M.P. Serious Crime Section
- Sgt. Leon Van De Walle - R.C.M.P. Serious Crime Section
- Cst. Nels Justason - R.C.M.P. Serious Crime Section

- Insp. Keith McCaskill - Winnipeg Police Service
- Sgt. Ron Oliver - Winnipeg Police Service
- Det. Thane Chartrand - Winnipeg Police Service
- Det. Al Bradbury - Winnipeg Police Service

- S/Insp. Ed Hoey - Metro Toronto Police Service
- Sgt. Tony Warr - Metro Toronto Police Service
- Det. Tom McNamara - Metro Toronto Police Service

- S/Sgt. George Rocks - Calgary Police Service
- Det. Brent Refvik - Calgary Police Service

- S/Sgt. Brock Giles - Vancouver Police Department
- Sgt. Bob Cooper - Vancouver Police Department
- Sgt. Al Boyd - Vancouver Police Department
- Sgt. Hugh Waterton - Vancouver Police Department

The following published articles were reviewed:

- Bernardo Investigation Review, Report of Mr. Justice Archie Campbell, June 1996
- An Alternative Approach to Investigations, Capt. Lacasse, Citrus County Sheriffs

The following reports were reviewed:

- V.P.D. Case Management Review-Homicide Squad Audit 1989
- Major Case Management Course Manual-Canadian Police College
- Managing Criminal Investigations-Nat. Criminal Justice Executive Program
- Major Case Team Manual-Michigan State Police
- The Examination of Case Management-V.P.D. Audit Section 1993
- Case Management Manual-Michigan State Police 1991

On 1998.01.24 Sergeant Al Boyd, Homicide Squad and I attended at the Hamilton-Wentworth Police Service, Ontario. During the next several days we had the opportunity to speak with both Managers and Investigators from the Homicide Sections of the Hamilton-Wentworth Police Service, Winnipeg Police Service and the R.C.M.P.

On 1998.01.28 we attended at the Metro Toronto Police Service and spoke with the Homicide Managers and Investigators and this was followed on 1998.01.29 with speaking with the Homicide Managers and Investigators of the Calgary Police Service.

Our discussions with these members was with respect to how they conduct Major investigations, the make up of their squads, Case Management Systems, clearance rates, types of Homicides in their jurisdictions, the ratio of investigators to homicides investigated and the ratio of homicides per population base.

The following information was collected in interviews in early January 1998. This information was collected to help answer the following questions:

- Determine if the Homicide Squad is adequately staffed?
- Is the present mandate appropriate?

In an attempt to answer these questions, data was collected from a number of similar sized jurisdictions from across Canada to address the specific issues:

- The population served by the police agency,
- The overall size of the police agency,
- The average number of homicides,
- The size and function of the police agencies Homicide Squad.

The following jurisdictions were selected for comparative purposes:

<u>City/Region</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>#Police Officers</u>	<u>Avg. # Homicides</u>	<u>Rate /100,000</u>
Peel Region	888,300	1083	9	1.0
Calgary	783,200	1150	13	1.7
Ottawa-Carlton	781,100	900	18	2.2
Ham.-Wentworth	657,200	661	13	1.9
Edmonton	648,700	1112	22	3.4
Winnipeg	618,477	1180	19	3.1

Vancouver	522,400	1089	28	5.3
-----------	---------	------	----	-----

In viewing the data above, it is important to focus on the homicide rate per 100,000 population. This is the best indicator of the level of homicides in each area. However, this figure is somewhat misleading in the case of Vancouver due to our population more than doubling each day for business and entertainment.

The following is a comparison of homicide rates, Squad investigative functions, number of investigators (excluding supervisors) and number of homicides per investigative member.

<u>City/Region</u>	<u>Homicide rate per 100,000</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u># Members</u>	<u>Homicide/Member</u>
Peel Region	1.0	a,b,c	9	1:1
Calgary	1.7	a,b,c	6	2:1
Ottawa-Carlton	2.2	a,b,c,d,e	19	1:1
Hamilton-Wentworth	1.9	a,b,c,f	12	1:1
Edmonton	3.4	a,b,c	9	2.5:1
Winnipeg	3.1	a,b,c	6	3:1
Vancouver	5.3	a,b,c,d,f,g	14	2:1

FUNCTION

- a homicides
- b attempt homicides
- c police shootings
- d kidnapping
- e armed robberies
- f sudden unexplained deaths of children under age 2
- g extortions

It is apparent that the V.P.D. Homicide Squad have a much heavier workload per member given our expanded mandate, however, this increased workload is not reflected in the Homicide/member ratio. This information was reflected in the proposal to the Implementation Committee that resulted in their draft recommendation that the Homicide strength should be increased to 18 investigators. This increase in staff will reduce the Homicide/member ratio from 2:1 to 1.5:1.

A brief synopsis follows based on discussions with a number of police agencies with respect to how they achieve their mandates.

Hamilton-Wentworth Police Service

The Hamilton-Wentworth Police Service handles approximately 13 homicides per year and achieve a clearance rate of approximately 90%. Their clearance rates for the past six (6) years are as follows:

•	1997	10 Homicides	3 unsolved
•	1996	10 Homicides	1 unsolved
•	1995	18 Homicides	2 unsolved
•	1994	11 Homicides	0 unsolved
•	1993	4 Homicides	0 unsolved
•	1992	10 Homicides	2 unsolved

Hamilton-Wentworth call out an N.C.O. and as many investigators as necessary to conduct the investigation. This usually means at least 4-6 investigators with one investigator assigned as a File Co-ordinator. The assignment of File Co-ordinator changes with each investigation.

The homicide investigators do not handle any evidence, they use 3-4 Forensic Identification members for each crime scene. The F.I.S. members handle and tag all evidence, put together a list of items seized and meet with the assigned investigator usually within 48 hours in order to determine how each item will be dealt with.

Approximately 60-70% of their homicides involve domestic issues, bar fights and would be best described as "smoking gun" homicides.

They use "Case File" as their word processing management system, however, this is under review by a Provincial Committee seized with implementing the recommendations contained within the Campbell Inquiry. It is expected that this committee will have developed a new computer software system by June 1998, and at that time the entire Province will adopt this new system.

All N.C.O.'s have completed the Major Case Management Course at the Canadian Police College with investigators now scheduled to attend.

Winnipeg Police Service

Winnipeg Police Service average 19 homicides per year with a clearance rate of approximately 99%.

Winnipeg call out all members (1 Sgt. & 6 Invest.) for every Homicide investigation. They also assign one member from the investigative team as a File Co-ordinator, with this assignment changing for each Homicide.

As well they call out a Forensic Identification Section Sergeant and four (4) F.I.S. Technicians. F.I.S. takes charge of the crime scene and process all evidence. Homicide Investigators do not handle any of the evidence.

Winnipeg describes their Homicides as being similar to those in Hamilton-Wentworth, with approximately 60-70% being "smoking gun" homicides. They have very few homicides that would be considered gang related.

Winnipeg uses Q&A as their word processing management system and are also very interested in reviewing the computer software system being developed by the Ontario Provincial Committee. All N.C.O.'s have completed the Major Case Management Course at the Canadian Police College with investigators now scheduled to attend.

Winnipeg has an agreement with their Crown counsel for cost recovery for all documents and videos supplied for disclosure purposes. This agreement requires Crown to pay \$3.00 per page for documents.

Calgary Police Service

Calgary Police Service average 20 homicides per year with a clearance rate of approximately 95%.

Calgary call out between 4 and 6 members to each Homicide scene. (1 S/Sgt. & 4-6 Invest.) The number being dependant on the type of homicide with the decision being made by the on-call Staff Sergeant. They also assign one member as the File Co-ordinator.

Further, they call out the Forensic Identification Section N.C.O. and 2-3 F.I.S. Technicians to all homicide crime scenes. The F.I.S. takes charge of the crime scene and is responsible for seizing and tagging all items. The F.I.S. Technicians will meet with the assigned Homicide Investigator within 24 hours with a log of all evidence and the investigator directs where each item will be sent for processing.

Calgary have also examined "Case File" and were prepared to go to this system but are now awaiting the development of the Ontario system. Informal case reviews are conducted as often as possible on homicide files.

Calgary also describes their homicides as predominantly "smoking gun" homicides, such as bar fights, domestics etc. Although they have had the occasional gang homicide.

In an effort to keep their Uniform Patrol members available they are about to implement the use of Commissionaires to hold crime scenes once secure.

Calgary also uses a unique form of communicating with their investigators when the investigator is conducting an interview. Basically the investigator wears an Alpha-Numeric pager during the interview while the remaining squad members watch the interview on a closed circuit TV in their office. If any of the squad members observe an area that the member should question the suspect about, they page the interviewing member who keeps his pager on vibrate. In so doing the interviewing member is immediately alerted to an area that he should question the suspect on without interrupting the interview.

The Staff Sergeant has completed the Major Case Management Course with the investigators now scheduled to attend.

Metro Toronto Police Service

Metro Toronto Police Service average 60 homicides per year with a clearance rate problem similar to Vancouver's. Their clearance rates have been steadily dropping from a high of approximately 80-90% in the early 1990's to 59% in 1997.

Metro has their 18 investigators divided in three (3) Teams with each Team having a Detective Sergeant in charge.

Metro sends only 2 investigators to a homicide scene, no N.C.O.

The Forensic Identification Section also sends only 2 Technicians to a crime scene. Their investigators also do not seize or handle any evidence at the crime scene, all evidence is handled by the 2 technicians. They are about to commence sending a third investigator to each crime scene with this investigator being responsible for and in charge of the crime scene. This member will ensure that the F.I.S. Technicians seize items the investigator feels should be seized.

Homicides in Toronto are very similar to those in Vancouver with a mixture of "smoking

gun" and stranger-to-stranger homicides, including ethnic gang issues and outlaw motorcycle gang issues.

Further they use "Case File" as their Case Management System but are awaiting the development of the Provincial Software system. They also conduct case reviews as often and when possible. No members have attended the Major Case Management Course.

PRESENT V.P.D. SITUATION

The Vancouver Police Department averages 28 homicides per year with a clearance rate that has been dropping over the last 4 years. The clearance rate for 1997 was 52%. Prior to 1994 we were averaging approximately 75-80% clearance.

At present our Homicide Squad is composed of 1 Staff Sergeant, 2 Sergeants and 14 Investigators. The investigators work in 2 person partnerships. The fourteen investigators work for and report to both Sergeants. There is no clear definition as to which Sergeant is in charge of which investigators. This has created a system of confusion for the members and on occasion conflicting directions from Supervisors. This also creates a problem when annual leave is signed up across the Squad with partnerships being broken up and a lack of continuity with who each member is working with.

Our Department sends 2 homicide investigators to a homicide scene plus an N.C.O.

The Forensic Identification Section also sends 2 Technicians to a crime scene. Our Homicide investigators will assist F.I.S. Technicians and often seize evidence from the scene. This leads to the investigator spending at least one and often two full days tagging this evidence. This also leads to unnecessary handling of evidence and the potential for contamination of evidence along with the investigator having to field various defence counsel questions in this regard during cross examination.

The recommendations contained in this report have been fully discussed with the F.I.S. Sergeant who concurs with all of the recommendations that affect his Section, but has requested that if they are to be implemented a time frame of May 1, 1998 be considered.

Our homicide files in Vancouver are unique. They are a mixture of ethnic gang issues, outlaw motorcycle gangs, various other gang activities, domestics, barfights along with some "smoking gun" homicides. Due to the gang and drug problems related to Vancouver, we suffer from a more sophisticated type of "hit style" murder that are very difficult to solve. Thus the majority of homicides are stranger to stranger.

We do not have a computerized system for tracking homicides or for case management. Our Case Management is built on the system developed as a result of the 1989 Homicide

Audit that identified a number of reportable categories to be followed up. Having reviewed the reportable categories from a number of other police agencies I will be recommending that we expand our categories.

We do not have any agreement for cost recovery for documents or video and audio tapes with our Crown Counsel. Cost recovery has been under review by the Chief Constable with Inspector Forbes providing a report that indicated that the purchase of a high speed dubbing machine was too costly. I concur with that position, but will be recommending that we adopt a much more inexpensive method of stacking V.C.R. machines in order to produce a minimum of four 4 video tapes at one time for each video room.

Of the eight (8) N.C.O.'s in the Violent Crime Section, one (1) has been trained at the Canadian Police College in the Major Case Management Course. Attachment "A" contains his written assessment of this training.

The Implementation Committee has recommended in their first draft that the Homicide Squad staff levels be increased from 14 investigators to 18 investigators. This staff increase will have a positive effect on work load levels, however, given their expanded mandate and the complexities of these added investigations it may be necessary to seek the assistance of investigators from other squads within the Violent Crime Section on occasion. These temporary assignments will prove beneficial as a method of training future Homicide investigators.

The final area I must comment on is the name of the Section. The term "Violent Crime Section" has never been accepted by members of our Department. Most members continue to refer to the Section by its previous name, the Major Crime Section. Further, I believe the name Major Crime Section carries with it a better connotation than the term Violent Crime Section. I believe it is important that the members of our Department and in particular the members assigned to the Section identify with one specific name, rather than referring to the Section by both the Violent Crime Section and the Major Crime Section. Most other police agencies refer to their unit as either Major Crime or Serious Crime.

Some of the comments and recommendations that I am making will have a cost to them. Certainly calling out more members up front will initially increase our costs. However, I am also convinced that the downstream costs will be reduced as more of our cases should be cleared more quickly. It should be noted, that the training offered on the Major Case Management Course at the Canadian Police College recommends the practice of front end loading in the first 72 hours of an investigation in order to more quickly solve cases.

Based on the comments from the above noted Police agencies along with the written material I have reviewed, there are a number of recommendations that the Management

Team from the Violent Crime Section, Homicide Squad are forwarding for your consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION

1. The Violent Crime Section be re-named the Major Crime Section.

HOMICIDE SQUAD

2. Homicide Squad should develop a Team approach in order to conduct investigations.
3. Each Team should consist of 1 Sergeant and 9 investigators. (Based on staff levels as recommended by the Implementation Committee). This will facilitate NCO continuity, vertical annual leave sign up based on two separate Teams and improved flexibility for assignments.
4. A minimum of 1 N.C.O. and 4 investigators should be called-out for every Major Investigation. When necessary, additional members of a Team would be call-out at the discretion of the N.C.O.
5. Tasks will be assigned by the Team Sergeant to each investigator, with a File Co-ordinator assigned for every Major investigation.
6. The File Co-ordinators role is to maintain the investigative file, keep the Team N.C.O. advised of progress and assist the Team N.C.O. in setting investigative priorities and direction.
7. Major Case File Reviews will be conducted in accordance with the schedule developed as a result of the 1989 Homicide Audit as follows:

First Review	-	72 hours
Second Review	-	30 days
Third Review	-	60 days
Fourth Review	-	90 days

Monthly reviews thereafter until second anniversary, then declared inactive and forwarded to Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit.

8. Once the Crime Scene is secure, Operations Division members should be returned to their assigned duties and replaced by either call-out members or consideration given to developing a pool of Reserve Constables who may be called-out for this purpose. (This would likely require discussions with the V.P.U.)
9. If a suspect or victim is transported to a local hospital and must remain for treatment (Romalis, Razei etc) then as a Health & Safety Issue for the hospital staff and to address previous V.P.U. concerns, a call-out pool of E.R.T. members should be established. This requires a minimum of 2 E.R.T. members.
10. When appropriate, the Homicide N.C.O. will call-out the services of the Geographic Profiling Section to attend the Crime Scene. See Attachment "B"
11. Pending an increase in the staffing level of the Homicide Squad, the Squad should adopt the Mandate as suggested by Staff Sergeant Giles including the last paragraph. This Mandate is contained in Attachment "C".

HOMICIDE CASE FILE SYSTEM

12. The reportable categories (19) contained in the Homicide Case Management File developed as a result of the 1989 Audit and reflected in Attachment "D" should be amended in accordance with those listed in Attachment "E" (32)
13. Upon the final development by the Ontario Government of the information technology Case Management System, that our Department reviews this system with a view to purchasing and installing this technology for the use of V.C.S. investigators.

FORENSIC IDENTIFICATION SECTION

14. The Forensic Identification Section (F.I.S.) N.C.O. will attend every Homicide scene and take charge of the crime scene.
15. A minimum of three (3) F.I.S. Technicians will attend every Homicide scene.

16. The F.I.S. Technicians will be responsible for seizing and tagging all evidence.
17. The F.I.S Technician will meet with the designated Homicide investigator within 48 hours of seizing/tagging evidence in order to review the log and determine the disposition of all exhibits.
18. The crime scene will only be released after the Forensic Identification Section N.C.O. receives permission from the assigned Homicide N.C.O.

VIDEO INTERVIEWS

19. An additional 2 V.H.S. video machines should be installed for use in each of the video interviewing rooms.
20. A total of 4 V.H.S. tapes should be produced for each video interview.
21. Video tapes to be designated as follows:
 - Master #1 - Court Exhibit
 - Master #2 - Crown Counsel Copy
 - Master #3 - Defence Disclosure Copy
 - Slave #1 - Investigators copy
22. A T.V. monitor and stand be purchased and hard wired into the Homicide Work Room in order to allow viewing during interviews by the Team Sergeant and members.
23. A total of two (2) Alpha Numeric pagers should be supplied to the Homicide Squad Staff Sergeant for the use of members during interviews. During these interviews members will use the message pagers set on vibrate so that the Team NCO can communicate directly with the interviewing member without interrupting the interview. Rental of pagers is \$18.50 per month along with a one time purchase of software for a personal computer of \$69.95.

TRAINING

24. All Violent Crime Section N.C.O.'s should be scheduled to attend the Major Case Management Course at the Canadian Police College as soon as possible.

25. All Violent Crime Section investigators should be scheduled to attend the Major Case Management Course at the Canadian Police College.

COST RECOVERY

26. Cost recovery should be implemented for copies of all V.H.S. and audio tapes supplied to Crown Counsel for disclosure to Defence Counsel. Cost recovery should also be implemented for each page of documents supplied to Crown Counsel for disclosure purposes. The appropriate level of costs should be determined by the Planning, Research & Audit Section.

Missing Person Commission of Inquiry
EXHIBIT No. _____
Date: _____
Registrar

Missing Women Commission of Inquiry

EXHIBIT No: 75

Date: January 26, 2012



Registrar