

Unsolved Calgary Homicides: An Analysis 2005-2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Calgary had 440 homicides during 2005-2021, 96 (22%) of which remain unsolved. This study was conducted in 2022 to provide more insight into our most violent crime in Calgary and to better understand what distinguishes our solved files from our unsolved.

One of the main determinants of whether a homicide is resolved quickly or slowly is its motivation, whether it be domestic, organized crime or gang motivated, related to drugs, or it happens during a fight. One-third of homicides in Calgary result from “big city problems” such as organized/gang crime and drugs. These are traditionally more difficult files to solve, so years with a higher number of these types of homicides are typically years with a lower clearance rate. In fact, among the 96 unsolved homicides during this period, two-thirds fall into the categories of organized crime/gang, or drug related. Of the 140 gang or drug-related homicides during this period, fewer than half have been cleared. National data supports this, as Statistics Canada has found that about one-third of homicides unrelated to gangs were “solved on the day the incident was reported, while by 100 days, [only] 27% of gang-related homicides were reported as solved.”¹

Gun homicides are also more difficult to solve, as with these files, there tends to be less physical evidence since there is generally more distance between the offender and victim. During 2005-2021, Calgary had 144 homicides via firearm, which is exactly one-third of all homicides during this period. The majority of these were organized crime or gang related. As the years move ahead, we are seeing a larger overall *proportion* of our homicides attributed to gun violence. For example, at this point in the year (Q3-2022), our proportion of gun homicides for the year is 57%. Ten years ago, it was 29%.

While CPS has its own forensic ballistics lab, offering investigators an expedient way to analyze their gun-related evidence, we have still been unable to clear almost half of gun homicides during the analysis period and two-thirds of our unsolved homicides were caused by a gun. Nevertheless, lab staff are working hard to review old files and hopefully offer investigators new leads to pursue.

Among the analyzed homicides, Race information for victims was available in two-thirds of files. While Calgary’s demographic population is approximately 60% White, 36% “Visible Minority”,

¹ David, J-D and Jaffray, B. (2022 November 21). [Homicide in Canada, 2021](#). Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.

and 4% Indigenous, the ethnic make-up of homicide victims during the analysis period was 42% White, 45% “Visible Minority” and 13% Indigenous. For unsolved homicide victims, the breakdown was 30% White, 61% “Visible Minority” and 9% Indigenous.

Investigatively, it has long been said the first 48-72 hours after an incident is discovered by Police are the most critical to solving that file quickly. Our data shows that one-third of all homicides result in charges within “The First 48”. Nationally, the average number of days it takes to solve a homicide is 36, and 64% of homicides were cleared within 100 days. In Calgary, our average was closer to 25 days.

National data showed that it took Police longer to solve homicides of Racialized victims than it did to solve those of non-Racialized victims. In Calgary, the story was slightly different. It appears it takes us a bit longer to solve homicides involving non-Racialized victims than it does to solve those of Racialized victims.

Support for the families and loved ones of homicide victims is a priority for the CPS, is provided through a number of resources within the Service and is dependent on the needs of the families as well as the investigation. Typically, the Primary Investigator is the point of contact with families, as s/he will have the best insight of what can be shared from the investigation and what needs to be kept confidential. Other resources supporting families can come from other investigators, Family Liaison Officers, the Victim Assistance Support Team, and community partners such as the Family Information Liaison Unit. It is common for Primaries to maintain contact with victims’ families long after they’ve left the Homicide Unit. In cases of unresolved homicides, the Primary will determine what type of support the families will continue to need until such time as their loved ones’ homicide is cleared.

I. INTRODUCTION

During the years between 2005 and 2021, Calgary amassed a total of 440 homicides, 96 of which remain unsolved (22%)². Just under one-third (N=29) of these unsolved incidents come from the last 5 years (2017-2021).

This report will summarize the details of our homicides during this period³, focusing attention on these 96 unsolved cases and providing insight into trends, with the goal of helping us to better understand and explain why roughly one-fifth of Calgary homicides during 2005-2021 are still not cleared. Factors such as cause of death, motivation, and victim ethnicity will be covered, as well as the factors that may impact solve rate and the veracity of the claim that the most critical hours for solving a homicide are in the 48 hours post discovery by police.

² Effective as of October 20, 2022.

³ The primary reason for selecting this period of time – 2005-2021 – is that we have been maintaining strong information records within our Homicide Unit, collecting more detailed information than that found on our RMS (Records Management System – Sentry), since 2005. For our next unsolved homicide update, we aim to have these more detailed records going further back in time.

II. HOMICIDES: OVERALL

Going back to the “almost” turn-of-the-century, Calgary Police have had to share the devastating news with 440 different families that their loved one was killed in the most serious act of violence: homicide. As is common with what has traditionally been known as a “crime of passion”, murders are unpredictable, requiring the Homicide Unit to pivot as required. In every new case, the Unit “front end loads” the investigation, ensuring that time-sensitive evidence is quickly gathered; this might require resources from across the Service.

As the investigation progresses, advanced investigative techniques such as wire taps, judicial authorizations and forensics (DNA) may be applied. Essentially, the investigation continues until all avenues have been exhausted to gather evidence and determine the circumstances leading to and surrounding the homicide. Homicide investigations remain open until they can be solved.

A. Average Per year

During the period of analysis, the range of homicides was between 11 (2011) and 37 (2007 and 2015), with an **average of 26 homicides per year**⁴. Some years, domestic homicides dominated (2005, 2007, 2009, 2013) and others, organized crime and gang murders were more predominant (2008, 2015 and 2020).

B. Gangs and Drugs

The prevalence of **gangs and drugs** in our city has led to a significant amount of work for our Homicide Detectives and Crime Analysts over the last 17 years, with 80 files attributed to organized crime and gang activity, and 60 files involving drugs as a motivating factor in the homicide. Coupling drugs, organized crime and gang activity, about one-third (N=140; 32%) of our murders over this time period have been the result of these “big city problems”.

C. Clearance

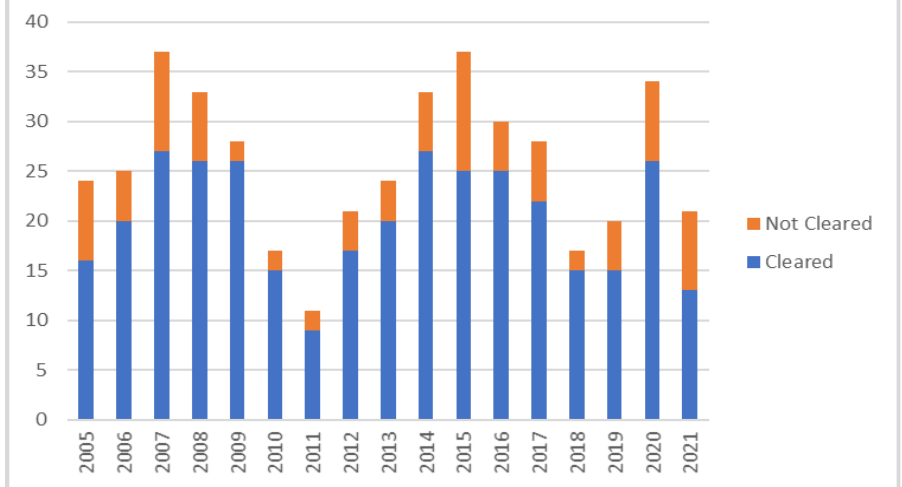
Our overall clearance rate during 2005-2021 is 78%, with 344 homicides cleared and 96 still not cleared. As **Figure 1**⁵ shows, clearance rates vary each year and can range from a low of 62% (2021) to a high of 93% (2009). It often depends on several factors, not the least of which includes the overall number of files for the year and the proportion of files that are either gun or gang related, as those files are harder to lay charges on.

⁴ Including 2005 and 2021, this equals 17 distinct years.

⁵ Unless otherwise stated, all data shown in charts and tables in this report was taken from our Homicide Unit statistical spreadsheet. This source is kept up to date on a daily basis.

For example, years with a clearance rate below 70% - 2005, 2015 and 2021 – also have a higher proportion of **OC/Gang** or **Drug** motivated files: 11 (46%), 11 (30%) and 6 (29%) respectively. These years also had a high number of gun related homicides: 33 out of 82 (40%) in total.

Figure 1. Homicide Clearance in Calgary: 2005-2021.



Given that our **domestic homicide** victims are familiar with their killers, the investigation of a domestic homicide is typically less complicated when it comes to

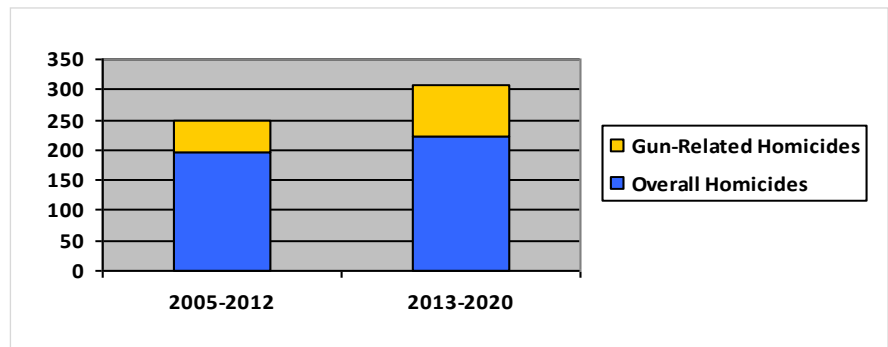
identifying a suspect; Consequently, they have the highest clearance rates among homicides. During 2005-2021, we had 122 domestic homicides, only 7 of which are currently unsolved (overall clearance rate = 94%). The primary cause of death for domestic homicides during 2005-2021 was via stabbing (N=45; 37% of all domestic homicides during this period).

Our homicide clearance rate typically **climbs as the years pass**. As an example, by the end of 2016, the clearance rate for the year was 59%. Today, the 2016 clearance rate is 83%, with 5 homicides remaining as unsolved, 2 of which were gang related.

D. Firearms

Since 2005, Calgary has recorded **144 homicides which were caused by a firearm**. This comprises exactly one-third of all homicides in our city (33%). Gun related homicides provide police with another avenue to pursue – ballistic analysis – which should lead to higher case clearance. Forensic firearm data is now managed better by the CPS, in our

Figure 2. Gun-Related and Overall Homicides: Comparing Periods.



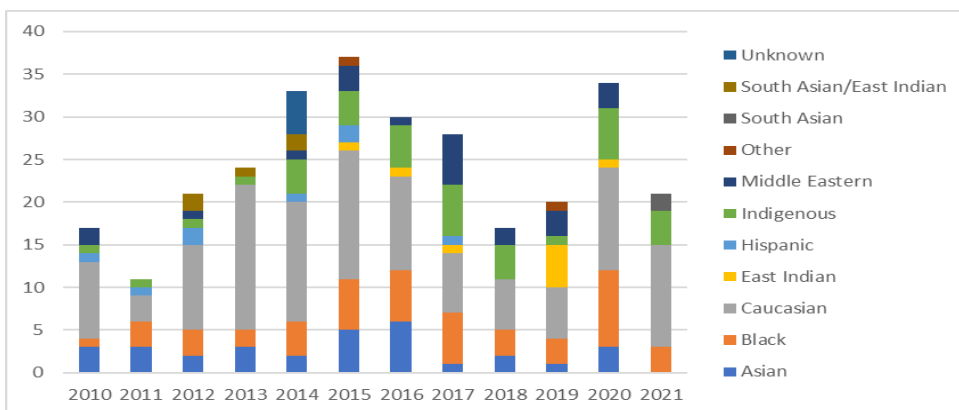
Forensic Firearm and Toolmark Lab (FFTL). The work of the team in FFTL provides the Homicide Unit with a better chance of solving gun-related homicides. Nevertheless, this analysis takes time and the number of shootings in Calgary over the past several years has been resource-intensive for our small FFTL team.

The proportion of gun-related homicides has ranged from a low of 9% (2014) to a high of 54% (2017). By the end of 2022, 56% of our homicides have been caused by a gun⁶, so the percentage is on the rise. Comparing 2005-2012 to 2013-2020 (**Figure 2**) – two 8-year periods - it is clear that as we move ahead in years, a higher proportion of our homicides are committed with a firearm. During 2005-2012, the proportion of gun-related homicides was 27%. During 2013-2020, it rose to 37% overall.

E. Victim Race

Despite national and media attention paid to the high percentage of Indigenous female victims in Canadian homicides and missing persons cases, **Calgary has been fortunate to see a relatively small number of missing (long-term) or murdered Indigenous victims, particularly women.** Among 440 homicides wherein the victim’s race was identified⁷ (N=293), 38 were committed against an Indigenous victim (13%⁸); Eleven of these were female (4%). Among these 38 files involving Indigenous victims, 6 homicides remain uncleared: 2 females and 4 males.

Figure 3: Homicide Victim Race, 2010-2021.



Among the 293 homicides wherein the victim’s Race is known, the breakdown is as follows (in order of most to least represented):

1. Caucasian (122, 42%)
2. Black (49, 17%)
3. Indigenous (38, 13%)
4. Asian (31, 11%)
5. Middle Eastern (22, 8%)
6. Indian/South Asian (16, 5%)
7. Hispanic (3%)

⁶ Effective to March 30, 2023.

⁷ Race data for the purposes of homicide analysis was consistently collected starting in 2010.

⁸ 13% represents the percentage of victims of homicide during 2010-2021 wherein the victim was identified as Indigenous.

III. HOMICIDES: UNSOLVED AND HISTORICAL UNSOLVED⁹

“Unsolved” and “Historical Unsolved”¹⁰ homicides can be distinguished based on two factors: (1) whether the Primary Detective is still working in the Homicide Unit and (2) how long ago the incident occurred. A homicide is considered “historical unsolved” if it occurred 2 years ago or longer and was assigned to a primary investigator who has left the Homicide Unit. All other homicides that are not cleared are simply deemed “unsolved or not cleared”. This analysis focused on all files between 2005 and 2021, so this included both historical files as well as those deemed “just” to be unsolved.

Our Homicide Unit consists of 2 teams, referred to as the East and West Teams. Each is comprised of 1 Staff Sergeant, 9 Detectives and a Crime Analyst. East Team also has 4 Cold Case Detectives, and West Team has a Missing Persons Team with 1 Sergeant and 7 Constables. The Cold Case and Missing Persons investigators then share another Crime Analyst.

Typically, when a new homicide comes in, the on-call Detectives and Analyst work together as a strong team, sharing the workload and cooperating to identify a suspect(s) and provide solid leads for the Primary Investigator to pursue. The success of our Homicide Unit teams stems from the team environment within which they operate, and the front-end loading of resources due to the perishable nature of evidence.

Concluding a complex file with criminal charges requires advanced and creative investigative techniques led by the Homicide Detectives, with support from the Forensic Crime Scenes Unit (FCSU), our Priority Crimes Team (PCT), and the Electronic Surveillance Unit (ESU). When an investigation is classified as a Historical Unsolved Homicide by one of the Homicide Staff Sergeants, the Historical Unsolved (formerly *Cold Case*) Detectives review the investigation to identify new investigative opportunities to solve the case and bring resolution to the victims’ families.

Historical Unsolved Homicide Detectives have been focusing in recent years on applying crime solving techniques such as Genetic Genealogy and DNA analysis; evaluating and re-testing exhibits as science progresses. All unsolved homicides now being reviewed by our Historical Unsolved Homicide team have been evaluated and “scored” for their “solvability”.

All homicide investigations follow the Major Case Management (MCM) Protocol and are led by a “Command Triangle”: Primary Investigator, File Coordinator, and Team Commander. The 3 members ensure that the investigation and its circumstances are approached with a critical mind, thereby avoiding “tunnel vision”. The Primary Investigator is responsible for the speed, flow, and direction of the investigation. S/He identifies and coordinates investigative tasks, collaborating with resources throughout the Service. The Primary Investigator is supported by a Team Commander – typically the Homicide Unit Staff Sergeant – who ensures resourcing while

⁹ Formerly, “Cold Case”.

¹⁰ Ibid.

providing oversight and guidance. The File Coordinator ensures all investigative documentation is properly recorded and filed and is ready for disclosure during the court process.

A. Average Per year

During the period of analysis, the range of homicides that remain unsolved is between 2 (2009, 2010, 2011, 2018) and 12 (2015), with an **average of 6 homicides per year that are not yet cleared.**

B. Gangs and Drugs

Organized crime related homicides are typically the most difficult to solve - often due to a lack of cooperation by witnesses - and are often the most resource intensive from an investigation standpoint. The most recent Statistics Canada homicide survey reported that nationally, the median solve time for gang related homicides was 10.5 days, compared to 1 day for non-gang related homicides¹¹.

Among the 80 organized crime/gang motivated homicides and the 60 drug motivated homicides we have had during 2005-2021, 50 OC/Gang motivated and 13 drug motivated remain unsolved. This means that of 140 gang or drug related homicides, 63 or 45% have not been cleared. As **Table 1** shows, aside from our two incidents¹² with no known motivation, organized crime and/or gang motivated homicides have the lowest clearance rate among all homicide types, at 38%.

Table 1. Clearance Rates for Homicide Motivations, 2005-2021.

| Motivation | Cleared | Not Cleared | Clearance Rate* |
|----------------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Organized Crime/Gang | 30 | 50 | 38% |
| Drug | 47 | 13 | 78% |
| Deadly Confrontation | 102 | 16 | 86% |
| Domestic | 115 | 7 | 94% |
| Fight/Quarrel | 35 | 3 | 92% |
| Financial Gain | 4 | 1 | 80% |
| Hate/Bias | 1 | 0 | 100% |
| Other | 10 | 4 | 71% |
| Unknown | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Grand Total | 344 | 96 | 78% |

*Rate is based on the overall number of homicides with this motivation.

C. Clearance

As **Table 1** demonstrates, among our 96 unsolved files during 2005-2021, more than half are organized crime and/or gang motivated (N=50, 52%). As **Figure 4** shows, 69% (N=66) of our unsolved homicides were caused by a firearm. Of these 66 firearm related homicides, 47 or 71%

¹¹ Homicide in Canada, (n1), 5.

¹² Thong DAO in 2013 and Abdikadir TUKHOV in 2020.

are OC/Gang motivated and a further 10 (15%) are drug motivated. This means that **60% of unsolved homicides in our city are caused by guns and are motivated by either organized crime or drugs** (57 out of 96).

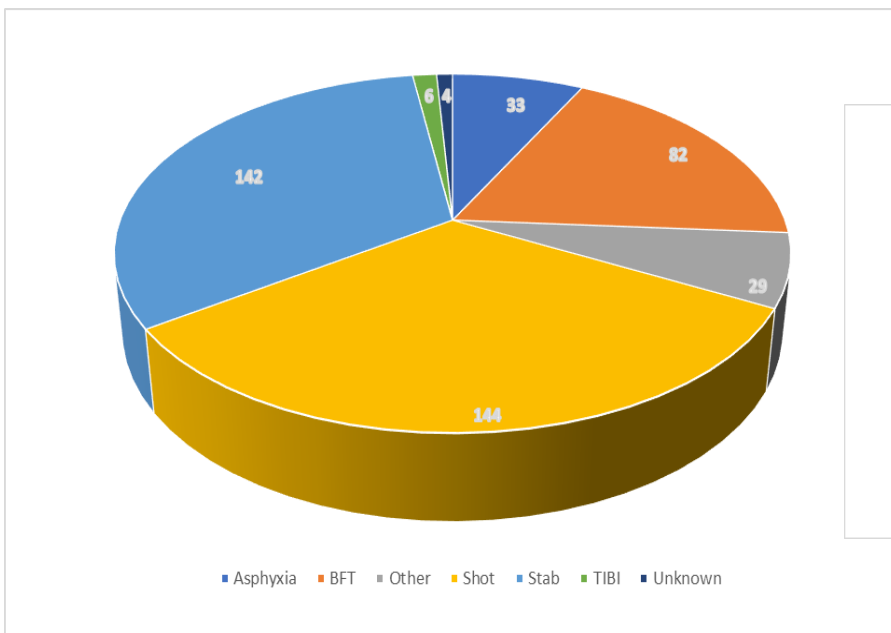
The worst year for unsolved gun homicides was 2015, with 10 incidents. That year, we had 37 homicides, 13 of which were firearm related; So, the Homicide Unit was over-stretched for resources and as indicated, gun homicides are among the most difficult to solve. Of the 10 files from 2015 that remain unsolved, 6 were led by Primaries who are no longer part of the Homicide Unit; Meaning, they are now considered historical unsolved homicides.

D. Firearms

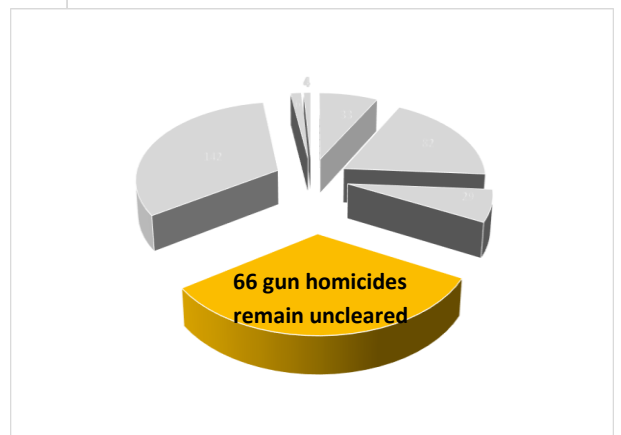
As previously outlined, approximately one-third of all homicides in our city during 2005-2021 have been caused by a gun (N=144; **Figure 4**). While more of these have been cleared than not, almost half (66, 46%) remain uncleared. There are many reasons for the difficulty in solving gun murders, but two major streams of thought are that (1) a gun puts distance between the victim and his/her killer, which removes the odds of other physical evidence (i.e., hair, clothing fibers, blood, etc.) being found at the scene of the homicide, and (2) most gun murders result from organized crime, and witnesses in these cases are more reluctant to speak with Police.

Our Firearms Lab currently has the list of unsolved gun homicides and is working on identifying whether new analyses is possible, given how much further ahead we are now compared to the years when the FFTL was not in place. For example, the FFTL was formed in 2011. One-third of our unsolved gun homicides occurred prior to that year (N=22).

Figure 4: Homicide Cause of Death, 2005-2021.



Two-thirds of our unsolved homicides were caused by a gun (66 of 96).



E. Victim Race

As highlighted in the previous section, we have Race data available from 2010-onward, and can identify the Race for 293 of our homicide victims during the period of analysis. Overall, most homicide victims are Caucasian (122, 42%). Black is our next most prevalent Race category, with 49 victims during this period (17%). Indigenous victims comprise 13% of victims (38); This is concerning, as they make up approximately 4% of the population of our city, whereas Caucasians make up about 66% of Calgary.

Among the 64 victims of unsolved homicides during 2010-2021 for which Race was identified, the breakdown is as follows:

- 19 were Caucasian (30%)
- 15 were Black (23%)
- 9 were Asian (14%)
- 6 were Indigenous (9%)
- 6 were Middle Eastern (9%)
- 4 were Indian (6%)
- 2 were South Asian (3%)
- An additional 2 victims were identified as *either* South Asian or Indian (3%).

The population of the Calgary Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) as reported in the 2016 Civic Census was 1,374,650. The ethnic breakdown of our city was reported as follows¹³:

- 60% - “European heritage”
- 4% - “Aboriginal heritage”
- 36% - “Visible Minority”
 - South Asian (mainly India and Pakistan) – 8.9%
 - African or Caribbean – 8.5%
 - Chinese – 7.6%
 - Filipino – 5.5%
 - West Asian or Middle Eastern – 3.5%
 - Latin American – 2.6%

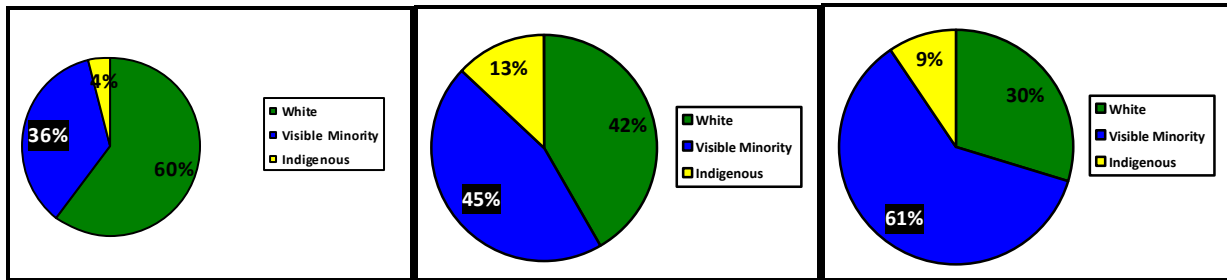
Given the population breakdown of Calgary CMA, we clearly have an over-representation of homicide victims that fall into the Aboriginal and Visible Minority Race categories. Focusing specifically on our unsolved homicides, the over-representation is even more pronounced.

¹³ Source: Statistics Canada [online]: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMACA&Code1=825&Geo2=PR&Code2=48&Data=Count&SearchText=calgary&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&TABID=1>

Figure 5: CITY POPULATION

HOMICIDE VICTIMS*

UNSOLVED HOMICIDE VICTIMS*



Source: Statistics Canada and *Homicide Spreadsheet, October 12, 2022. Ethnic breakdown of victims is based on CPS data from 2010-2021.

As **Figure 5** shows, while the majority (60%) of Calgary CMA identifies as being of European heritage, White Calgarians only comprise 42% of homicide victims and 30% of *unsolved* homicide victims. Indigenous Calgarians comprise just 4% of our population, yet 13% of our homicide victims and 9% of our unsolved homicide victims. Calgarians belonging to a “visible minority” Race designation comprise 36% of Calgary’s population yet make up 45% of homicide victims and 61% of unsolved homicide victims. Within the category of “Visible Minority”, the largest number of victims fall under the more specific heading of “Black” (N=49, 17%); then it’s Asian (N=31, 11%) and Middle Eastern (=22, 8%). The largest proportion of Black victims whose homicides remain unsolved fall into the “Motivation” category of “OC/Gang” (N=14) followed by “Drug” (N=12). Together, those motivations make up 53% of all unsolved homicides involving a victim who is Black. For Asian victims, the story is much the same. Out of 9 unsolved homicides involving an Asian victim, 7 were motivated by organized crime or gang activity and 1 was motivated by drugs.

IV. INVESTIGATING HOMICIDE

A. “Front-End Loading”

It has long been said the first 48-72 hours of a homicide investigation are among the most critical, and the more resources, investigators and hours that can be dedicated to the file during that period, the better the chances of identifying a suspect(s) and successfully concluding the investigation with criminal charges. In fact, on the A&E documentary called “The First 48” – a show about solving murders – “the show’s title sequence tells us a homicide detective’s chances of solving a murder are ‘cut in half if they don’t get a lead within the first 48 hours’.”¹⁴ This sort of data is not “systematically tracked” in Calgary though, so this is a tough claim to verify locally.

The initial phase of a homicide investigation requires resources from throughout the Service. Our initial response includes: activation of the Major Crimes Protocol by the Real Time

¹⁴ [Online] New York Times, 2021 September 27. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/23/upshot/murder-crime-solving.html>

Operations Centre (RTOC); implementation of the Major Case Management protocol by the Homicide Unit; identifying witnesses, and coordinating interviews as well as forensic scene examinations; coordinating with the Medical Examiners; collecting video evidence; and conducting neighbourhood canvassing. The exponential growth in the use of video surveillance has been crucial to successful investigations, but the collection and examination of video surveillance is time consuming and labour intensive.

The Calgary Police Service provides a very high level of resourcing at the onset of Homicide investigations, which proves a higher-than-national-average rate of success.

B. Fatal Shootings

It is widely known in law enforcement that fatal shootings are difficult homicides to solve quickly. This may be because murders with no gun are more likely to result in direct contact between the victim and offender, and this contact often results in more physical evidence.¹⁵ This is confirmed in our own analysis of homicides in Calgary, as well as at the national level. The annual *Statistics Canada* Homicide Survey results for 2021 indicated that fatal shootings take detectives more time to solve than fatal stabbings or beatings. Whereas 70% of homicides by beating and 84% of homicides by stabbing were cleared within 100 days, only 47% of homicides by shooting were cleared within the same time frame, nationally.

C. Calgary's Homicide Solve Rate

In Calgary, we know that a significant amount of information - ultimately critical to solving the crime - is generated within the first few days of a homicide investigation. This, again, is hard to measure and verify. But anecdotal experience tells us that front-end loading investigative resources is in fact critical to successfully gathering evidence and resolving a homicide.

It would be extremely time-intensive to determine what percentage of Calgary homicides involved evidentiary developments in the first 48-72 hours that ultimately led to the case being solved faster. What *can* be calculated though, is the time lapse between the incident date and the date on which an offender was charged in that case. Our homicide data was explored with this in mind, for the period for which these details have been collected¹⁶, and the following can be asserted, on the topic of "The First 48".

During 2015-2021, there were 164 Accused persons¹⁷ identified with a charging date¹⁸. Focusing specifically on "The First 48", the following was found:

- There were 27 Accused persons charged on the date of the incident;

¹⁵ Ibid, NY Times.

¹⁶ 2015-2021.

¹⁷ One offender appeared in the list twice, but for 2 separate incidents with 2 separate charging dates.

¹⁸ We started tracking date of charges, for the purposes of statistical analysis in our Homicide Unit, in 2015.

- There were 19 Accused persons charged the date after the incident; and
- There were 7 Accused persons charged within 2 dates of the incident date.

What this means is that among 164 Accused persons charged in a Calgary homicide case, 53 or approximately one-third were charged in “The First 48”.

Statistics Canada reports that out of 788 reported homicides last year, 525 were solved by the end of the year (67%). This was a drop from the previous year. National data collected during 2017-2021 suggested **the average time for a homicide to be solved in 2021 was 36 days**. “However, approximately half of homicides [nationally] were solved within the first few days, 28%...were solved the day the incident was reported” to Police, 41% were solved after one day and 50% after 5 days. So basically, within the first 100 days, 64% of homicides were cleared.¹⁹

In Calgary, the average number of days between incident date and charging date during 2017-2021 was 268 days, with a range of 0 to 1221. For 2021, our average was 50 days, with a range of 0 to 452 days. If we remove the 2 outliers (0 and 452²⁰), **the average drops to 25 days, which is 11 fewer days than the national average.**

D. Race and Solve Rate

*Statistics Canada*²¹ looked specifically at solve rate and Race within the **national data** they had collected for the period of 2019-2021, and identified some differences based on the victim’s Race. Most notably:

- It took longer for homicides involving Racialized victims to be solved;
- Half of homicides involving victims of a non-Racialized Race group were solved within 2 days, while it took 53 days for the same percentage of Racialized victims to have their cases solved; and
- 52% of homicides involving a Racialized victim were solved within 100 days, compared to 68% for non-Racialized homicide victims.

In **Calgary**, we had 48 victims²² whose cases were cleared during the same period *StatsCan* analyzed for solve rate (2019-2021). Our analysis showed a much different story than that shown at the national level. Among these victims, the following applies:

- Half (N=24) were Caucasian, and half (N=24) were from a Racialized community: 8 were Indigenous, 7 were Black, and there were 3 each in the Race categories of Asian, Indian and Middle Eastern;

¹⁹ *Homicide in Canada*, (n1), 9.

²⁰ One victim’s homicide took 452 days for the Homicide Unit to solve; Another victim’s killer was arrested on the day of the incident.

²¹ *StatsCan* determines solve rate by calculating the time lapse between when an incident was deemed a homicide and when the incident was cleared (i.e., when a charge is laid or a case is cleared otherwise).

²² In cases involving multiple offenders, the lowest “Days to Charge Date” were used. In some cases, one offender was charged early while others may have been arrested after a longer investigation.

- Among the homicides of non-Racialized victims, 7 (29%) were solved within 2 days. For Racialized victims, it took only 1 day to solve 9 (38%) homicides; and
- Within 100 days²³, all but 2 homicides involving Racialized victims were solved. For non-Racialized victims, all but 3 homicides were solved within 100 days²⁴.

Calgary, therefore, seems to differ from the national trend, in that our solve rate appears to be faster with Racialized victims, as opposed to non-Racialized victims.

V. Breakdown of Unsolved Files: 2005-2021

During 2005-2021, Calgary amassed a total of 440 homicides or on average, 26 homicides per year. During this timeframe, we have been unable to clear 96 homicides, or 22% of the total. This means our clearance rate overall during 2005-2021 is 78% and we have 344 homicides that *have* been cleared.

Table 2 breaks down the homicide numbers during 2005-2021 based on clearance and motivation for the murder. As shown, clearance rate can vary from year to year, and ranges from a low of 62% in 2021 to a high of 93% in 2009. Interestingly, the proportion of OC/Gang and Drug files in those 2 years was exactly the same – 29%. What *was* different is that in 2009, there was a large number of domestic homicides (traditionally more straight-forward to clear; 12, 43% of total) and three incidents involving multiple victims – all of which were cleared; So, this contributed to the high clearance rate that year. Conversely, in 2021, there was a low number of domestic homicides (4, 19% of total) and not one “multiple victim” event.

Table 2. Unsolved Homicides by Year, Total Homicides by Year, and Homicide Motivation Breakdown by Year, 2005-2021.

| Year | # Unsolved Homicides | # Solved Homicides | Total Homicides* | Clearance Rate | Homicide Motivation – OVERALL^ | Homicide Motivation – UNSOLVED |
|------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------|--|--|
| 2005 | 8 | 16 | 24 | 67% | 3 Deadly Confrontation 10 Domestic 4 Drug 7 OC/Gang TOTAL: 24 | 2 Drugs 6 OC/Gang TOTAL: 8 |
| 2006 | 5 | 20 | 25 | 80% | 9 Deadly Confrontation 4 Domestic 8 Drug 2 OC/Gang 2 Other TOTAL: 25 | 2 Drug 2 OC/Gang 1 Other TOTAL: 5 |
| 2007 | 10 | 27 | 37 | 73% | 12 Deadly Confrontation 11 Domestic 2 Drug 6 OC/Gang 6 Other TOTAL: 37 | 2 Deadly Confrontation 1 Domestic 1 Drug 5 OC/Gang 1 Other TOTAL: 10 |
| 2008 | 7 | 26 | 33 | 79% | 8 Deadly Confrontation 8 Domestic | 6 OC/Gang 1 Other |

²³ Specifically, within 72 days, as the jump was then to 467 days.

²⁴ Specifically, within 86 days.

| Year | # Unsolved Homicides | # Solved Homicides | Total Homicides* | Clearance Rate | Homicide Motivation – OVERALL^ | Homicide Motivation – UNSOLVED |
|------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------|--|---|
| | | | | | 4 Drug 12 OC/Gang 1 Other TOTAL: 33 | TOTAL: 7 |
| 2009 | 2 | 26 | 28 | 93% | 8 Deadly Confrontation 12 Domestic 2 Drug 6 OC/Gang TOTAL: 28 | 1 Drug 1 OC/Gang TOTAL: 2 |
| 2010 | 2 | 15 | 17 | 88% | 7 Deadly Confrontation 5 Domestic 3 Drug 1 OC/Gang 1 Hate/Bias TOTAL: 17 | 1 Domestic 1 OC/Gang TOTAL: 2 |
| 2011 | 2 | 9 | 11 | 82% | 4 Deadly Confrontation 2 Domestic 3 Drug 2 OC/Gang TOTAL: 11 | 2 OC/Gang TOTAL: 2 |
| 2012 | 4 | 17 | 21 | 81% | 11 Deadly Confrontation 5 Domestic 2 Drug 2 OC/Gang 1 Other TOTAL: 21 | 2 Deadly Confrontation 1 OC/Gang 1 Other TOTAL: 4 |
| 2013 | 4 | 20 | 24 | 83% | 7 Deadly Confrontation 11 Domestic 4 Drug 1 OC/Gang 1 Unknown TOTAL: 24 | 1 Domestic 1 Drug 1 OC/Gang 1 Unknown TOTAL: 4 |
| 2014 | 6 | 27 | 33 | 82% | 19 Deadly Confrontation 9 Domestic 3 Drug 2 OC/Gang TOTAL: 33 | 3 Deadly Confrontation 2 Domestic 1 Drug TOTAL: 6 |
| 2015 | 12 | 25 | 37 | 68% | 6 Deadly Confrontation 8 Domestic 3 Drug 10 Fight/Quarrel 1 Financial Gain 8 OC/Gang 1 Other TOTAL: 37 | 4 Deadly Confrontation 2 Drug 6 OC/Gang TOTAL: 12 |
| 2016 | 5 | 25 | 30 | 83% | 4 Deadly Confrontation 8 Domestic 2 Drug 6 Fight/Quarrel 2 Financial Gain 6 OC/Gang 2 Other TOTAL: 30 | 1 Deadly Confrontation 1 Fight/Quarrel 1 Financial Gain 2 OC/Gang TOTAL: 5 |
| 2017 | 6 | 22 | 28 | 79% | 2 Deadly Confrontation 6 Domestic 10 Drug 4 Fight/Quarrel 5 OC/Gang 1 Other TOTAL: 28 | 1 Drug 1 Fight/Quarrel 4 OC/Gang TOTAL: 6 |
| 2018 | 2 | 15 | 17 | 88% | 2 Deadly Confrontation 7 Domestic 2 Drug | 1 Deadly Confrontation 1 OC/Gang TOTAL: 2 |

| Year | # Unsolved Homicides | # Solved Homicides | Total Homicides* | Clearance Rate | Homicide Motivation – OVERALL^ | Homicide Motivation – UNSOLVED |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------|--|---|
| | | | | | 5 Fight/Quarrel 1 OC/Gang TOTAL: 17 | |
| 2019 | 5 | 15 | 20 | 75% | 2 Deadly Confrontation 8 Domestic 2 Drug 1 Fight/Quarrel 1 Financial Gain 6 OC/Gang TOTAL: 20 | 1 Drug 4 OC/Gang TOTAL: 5 |
| 2020 | 8 | 26 | 34 | 76% | 8 Deadly Confrontation 4 Domestic 3 Drug 7 Fight/Quarrel 1 Financial Gain 10 OC/Gang 1 Unknown TOTAL: 34 | 1 Domestic 1 Fight/Quarrel 5 OC/Gang 1 Unknown TOTAL: 8 |
| 2021 | 8 | 13 | 21 | 62% | 6 Deadly Confrontation 4 Domestic 3 Drug 5 Fight/Quarrel 3 OC/Gang TOTAL: 21 | 3 Deadly Confrontation 1 Domestic 1 Drug 3 OC/Gang TOTAL: 8 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 344 | 440 | 78% | 118 Deadly Confrontation 122 Domestic 60 Drug 38 Fight/Quarrel 5 Financial Gain 1 Hate/Bias 80 OC/Gang 14 Other 2 Unknown TOTAL: 440 | 16 Deadly Confrontation 7 Domestic 13 Drug 3 Fight/Quarrel 1 Financial Gain 50 OC/Gang 4 Other 2 Unknown TOTAL: 96 |

Source: Homicide – Analytical Spreadsheet, Sourced 2022 October 20.

*These numbers might differ slightly from other year-end numbers in this report as sometimes case status can change with investigation.

^In 2015, the motivation of “Deadly Confrontation” was parsed out into a number of sub-categories, including Fight/Quarrel and Financial Gain.

We have not yet re-evaluated that motivation for years prior to 2015.

VI. SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS’ FAMILIES

One measure we don’t currently track in our homicide statistics is victim family support, which is critical for families in the aftermath of losing their loved one to homicide. CPS has a webpage directing victims’ families to a [survivor’s guide](#), which includes resources they can tap into, such as AHS, the Crisis Line, and Calgary Homicide Support Society. But what about if families are looking for investigative updates, in the event their loved one’s murder has not yet been solved?

The Primary Investigator is the CPS’ point of contact with families, as s/he can share the most appropriate information that aligns with the investigative strategies and progress. Many homicide investigations engage complex investigative techniques, including wire taps, undercover operations, and the use of cooperative witnesses/agents. The Primary Investigator has the knowledge and understanding of what can be shared and what must be kept

confidential, to ensure investigative integrity and discretion while ensuring the families feel supported and informed.

The Homicide Unit has also utilized investigators (other than the Primary Investigator), Family Liaison Officers, Victim Assistance Support Team (VAST) members, and community partners to provide support to the grieving families. It should be noted that many Primary Investigators form long-term connections and relationships with the families as they guide and support them through the court process. It is not uncommon for families to maintain contact with the Primary after s/he has left the Homicide Unit, through a transfer or retirement. In the unfortunate event that the homicide is unresolved, the investigators will determine what support and continued communication is preferred; the Primary Investigator, another Homicide investigator, or VAST will ensure continued communication and case updates.

The Homicide Unit is currently developing new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to support victims' families through a trauma-informed, victim-centric approach. It is imperative that families and loved ones impacted by homicide receive the trauma-informed and culturally appropriate support they deserve. The goal is to ensure that families are properly supported and provided as much information as possible throughout the investigation and court proceedings.

The Homicide Unit has received support from the Provincial Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU) – a unit within the Alberta Indigenous Programs. FILU provides services and support to the families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and has been critical in helping investigators support Indigenous families. The Homicide Unit has also received substantial support from the Diversity Resources Unit to assist in not only supporting families and loved ones of victims, but also in providing information and support to the affected community.

The wishes of the impacted families will inform the type and level of support and communication in homicide investigations. Experience has shown that assumptions cannot be made about what families may want or need; all families and their reactions and needs are uniquely different. The Homicide Unit will continue to collaborate with Family Liaison Officers, VAST, FILU, IRT, Diversity Resources, and community partners to ensure that impacted families receive the support they need and prefer.