
Green River Homicides Investigation Budget Briefing Paper

Background

The Green River investigations began in 1982 when the bodies of five women were found in and near the Green River in South King County; eventually, the deaths of 49 women were linked to the investigation. The King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) formed a task force to investigate the deaths, and local law enforcement agencies, the FBI, and the Attorney General's Office contributed detectives. In the ensuing decade, the task force increased and decreased in size, eventually diminishing to one KCSO detective.

In August 2001, the KCSO received word that the state crime lab had matched the DNA on evidence that was collected during previous investigations to suspect Gary Ridgway. The Sheriff immediately directed the formation of the "evidence review team". The King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (KCPAO) assigned Senior DPA Jeff Baird to the case. On November 30, 2001, Gary Ridgway was arrested in connection with four of the 49 murders.

Current State

The KCSO and KCPAO anticipate that the next steps in the case will take three years. Our top priority will be trial preparation, which we conservatively estimate will take 18 months to two years. When the trial does begin, it will likely be lengthy. Concurrent with those phases, we will be examining other unsolved homicides, including those that are not currently linked to the Green River investigation. The ongoing investigation into the uncharged cases could continue for several years.

Trial Preparation

Our initial priority will be to prepare for trial on the four homicides for which Mr. Ridgway has already been charged.

Preparation will be an expensive and extraordinarily time-sensitive process, and will involve an unprecedented number of documents. We must comply with Justice Court Rules that govern speedy trial and disclosure of evidence to the defense team. The defense has a legal right to demand all of this material as discovery, and will undoubtedly do so. If we fail to comply fully on our own, we will be compelled to comply by court order.

Full disclosure requires that all documents included in the four homicide case files, as well as all files related specifically to Mr. Ridgway be provided to the defense. We plan to have a vendor scan each page of the documents and provide them to the defense on compact discs. The KCSO and KCPAO agree that electronic transfer is the best way to share information with the defense. Further, having the information available electronically will enhance investigators' ability to continue working on the four charged

cases and to analyze and compare evidence on the uncharged homicides. In addition to incriminating information against Mr. Ridgway, both the defense and prosecutors will look for potentially exculpatory information contained in the documents.

Since we estimate that there are 200,000 pages involved, this process must begin almost immediately. The vendor estimates that the process will take about 30 days to complete, using two assembly lines that operate twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week.

The remaining 45 "official" Green River Homicide cases will have to go through the same process. We estimate that those files contain approximately 500,000 additional pages of documents.

The final phase of the scanning project will involve another 300,000 or so pages of documents such as tip sheets on other suspects and incidental documents collected by police investigators over the past twenty years.

Barring delays or difficulties, we anticipate that each of the one million pages will be processed by the end of 2002. At that point, both the prosecution and the defense will have electronic access and search capabilities for all of the documents associated with this investigation.

As the historical documents are being processed, currently assigned investigators are collecting more new evidence and information. New tips come in every day, and each tip has the potential to become an additional full-blown homicide investigation. During the past two decades, many people have moved out of the area or passed away. Our investigators will be working to locate these individuals, and when possible, contact and interview them. As these contacts take place, they generate additional leads needing attention. Since we are never sure what might come of the next contact, we feel compelled to exhaust these leads. For the four charged cases, it is imperative this work be done as soon as possible.

Staff Resources

We have begun this work with a team composed of twenty KCSO staff and five KCPAO employees. We also have one Seattle Police Department (SPD) detective and one Bainbridge Island Police Department (BIPD) lieutenant on loan to us at this time. Financial details of these loans are discussed below.

The attached organizational chart displays how task force personnel are currently deployed. In addition to the detectives and prosecutors noted below, the task force includes a captain, two sergeants, civilian administrative staff, and an evidence technician.

Detectives

One full-time detective is assigned exclusively to each charged case, and two detectives are assigned to work exclusively on information related to Mr.

Ridgway. The other detectives are deployed to the most urgent investigative tasks, as they exist at this moment (e.g. reviewing case files, following new leads, and cataloging evidence). Their assignments will change as the investigation progresses.

We expect that we may be able to identify suspects in the additional homicides through DNA or other scientific, circumstantial, and testimonial evidence. As that occurs, it will be necessary to expand the size of the task force to meet the demand of the work.

Other Cases/Mutual Aid

It is likely that through this investigation, we will be able to link other suspects to other unsolved homicides. A local newspaper recently reported that there are 52 other unsolved female homicides that may be related to this case. If that happens, it is our intent to assist the agency that has legal jurisdiction over a case with their investigation, as necessary.

Cost

We are proposing a beginning budget to carry us through the first two years of this process. The attached financial estimates are reasonably accurate for the first two years, but it would be very speculative to project costs for year three at this time. There is no doubt that it will take dozens of people to assess information that was collected and/or created over two decades. We know that we need to prepare for at least one trial; further review of evidence will likely reveal a need for additional charges, arrests, and trials for Mr. Ridgway and others.

The task force includes two officers from other agencies. Our cost-sharing arrangement with the executives of those agencies is that King County will provide cars, office equipment, and Green River-specific overtime pay, but the lending agencies will continue to pay the salary and benefits of their loaned employees.

Conclusion

It is impossible to predict at this time how long this investigation will take and where it will ultimately lead us, but the cost of not doing the work is too high in both dollars and lives.

The horrific nature of these crimes demands that we put forth an all-out effort to solve them. The hundreds of surviving family members and friends of the victims expect us to accept the responsibility to seek justice and closure on their behalf.

**King County Sheriff's Office
Green River Homicides Investigation
Two-year Expenditure Plan**

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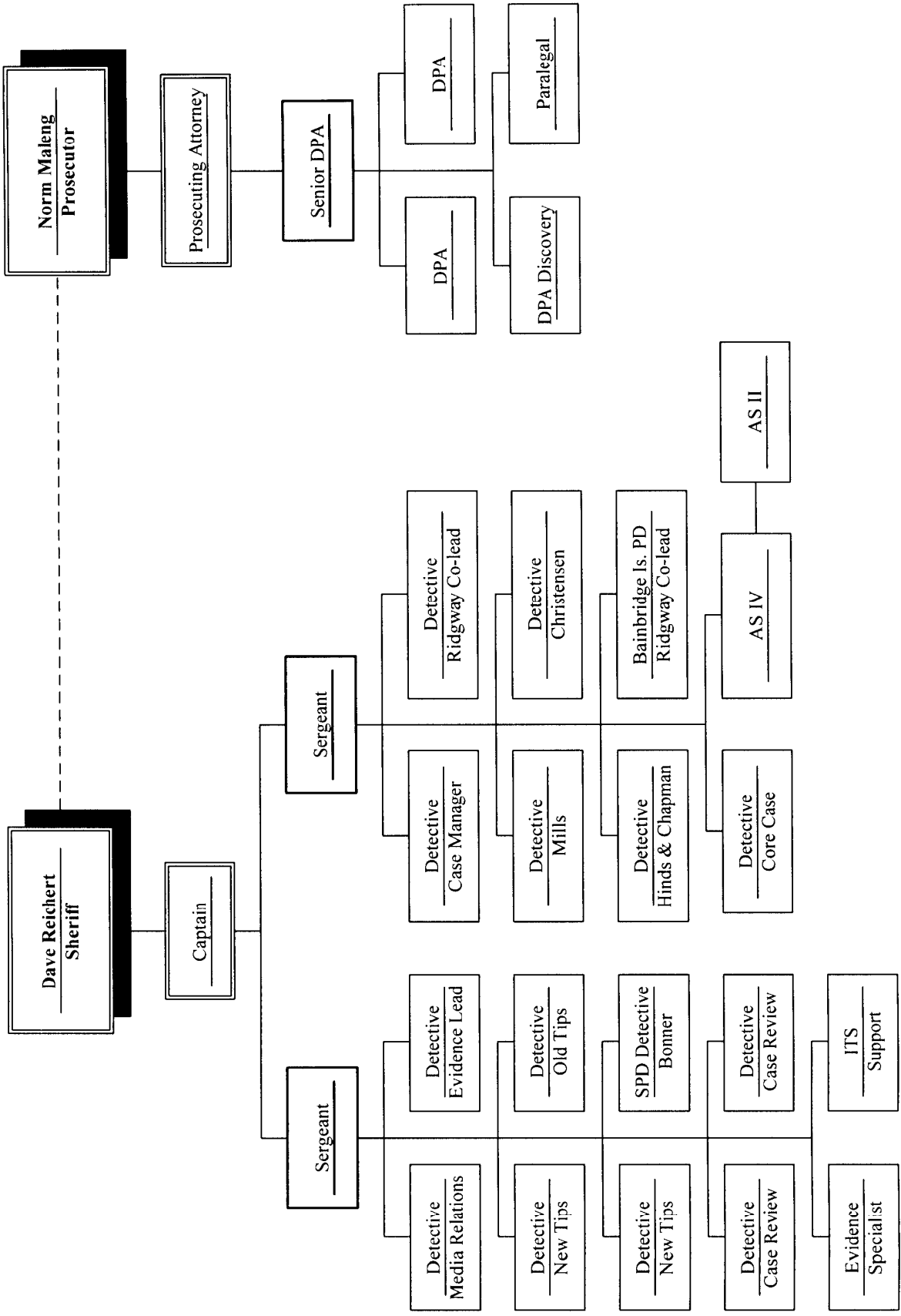
Position/Item Description	Budget 2002		Budget 2003	
	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE
<input type="checkbox"/> Captain (Salary: \$82,883/Benefits: \$20,529)	\$ 103,412	1.00	\$ 105,997	1.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sergeant (Salary: \$63,055/Benefits: \$19,039)	164,188	2.00	169,935	2.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Detective (Salary: \$40,582/Benefits: \$16,661)	572,430	10.00	888,698	15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Detective (3 Positions: 6 months)	85,865	1.50	177,740	3.00
<input type="checkbox"/> LAN Administrator (Salary/Benefits)	58,908	1.00	60,380	1.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Admn. Specialist IV (Salary/Benefits)	51,355	1.00	52,639	1.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Admn. Specialist II (Salary/Benefits)	43,367	1.00	44,451	1.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence Specialist (Salary/Benefits)	46,318	1.00	47,476	1.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 51130 Overtime/Benefits	165,870		171,675	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 51158 Detective Pay	46,413		68,760	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 51380 Quartermaster	46,500		15,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 53105 New Hire Exams	29,000		10,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 55352 Radio Charges	19,561		27,764	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 56740 Laptop/Desktop Computer	45,500		15,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 56770 Auxiliary Equip.-Vehicle	116,250		37,500	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 52290 Operational Supplies	20,000		22,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 52223 Gasoline	20,000		30,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 53103 DNA Services (Grant)	500,000		250,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 53105 Forensic Expert	50,000		50,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 53710 Lease Space	128,000		130,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 53620 Maint. - Bldg.	25,000		27,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 53770 Copier/Fax Rental	14,500		14,863	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 53750 Lease Vehicles	108,750		157,500	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 53210 Telephone Charges	25,000		30,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 55145 Electrical/Phone/ITS Install.	45,000		5,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 56720 Furniture	45,000		5,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 56730 Office Equip.	10,000		3,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 56740 Server EDP Equip.	20,000		3,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acct. 56790 Surveillance Equip.	10,000		5,000	
Total	\$ 2,616,187	18.50	\$ 2,625,378	25.00

This plan also supports the space needs of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, including furniture, phone, ITS and electrical installation costs. It is understood that PAO will fund all of the Discovery costs for PAO, Public Defender and KCSO.

Green River Homicides Investigation

2002

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King County Sheriff's Office
Function of those Assigned to Green River Homicides Investigation
2002

Captain – administrator for Green River Investigation

Sergeant – supervises Detectives, Media Relations Officer, clerical staff, Computer Resource person and Evidence Specialist; oversees Detectives working on tips; coordinates with other unit Sergeant on assignments; and reports to Green River Captain.

Two Detectives: New Tips – assigned to work on 300 plus tips generated since arrest and assigned to act as liaisons with present prostitution population.

Detective: Old Tips – work on older tips generated prior to arrest and act as liaison with present prostitution population.

Detective (loaned Commissioned person) – assist with core case detectives, and responsible for review of victim Bonner file and certain SPD cases.

Detective: Evidence Lead – responsible for overseeing all Green River evidence; all past and future lab submissions to state and outside laboratories; and will be the knowledge source for evidence related questions on all cases.

Detective: Media Relations – has primary responsibility for all media relations; acts as liaison with department MRO; will gather historical information on task force and its previous make-up; and works tips as needed.

Two Detectives: Case Review – responsible for review of uncharged cases not presently recognized as supporting the four core cases; review cases for purposes of identifying any suspect, with particular attention to the evidence present; establish additional casework or contacts to be made; and establish any relationship to the charged suspect.

Evidence Specialist – maintains control of all Green River evidence and responsible for its proper packaging, paperwork documentation, etc.

ITS Support – computer support person for all assigned to Green River investigation in its remote location and computer support for prosecutorial staff on site with investigators.

Sergeant – supervises Detectives (particularly the core case detectives) and clerical staff; coordinates with other unit Sergeant on assignments; acts as liaison with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and their staff assigned to this matter; and reports to the Green River Captain.

Detective: Case Manager – monitors tips and all incoming paperwork for placement into hard files and electronic format; and acts as liaison for discovery process.

King County Sheriff's Office

Function of those Assigned to Green River Homicides Investigation 2002

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Detective: Ridgway Co-lead – core case detective and co-responsibility for focus on suspect Ridgway.

Detective (loaned Commissioned person) – core case detective and co-responsibility for focus on suspect Ridgway.

Detective: Core Case – core case detective with primary responsibility for victim Hinds and Chapman cases.

Detective: Core Case – core case detective with primary responsibility for victim Mills case.

Detective: Core Case – core case detective with primary responsibility for victim Christensen case.

Detective: Core Case – core case detective responsible for the case review of either a charged case, a case with charge potential (based on available evidence, witness statements, etc.), or an uncharged case primarily supporting the four core cases.

AS IV – clerical support for 15 Detectives, 2 Sergeants and 1 Captain.

AS II – clerical support for 15 Detectives, 2 Sergeants and 1 Captain.