

[← Back](#)

Killings down in Pierce County, up in Tacoma in 2002 - Crimes: Police say they don't know why so many were killed in the city

By Stacey Mulick January 19, 2003 Publication: The News Tribune Page: B05 Word Count: 980

Last year, Pierce County sheriff's deputies investigated 11 killings, down from 18 in 2001 and the lowest in 12 years.

Tacoma police investigated 21 homicides last year, up from 17 in 2001. The number was the highest since 1998. Of the 21 killings, three were double homicides. Police officials said they don't know why Tacoma's homicides increased in 2002. They attribute part of it to the three double slayings. "That obviously skews the numbers off the top," spokesman Jim Mattheis said. "If you go through them, there aren't any links to say we're having a rash of gang-related homicides or drug-related homicides. Most of them were different." Sheriff's officials attribute their lower numbers to beefed up enforcement on dangerous, repeat offenders, a high rate of solving the violent crimes and domestic violence intervention programs. The sheriff's department investigated these homicide cases in 2002. * Russell Whitaker II, 26. He was killed when Bruce Eric Smith, fleeing the scene of a rape, slammed into Whitaker's car Jan. 11. Smith was convicted of murder in the death. Smith, a convicted felon, was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of release under the state's Three Strikes Law. * Christopher Lee Vangeystelen, 29. Investigators found his body Feb. 24 near Prairie Ridge after receiving an anonymous tip. No arrest reported. * Sharon Y. Vangilder, 39. She was strangled; her body was found March 21. No arrest reported. * Harold James Blue, 29. He was fatally shot during a

fight March 26 outside a tavern. Prosecutors have charged Carl Edward Jives Jr. with the death. He is a fugitive. * Keith L. Stumbaugh, 68. He was stabbed to death May 27 in his University Place apartment. Prosecutors have charged Vaughn Perry Radford in the death. * Robert W. Baker, 54. He was beaten to death at his home near Elgin on June 19 after a fight with his wife. Prosecutors have charged Cynthia Baker in her husband's death. * Bretton Lee Holdorph, 36. He was shot to death July 23 as he slept inside a mobile home he shared with his mother. No arrest reported. * Douglas Isaac McReynolds, 44. He was fatally shot Aug. 25 during a struggle with his wife. Prosecutors have charged Heidi Jean McReynolds in her husband's death. * Robert Fye Franklin, 38. He was shot to death Oct. 5 when a gunman fired into a tavern. No arrest reported. * Ricky Sinclair, 34. He was shot Nov. 27 when two intruders broke into a Lakewood apartment. Prosecutors have charged Liban Abdulkad Sheikh and Mohamud Abdullahi Mohamed in the death. Sheikh remains a fugitive. * Nathon Young, 14. He was mortally wounded Dec. 3 at a friend's home in Spanaway as he and another youth played with a rifle. He died the next day. The shooting was ruled accidental. Tacoma police investigated these homicide cases in 2002: * Kenneth Von Harris Jr., 20. The Parkland resident was fatally shot and his body found Jan. 9 in a South End alley. No arrest reported. * Michael Stephens, 42. He was fatally stabbed Jan. 14 during a Tacoma party. No arrest reported. * Keenya Cook, 21. She was fatally shot Feb. 16 at her aunt's East Side home. East Coast sniper suspects John Allen Muhammad and John Lee Malvo are suspects. * Marcus A. Carrillo, 14. He was fatally stabbed in a street fight March 21 on the East Side. Police and prosecutors ruled his 15-year-old attacker acted in self-defense. * Bio T. Siale, 24, and Hiram Magalei, 29. They died April 5 when a gunman shot into a crowd outside a downtown Tacoma night club. No arrest reported. * Lula B. Williams, 42. She was found strangled May 19 in an abandoned Tacoma house. No arrest reported. * Nikita Tumblin, 36. He was killed June 24 during an argument. Prosecutors have charged Dimitri Jovell Powell in the death. * Gary Alfiche, 46. He died July 26 after being stabbed six days earlier during an argument. Prosecutors charged Cindy Denise Musgrove in the death. * The Minh Hoang, 32. He was found beaten to death Aug. 13 in an abandoned home. No arrest reported. * Felton R. Nance III, 38. He was fatally stabbed Aug. 25 during a fight in the Tacoma Rescue Mission. Prosecutors have not filed charges against Nance's attacker. * Lamar Turner, 21. He was fatally stabbed Nov. 10 during a fight outside a Tacoma bar. Police have issued an arrest warrant for Yasmani Olguin-Mejia in the death. * Teresa Ann Cahill, 52. She was killed Nov. 13 in her Northeast Tacoma home and her body dumped in North Bend. Prosecutors charged her husband, Craig Cahill, in her death. * Matthew John Wilson, 11. He was fatally shot Nov. 20 as he and a friend played with loaded gun at the friend's East Side home. Prosecutors are reviewing the case. * Jeremy Britt Bayinthavong, 5, and Kimberly Carol Riley, 19. A gunman shot into a South End home during a Thanksgiving party. No arrest reported. * Clarence Johnston, 48. He was shot Dec. 1 during a street fight.

Prosecutors have charged Geoffrey Hauptli, Daniel Higgins and Raymond Howard Jr. in the death. * Anthony Edward "Aiden" Owings, 5 months. He was killed in a fall outside his family's Tacoma apartment. Prosecutors have charged Brian Zane Womac in his son's death. * Carl Richard James, 15. He was shot driving a stolen car Dec. 14. Prosecutors have charged the car's owner, Fredrick Sims, in the death. * Jamaica Howard, 21, and Paul "P.J." Chase, 22. The newlyweds were killed in her car Dec. 31. No arrest reported. Other law enforcement agencies investigated these homicide cases in 2002. * Cresenciano Gatdula, 71. He was fatally stabbed in his Fircrest home Oct. 19. Prosecutors have charged his wife, Trinidad Gatdula, in his death. * Richard Thompson, 43, was fatally shot Sept. 24 during a fight with his stepson at Thompson's Puyallup home. Prosecutors decided not to file charges.

The News Tribune**Date:** January 19, 2003**Page:** B05

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