

*Online version*

**THEMATIC REVIEW OF  
LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL TRANSGENDER  
RELATED MURDERS**

**LGBT ADVISORY GROUP TO  
THE METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**



## **Authors**

This review is written by the murder review project team of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Advisory Group. The members of the team are, in alphabetical order, Jack Gilbert, Bob Hodgson, Derek Lee, Griffith Vaughan Williams and other members of the Advisory Group.

The LGBT Advisory Group is a group of independent advisors to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). We are a voluntary group working for better policing for LGBT people in London. Our work is facilitated by the Diversity and Citizen Focus Directorate of the Metropolitan Police.

For more information on our work, please visit our website at <http://www.lgbtag.org.uk>.

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## **2 Introduction**

### **2.1 What is the purpose of this Murder Review?**

The purpose of our review is to extract lessons to be learnt and to identify best practice from selected investigations of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) of LGBT-related murders from 1990 to 2002. We have chosen six investigations with a total number of 10 victims.

Several of the murders being reviewed here received much attention at the time from the LGBT and mainstream media. They continue to be a sensitive subject for many LGBT people. Although some of these cases remain unsolved, it is not our purpose to re-investigate these murders. We do not have the expertise to do so. The police do have a systematic case review process (see Appendix A).

We focus on the LGBT-specific issues that arise from the circumstance of these murders: Was the police investigation able to address the LGBT issues effectively and adequately? Did they respond to the needs of the family and support network of the victims? Did they have an effective strategy for community liaison in terms of gathering intelligence and community reassurance?

### **2.2 Brief history**

This project was initiated by the LGBT Advisory Group in 2002 with the agreement of the head of the Diversity Directorate at the time, Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Grieve. We consulted members of the Advisory Group and others on our selection of murder cases to review. We also explored various methodologies. Our original proposal was to review the case files of the murders and to interview the senior investigating officers of the investigation teams. After a lengthy attempt to use this as a starting point for discussions with the police, we failed to reach agreement with the police on this form of review.

In the end, we made direct contact with the Homicide Command of the Specialist Crime Directorate (SCD), and agreed on an indirect review where we use as our primary source a review report commissioned from a team of experienced SCD officers, led by DI Stephen Dingvean. The police report was completed in 2005. Our work on this independent report started in earnest in late 2005, using both information from the police report and material already in the public domain.

### **2.3 Methodology**

Six investigations into 10 murders were selected as case studies for our review:

- Murder of Michael Boothe (1990, unsolved)
- Murders committed by the serial murderer Colin Ireland: Peter Walker, Christopher Dunn, Perry Bradley III, Andrew Collier and Emanuel Spiteri (1993, solved).
- Murder of Robyn Browne (1997, unsolved)
- Murder of Jaap Bornkamp (2000, unsolved)

resources to combat anti-gay violence, Chief Superintendent Shoemake responded by saying:

“A person born with any sort of colour doesn’t have a choice in the matter. I would suggest that sexual preferences, however, are a matter of individual choice.”

He further claimed that although some homosexuals behaved responsibly:

“...the problem comes with the other type of homosexual who often leads a double lifestyle, often using false identities, actually frequenting pubs, clubs and public toilets, has casual pick ups for the purposes of sex and of course doesn’t wish to be exposed.” (*Pink Paper*, 21 July 1990).

This attitude was a historical remnant of the police treatment of gay men as criminals. Not only was this incorrect stereotyping, it was also counter-productive to the witness appeals.

## **4.2 The Ireland murders (1993)**

### **4.2.1 Linkage of the crimes: missed opportunities**

The investigation of the serial murders by Colin Ireland was hampered by a lack of knowledge of the gay scene in London and the special culture of S&M/bondage. In particular, valuable time was lost before the police managed to recognise two common threads to the crimes. These links were established only after the death of the fourth victim, Andrew Collier. (A chronology provided at the end of this section.)

First of all, Ireland tied his victims as part of restraint-related role-playing during foreplay, and sought men who were already interested in this or could be introduced to it. The investigators had great difficulty interpreting the circumstances in which they found the victims. The second common thread was that Ireland chose all his victims from the same pub, the Coleherne. In the 1980s and 90s, the Coleherne was known in the LGBT community as a meeting place for men who shared an interest in S&M and bondage. However, since the victims were killed in their own homes in different parts of London, this link was not immediately apparent to the police.

As a result of these difficulties, the suspicious deaths of the first two victims, Peter Walker (8 March) and Christopher Dunn (28 May), were not linked. In fact, the police did not designate the death of the first victim, Peter Walker, as a homophobic murder until Ireland himself told them. The death of the second victim, Christopher Dunn, was initially treated as unexplained, following the pathologist’s opinion that death could have occurred as an accident during consensual S&M activity.

The third victim, Perry Bradley, also went to the Coleherne. However, his sexuality was not known to family and colleagues, and so his murder was not initially classified as homophobic. Again, the homophobic link was established only when Ireland called the Kensington police station after Perry’s murder.

The murder of the fourth victim, Andrew Collier, was recognised as gay-related from the outset. It was through contact with Galop (see next section) and calls from Ireland himself that Collier’s murder was linked with the death of the first victim, Peter Walker. The link occurred on the second day of the Collier investigation (10 June). This meant that, when investigating the suspicious death of Perry Bradley III (4 June), the

investigators did not approach the Coleherne to find out if Bradley had been there on the night he died until after both the deaths of Andrew Collier (8 June) and Emanuel Spiteri (12 June).

#### **4.2.2 Linkage of the crimes: use of community intelligence**

As the police found out more and more about the personal lives of the victims of these serial killings, they understood that they needed community advice. However, it was also clear that the police lacked the knowledge to deal with the information they had gathered. Within 48 hours of Peter Walker's death, the police contacted a community organisation, Galop, which monitors LGBT policing issues. This is because they believed that the death occurred whilst Walker was having sex. At this stage, they had not yet designated this first death as homophobic.

The contact with Galop turned out to be a key development in the investigation. After the death of Andrew Collier, the Collier investigation team contacted Galop again. On 10 June, Galop pointed out that there could be a linkage between the deaths of Walker and Collier (first and fourth victims) from the similarity in the S&M circumstances of their death. (This was confirmed by calls from Colin Ireland himself that connected the Walker and Collier cases.)

#### **4.2.3 Representation of LGBT life**

Given the climate of fear about HIV/AIDS at the time, the HIV status of the victims was highlighted and sensationalised in the press (see Appendix D). It was not clear whether the public disclosure of this information was useful. However, this information could be easily interpreted as a marker for promiscuity, adding to the stereotyping of the victims.

**Recommendation 1.** We recommend that clear protocols must be developed for the public disclosure of HIV status, assessing the relevance of such disclosure to the investigation.

#### **4.2.4 Summary**

Police at the time failed to deal adequately with LGBT life and culture. The initial investigations of the first murders seemed to us to be more focussed on determining promiscuity and risk taking, and seemed predisposed to interpreting circumstances as sex acts 'gone wrong'. We would argue that given the rarity of such suspicious circumstances the police should have been in a position to link the first two murders, and to have done much more to warn the community at all times after that - particularly following the murder of Andrew Collier. This represents a serious failure of policing.