

Facing Domestic Violence

A murder that couldn't be ignored

Murder proved changes were needed to protect domestic violence victims

IAN ADAMS

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A murder-suicide on International Women's Day 20 years ago forced police and the courts to delve into systemic failings in dealing with domestic violence.

On March 8, 1996, Randy Iles climbed into a rented truck with a shotgun he'd purchased that morning, drove to Craigeleith, and killed his ex-girlfriend, Arlene May.

May's murder sparked a coroner's inquest that was the first in Ontario to examine the roots of domestic violence and how police and the courts treat victims and perpetrators.

"I just hope that things get better for women in the future," said May's daughter, Pauline May. "It's hard to think about, and to deal with it is harder. I wouldn't wish that upon my worst enemy."

My Friend's House executive director Alison FitzGerald was a front-line worker at the women's crisis shelter at the time. She was home at the time of the murder and saw the police vehicles heading to Craigeleith.

"I saw all these cop cars and wondered, 'Oh my God, what's happening', and then I watched the news," she said. "I had a gut feeling that it was one of ours."



It's hard to think about, and to deal with it is harder."

Pauline May

Arlene May's daughter, Pauline. IAN ADAMS PHOTO

May had gone to the shelter for the first time about three months before she was killed. Iles had assaulted her on several occasions.

May was a single mom of five kids, ranging in age from 20 to four. Son Adam was living with his dad while the eldest, Pauline, had her own apartment in Colling-

wood, where she lived with her own son.

"She was just a typical mom, always tried to do stuff with us and take us places, when she could afford to," Pauline said.

May brought her children to Collingwood to escape Toronto. They had been living in a rough neighbourhood where there had been

drug dealing and shootings. Pauline remembers one woman was raped and killed near the family's home.

"It was getting bad. My brothers were getting beaten up by the neighbourhood kids, there was lots of drugs, and a couple of people had been shot," she said. "We wanted to get up here to get a bet-

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The inquest into May's murder changed the way domestic violence is handled by police and the courts.

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ter life, because it was getting scary down there."

In 1994, May started a relationship with Iles, not realizing he was still with his wife.

"He had an infatuation with my mom from the beginning. At first, he was a great guy and treated my mom like a princess," Pauline said. "He changed later on; as soon as something happened that didn't go his way you started to see his true colours."

May became pregnant but miscarried. It was during the pregnancy that Iles began to physically abuse her.

In November 1996, a week after Iles assaulted her, May went to My Friend's House for help. Staff urged her to go to police.

See SHE, Page 9



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She knew something was going to happen: daughter

● A, from Page 8

“Her only option was to report it to the police,” said Susan Hanna, then a child and youth worker with My Friend’s House, and now the shelter’s outreach worker. “She was always welcome to stay at the shelter, but her only protection was the police.”

In the three months leading up to the murder, Iles terrorized May, calling her and leaving messages, saying they would be together for a “honeymoon in heaven.”

Collingwood Police and the OPP in Grey County charged him with assault, criminal harassment and numerous breaches of recognizance for contacting May while his other charges wound their way through the courts.

May was about to move back to Collingwood, to get away from the isolation of living in Craigeleith and being so far away from help if she needed it.

“She wanted to get back into town to get closer to me, and closer to a police station,” Pauline said.

Two days before Iles killed her, May gave her eldest daughter a letter.

“She knew something was going to happen,” Pauline said. “[The letter said] that if anything was to happen to her, I needed to take care of my younger sister and to separate out her belongings.”

Early on the day of her murder, May came into Collingwood to get her hair done in the hope it would be a pick-me-up, said Pauline.

“Because of everything that had been going on, she was depressed and she wanted to make herself feel better. She stopped by my place to show me and she just teared up,” Pauline said.

That afternoon, Iles waited outside May’s Timmons Road home until she returned. He forced his way in. He barricaded the three children in a closet, but eventually let them go and told them to go to the Craigeleith General Store to call police.

The children, then ranging in age from four to 15, ran across Hwy. 26 to the store.

Meanwhile, Pauline, who had been out with a friend, came home in the middle of the afternoon to a message from her sister to call the Craigeleith General Store. She called back and spoke to an officer, who filled her in on what was happening.

She got a ride to Craigeleith and spent the next several hours in a police cruiser speaking with an officer, while police attempted to make contact with someone in the house. Officers eventually forced their way in just before midnight, finding the couple dead in a bedroom.

Iles had shot May in the chest at short



This is the last photo of Arlene May before her murder, taken by her then 14-year-old daughter, Kelly. SUBMITTED PHOTO

“I had to stay strong for everybody ... I know she wouldn’t want me to give up.”

Pauline May

range, paused for a cigarette, reloaded, and shot her again before turning the gun on himself.

Pauline was suddenly faced with the job of arranging a funeral for her mother.

“I had to stay strong for everybody. I didn’t get counselling, which I probably should have because I’ve never dealt with it properly. I just was trying to be strong for my kids and my siblings,” she said. “I know she wouldn’t want me to give up. She would want me to be a good person; she raised us to be good people, and have morals. She was a strong woman.

“She tried, and unfortunately it didn’t work out.”

In the months and years following her mother’s death, Pauline raised her siblings and took part in the inquest, hoping it would make a difference for other women who found themselves in the same kind of abusive relationship.

“I had guilt for a while, because I told her I would move in and stay with her until he went to jail, that I would protect her any way I could, but she wouldn’t let me because she was protecting me,” she said. “I miss my mom every day ... I would give anything to have my mom back.”

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DARD DEAL DISPUTE
 Go to Simcoe.com to see some of the emails and meeting notes obtained in the Freedom of Information request submitted to the town referenced in this week's front page story.

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FAMILY REUNITED
 Wasaga Beach's Zena Rolph (centre) met her grandson, Stephen Vogt, for the first time on Sunday, Aug. 7, 45 years after Vogt's birth mother, Linda Wilson (right), gave him up for adoption. See story on page 14.
IAN ADAMS PHOTO

Town, bar operators dispute Dard deal

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SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

The operators of one of the town-owned beachfront bars say the mayor and CAO made, and then reneged on, a deal for the Dard.

Simcoe.com has learned a meeting took place on March 9 between Bananas Beach Club operators Enzo Grossi and Larry Pevato, and Wasaga Beach mayor Brian Smith and CAO George Vadeboncoeur to discuss a new lease agreement for Bananas.

According to documents obtained through a request under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the

meeting also included discussions on the lease for the Dard. That lease was the subject of a request for proposals that had closed two weeks before the meeting.

No meeting minutes exist from the March 9 discussions. According to the documents obtained in the FOI request, efforts were made to keep the meeting secret.

Among the documents obtained by Simcoe.com is an email sent by Phoenix Hospitality's project manager Anna Noveva on March 18 to CAO Vadeboncoeur referencing the "amount and terms discussed at

your March 9, 2016 meeting," and including an attached "draft lease agreement for the Dardanella."

The CAO replied to this email asking Noveva to "delete reference to the March 9 meeting" and resend.

"I would be happy if you recalled it so it didn't exist," said the CAO in his email to Noveva. Noveva resent the lease documents for the Dard, without reference to the March 9 meeting, three-and-a-half hours later.

Vadeboncoeur would not comment on the matter, citing potential litigation.

According to Grossi and Pevato,

Smith called Grossi on the morning of March 9 to set up the meeting for that afternoon.

"I got a phone call from the mayor, asking me if I was ready to make a deal," Grossi told Simcoe.com.

Smith also declined to respond to questions from Simcoe.com due to the potential for litigation.

"Based on what it appears (Grossi and Pevato) may have said to you, it's not accurate, and we won't comment any further until we know, first of all, that this is going to become a legal issue and, if so, what our lawyers advise us to do," said Smith.

See **MAYOR**, Page 8

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Mayor, CAO tried to keep meeting with beachfront bar operators quiet

● **Town**, from Page 1

Phoenix Hospitality was already considered the successful bidder for Bananas, with a proposed lease of \$85,000 in 2016, when the two men say they were called in to the March 9 meeting with Smith and Vadeboncoeur.

“At that meeting, the discussion was for both (Bananas and the Dard),” Pevato added.

According to the documents obtained by Simcoe.com, Smith said if Phoenix was to increase the lease rate for Bananas, he would support their bid for the Dard.

Pevato acknowledged that Phoenix is now considering legal recourse, a route hinted at within the documents obtained by Simcoe.com.

Pevato and Grossi told Simcoe.com they agreed to a deal at the March 9 meeting that would see Phoenix pay \$136,000 for both bars in 2016 – \$102,000 for Bananas, and \$34,000 for the Dard.

“Our understanding was the combination of the Dard and Bananas was a total rent of \$136,000,” Pevato said in an interview. “If we did not get the Dard, (the lease for Bananas) would go back to \$85,000.”

Pevato said the mayor was to take that recommendation to council. However, the recommendation that went to the committee March 10 was only regarding Bananas, with no mention of the Dard.

“Our understanding was the mayor was going to council to tell them the combination was \$136,000, not that he ‘got \$102,000 for Bananas’ and the Dard is irrelevant,” he said. “He did not convey the conditions to council that were our conditions of the deal.

“He severed the deal (and) did not give council a true representation of what we discussed.”

According to the notes of an April 22 meeting between Smith and Phoenix, the mayor insisted the March 9 meeting and its details should have been kept confidential.

Pevato said he and Grossi were not told the meeting needed to stay confidential, though neither man discussed it with anyone outside of the meeting, other than in emails sent to municipal staff later with the leases for both operations.

“(Confidentiality) was never brought up, the reason being it was being brought to council the next day,” Pevato told Simcoe.com. “Confidentiality was irrelevant, because we had to send the revised lease documents (for Bananas and the Dard) to (staff).”

The meeting was not kept confidential, and, according to the April 22 meetings notes, the mayor blamed Grossi and Pevato saying they “did not keep their word.”

In an email from Smith to Vadeboncoeur,

Smith said he didn’t believe Grossi and Pevato “have any respect for this council.”

“The fact that they think they are entitled to have more than one bar is quite frankly, arrogant,” stated Smith in his email. “I cannot see me supporting them at this time.”

Pevato told Simcoe.com the suggestion put to them at the April 22 meeting that the earlier discussion should have been kept confidential was disconcerting.

“We were shocked, to be honest,” he said. “There’s nothing to hide. If (the mayor) is negotiating on behalf of the town, shouldn’t the (municipality) be privy to that information ASAP?”

Watch *Simcoe.com* for more on this story.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wasaga Beach’s procurement policy specifies that a town employee, or council member, should not “knowingly cause or permit anything to be done or communicated to anyone which could cause any potential vendor to have an unfair advantage or disadvantage in obtaining a contract for the supply of goods and/or services to the town.”

The town’s code of conduct also speaks to the decision-making process surrounding awarding contracts, noting council members should not have direct or indirect personal contact or interaction with the parties administering or directly involved in such processes.

TIMELINE

- **Feb. 25:** Deadline for the second RFP for the Dard closes.
- **March 9:** Enzo Grossi and Larry Pevato meet with Mayor Brian Smith, CAO George Vadeboncoeur to discuss a new lease arrangement for Bananas and Dard. According to Grossi and Pevato, it was proposed Phoenix pay the town \$102,000 for Bananas for the 2016 season, and \$34,000 for the Dard.
- **March 10:** Council’s co-ordinated committee recommends, based on a report by economic development and tourism director Andrew McNeill, that council accept a five-year lease with Phoenix Hospitality to operate Bananas, with a base lease of \$85,000 for the 2016 season. However, the item is pulled for discussion by the mayor, who informs committee the CAO reached out to Grossi and asked to meet to discuss the terms of the lease, after which Grossi agreed to amend the lease to \$102,000 for the 2016 season. No mention is made of any discussion with Grossi and Pevato related to a lease for the Dard.

- **March 22:** Council approves the lease for Bananas with Phoenix Hospitality for \$102,000. During the discussion, Deputy Mayor Nina Bifulchi questions the process and the mayor’s involvement.
- **April 12:** Council’s committee of the whole debates the second RFP submissions for the Dard. While municipal staff recommended Phoenix as the operator, Coun. Ron Ego proposes the lease be awarded to Elusiv Entertainment. The motion to award the Dard to Phoenix is supported by councillors Ron Anderson and Bonnie Smith, and the mayor, but is defeated, as is a motion to award the bar to Elusiv.
- **April 19:** The committee of the whole recommendations come before council; again, debate centres on a motion whether to award the Dard to Phoenix. Coun. Anderson, who would resign at the end of the meeting, said he had concerns voting on a matter one way at committee, and in the opposite at council. In a recorded vote, the motion is defeated with Deputy Mayor Nina Bi-

- folchi, and councillors Sylvia Bray and Smith in support of awarding the Dard to Phoenix.
- **April 22:** Smith met with Grossi and Pevato to discuss the decision on the Dard. According to meeting notes taken by Lorraine Santo, executive assistant to the mayor and council, which were included in the documents obtained by Simcoe.com, at this meeting, Smith states the March 9 meeting was not kept confidential. He further states that he “is confident that Enzo (Grossi) and Larry (Pevato) did not keep their word.”
- **May 18:** The third RFP published for the Dard, with a submission deadline of June 1.
- **June 9:** Following presentations from three prospective operators, including Phoenix Hospitality, a motion to award the Dard to Elusiv is defeated in a tied vote; the motion is supported by councillors Ego, Smith, and Bill Stockwell. The Dard remains closed.



Gabriela Lejawa

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Q. What is your favorite school subject?

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OPP detectives review their notes while at the scene of a second stabbing in Wasaga Beach that took place on Main Street early Monday morning, near the Skull Island miniputt facility. IAN ADAMS PHOTO

Witnesses sought after fatal stabbings

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Wasaga Beach had a tragic start to the summer after two young men from the Caledon area were stabbed to death on the weekend.

Eighteen-year-old Francesco Molinaro was the first victim late Saturday at around 10:30 p.m. in front of Pizza Pizza on Mosley Street. Nearly 30 hours later, early Monday morning at 3:30 a.m., 23-year-old Erick Tello Arias was

stabbed in an altercation on Main Street.

Police had both areas blocked off for a number of hours; in the case of Arias, Main Street between Beck and River Road East was closed for 20 hours while officers conducted their investigation.

Police did not release details on the suspects in either case, or whether anyone was in custody. On Monday, while officers were

combing over the second scene, the OPP sent out a plea for witnesses to the incident that claimed Molinaro's life.

"We have to reach out to the public and ask them to share, whether it's information they know, information from people they might know, or something they might have captured on their cellphone," said Huronia West OPP spokesperson Const. Mark Kinney. "Those are all

things we need them to bring to us so we can get a clear picture on what transpired leading up to the event, and the aftermath."

Kinney said police were treating the two incidents as separate investigations.

"Both investigations are still in their infant stages, and they will evolve and we'll follow them where they take us," he said.

See TWO, Page 4

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SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Town and OPP to meet, discuss safety after weekend killings

● **Two**, from Page 1

Kinney also declined to make a connection between the two stabbings and Electric Elements music festival in the main beach area, which purportedly drew several thousand people on Sunday.

Kinney stopped short of saying whether members of the public should be concerned for their safety, given two murders had occurred in a short span of time.

Mayor Brian Smith expressed his sympathy to the family of both victims, speaking to media just outside the scene of the Main Street stabbing on Monday.

“I have children of this age myself and I cannot begin to imagine what these families are going through right now,” said Smith, who said he was only apprised of very basic details by the OPP. “Our hearts and prayers go out to the families of these two victims.

“It’s very tragic. This type of thing can happen anywhere, and the fact it’s happened in our community is shocking – it’s shocking to me, it’s shocking to the residents, it’s shocking to the visitors. We’re going to have to deal with this.”

Smith said there will be meetings between the OPP and the town to determine what can be done to minimize incidents.

“I don’t believe that safety in the community is an issue, but we will be having meetings with the OPP and our emergency services here in the next few days and weeks looking at different things that we might want to put in place to prevent this from happening again.”

He declined to say if the incidents were related to the youth-oriented attractions in place for the weekend.

“It’s very tragic. This type of thing can happen anywhere, and the fact it’s happened in our community is shocking ...”

Mayor Brian Smith

“There will be a lot of questions asked and a lot of questions that will need to be answered. We’re just not there yet as this is in the early stages,” Smith said.

However, business owner Gary Sawatzky, whose business was one of those affected by the closure of Main Street on Monday, believes the town should focus more on family-oriented tourism.

“I think the town needs to return to families and the locals,” he said. “I’m sure town council has a bigger plan for families. Real tourism belongs to the families.”

Both incidents being investigated by members of the Central Region Support Team, Detectives from Crime Units throughout Central Region, the OPP Forensic Identification Services Unit (FISU) and the Emergency Response Team (ERT).

Detective Acting Inspector Randy Wright of the OPP Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB) is leading the investigation of Arias’ killing, while Det. Inspector Raffay and Det. Staff Sgt. Rosato are investigating Molinaro’s death.

Police are appealing to anyone with information on both incidents to contact Huronia West OPP at 705-429-3575 during normal business hours or after hours to the Provincial Communication Centre at 1-888-310-1122, or to call Crimestoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

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