

# Homicide Trends

11-7-2023

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Mary Barbosa & John Castleton, Co-Chairs,  
Most Dangerous Offender Project  
King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office



**Prosecuting Attorney's Office**

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**King County**

# Most Dangerous Offender Project (MDOP)

MDOP Co-Chairs:

**Mary Barbosa** – Hired in 1998, MDOP in 2004-2008 and 2015-present, Co-Chair since 2020

**John Castleton** – Hired in 1999, MDOP since 2007, Co-Chair since 2021

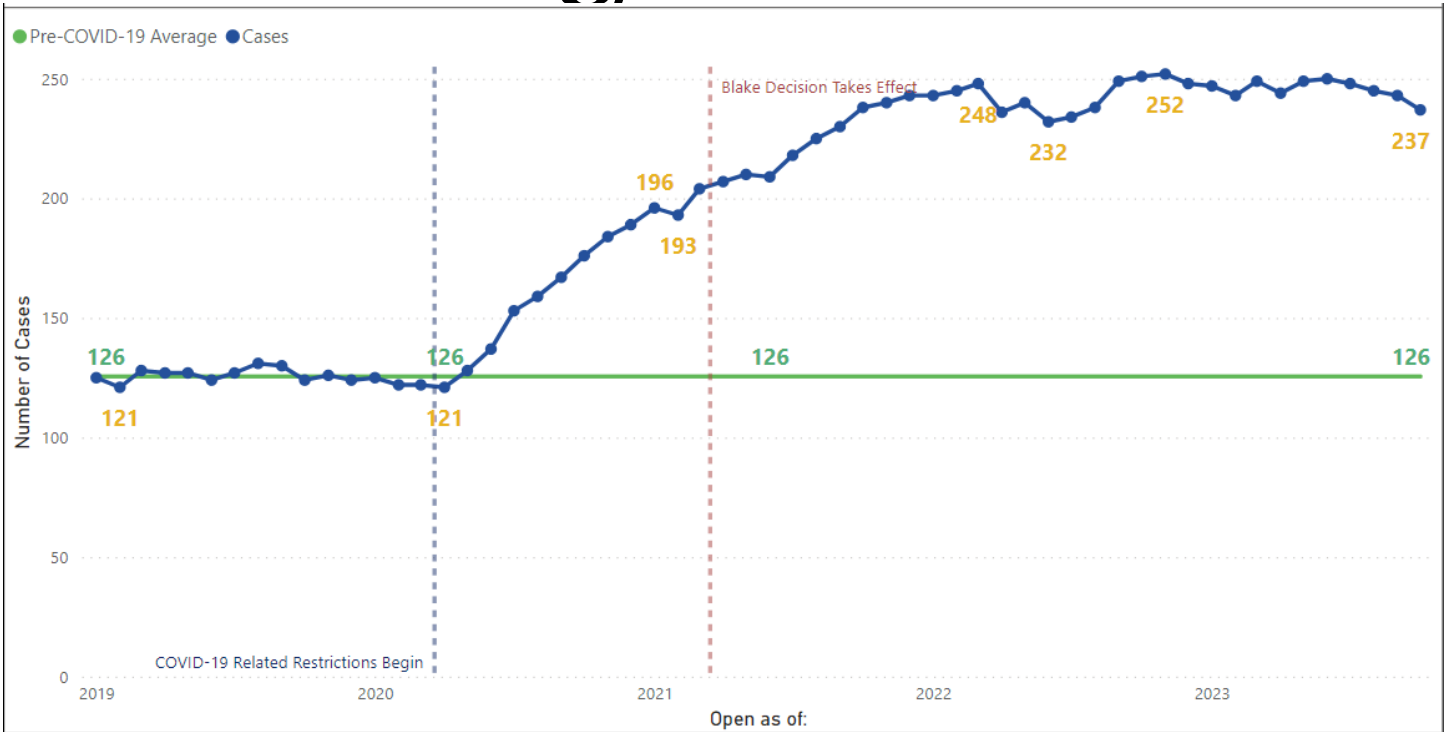
# MDOP History and Evolution

- Began in 1995
- MDOP attorneys on call 24/7, 365 days a year
- Respond to homicide scenes
- Assist detectives with search warrants, etc.
- Attend autopsies
- Vertical prosecution model
- Meet with victim families

# MDOP History and Evolution, cont.

- Staffing has changed over the years
- Began with 7 DPAs, 1 Chair, 2 paralegals, 1 victim advocate
- Mid 2000s: County Council funded Cold Case Unit
- Cold Case Unit lost funding in 2009
- 2020: increased to 9 DPAs when homicides began to increase
- 2022: increased to 14 DPAs, 5 paralegals, 4 victim advocates
- Current filed caseload per attorney = 14-25
- Loss of COVID funding threatens to impact MDOP staffing
- Currently 13 DPAs

# KCPAO Pending/Filed Homicide Cases



# Breakdown by Police Agency

KCPAO Pending/Filed Homicide Cases by Police Agency:

<b>Police Agency</b>	<b>Court Cases Pending/Filed</b>
Seattle Police Department	77
King County Sheriff's Office	45
Kent Police Department	34
Federal Way Police Department	15
Washington State Patrol	15
Renton Police Department	13
Auburn Police Department	10
Bellevue Police Department	5
Des Moines Police Dept	5
Kirkland Police Department	5
Redmond Police Department	5
Tukwila Police Department	5
Other	3

# Increased Complexity of Homicide Cases

- Homicide cases are more labor intensive than 10 years ago
  - Body Worn Video
  - In Car Video
  - Forensic Cell Phone Examinations
  - Cellular Phone Records
  - Social Media Records
  - Advances in Forensic Sciences
  - Increased Mitigation Practice
  - Attorney Turnover (both KCPAO and DPD)

# MDOP 2023

- Responded to 144 callouts (potential homicide scenes) in 2023 through 11/2/23
- In approximately 20 of those callouts, the victim survived or the cause of death was ruled an overdose, suicide, or accident
- 123 confirmed homicides to date

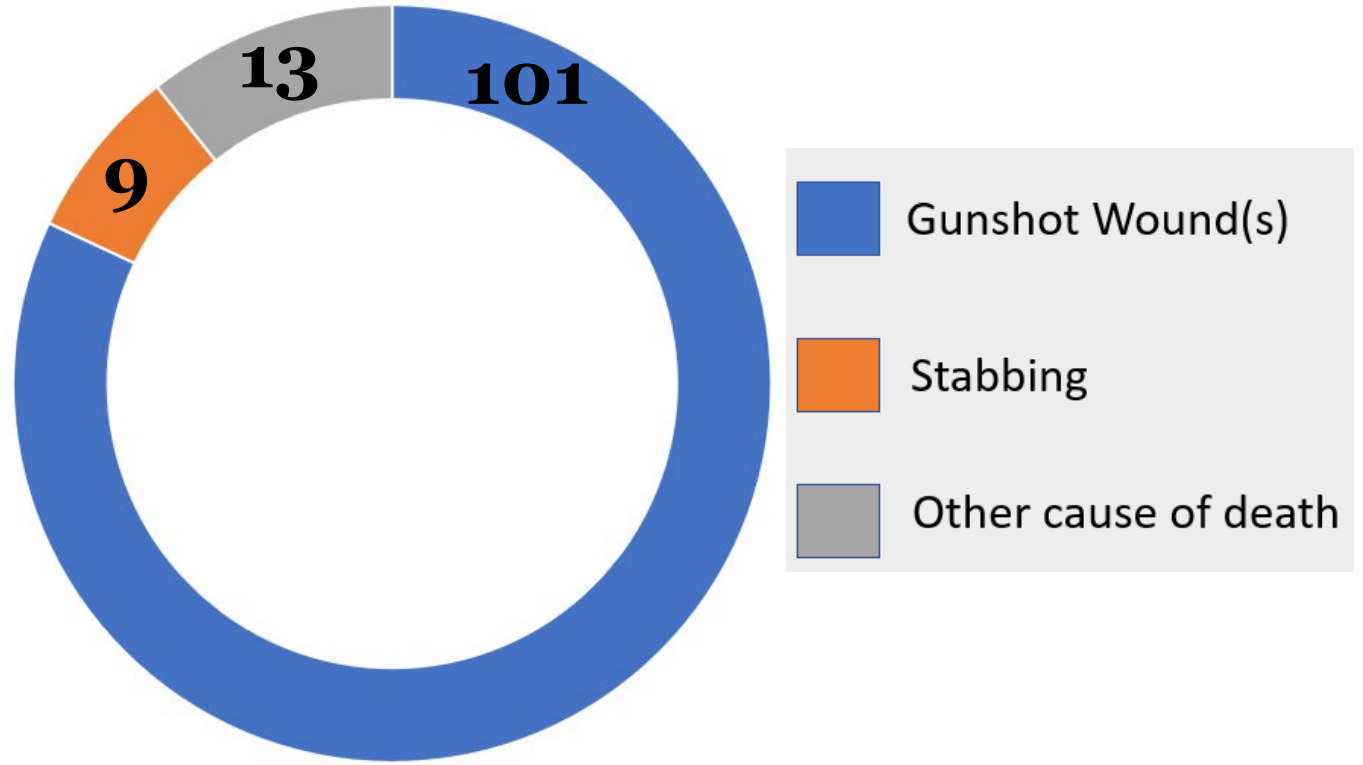


# MDOP 2023

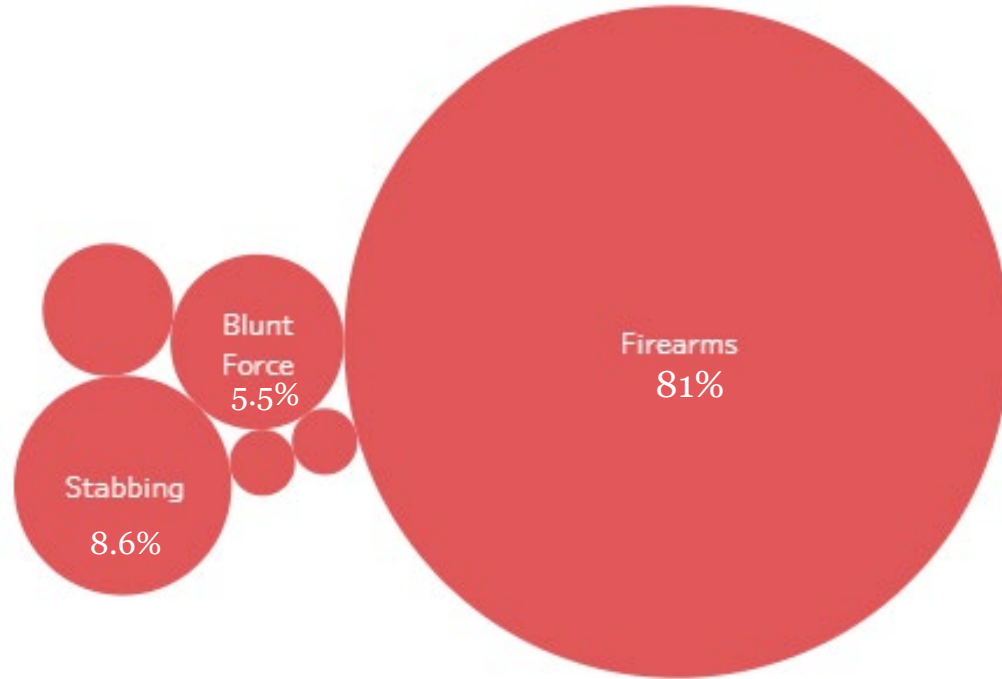
(comparison to previous years)

- Responded to 144 callouts (potential homicide scenes) in 2023 through 11/2/23
  - 2022 – 131 callouts (through 11/2)
  - 2021 – 117 callouts (through 11/2)
  - 2020 – 127 callouts (through 11/2)
  - 2019 – 79 callouts (through 11/2)
  - 2018 – 82 callouts (through 11/2)
  - 2017 – 71 callouts (through 11/2)
  - 2016 – 57 callouts (through 11/2)

Callouts to confirmed homicides:

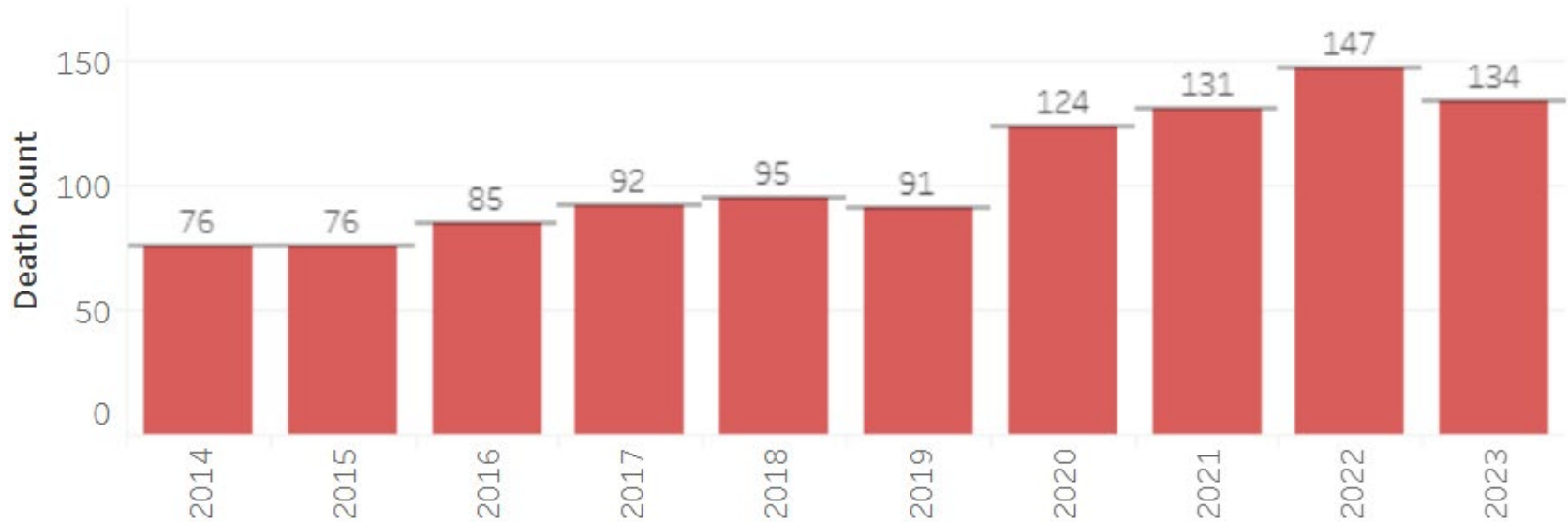


# KC Medical Examiner data on Homicides in 2023 by circumstance of death:



# King County Medical Examiner data on Homicides:

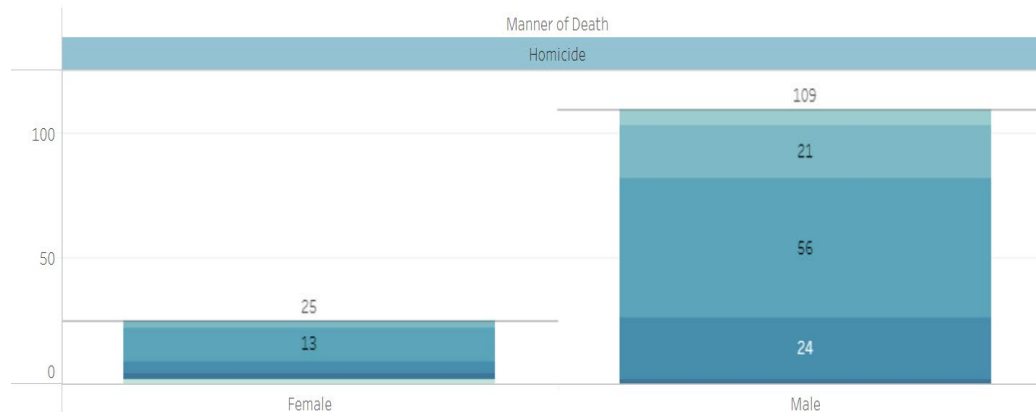
2023 is through November 5



# Recurring Homicide Trends (2023)

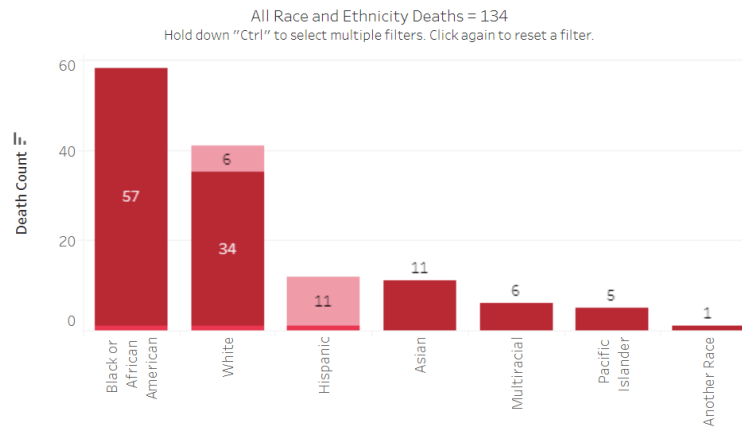
- 11 Domestic Violence (Intimate partner, relatives)
- 32 Public Residences (Encampments, RVs or vehicles, Motels, Public Housing, Shelters)
- 44 Non-Residential Public Places (parks, public parking lots, roadways, buses, trains, bus stops or light rail stations)

# King County Medical Examiner Data on Victim Demographic through 11/5/2023



## Age

- Under 1 year
- 1-17 years
- 18-24 years
- 25-44 years
- 45-64 years
- >=65 years



## Ethnicity

- Hispanic
- Non Hispanic
- Unknown

Race in ME Cases	58 (43.3%)	41 (30.6%)	12 (9.0%)	11 (8.2%)	6 (4.5%)	5 (3.7%)	1 (0.7%)
Race in KC	7.2%	64.4%	NA	20.9%	5.6%	0.8%	NA

# Shooting Victim Demographics

Looking at confirmed King County gun violence in 2023

- 82% were people of color
- 20% were ages 18-24
- 52% were ages 25-49
- Shooting victims increased 46% over the 5-year average with homicides increasing 59% respectively
- This rise in gun violence is not unique to King County

# Cold Cases

- No statute of limitations for homicide
- Law Enforcement continue to investigate homicide cases when caseloads allow
- Advances in forensic sciences lead to solving cold cases
  - Investigative Genetic Genealogy (“IGG”)
- Resource heavy practice for Police and Prosecutors
  - Often reviewing thousands of pages of reports
  - Identify evidence to be tested
  - Locate witnesses
- Need funding for dedicated investigation/prosecution of cold cases



# Questions?



**Prosecuting Attorney's Office**

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**King County**