The challenges faced by homicide loss families

I am a co-victim of homicide, a murder survivor. Some refer to me as the mother of the boy who was killed. At times, it feels as if I don’t even have a name, such is the stigma surrounding homicide. Whatever the term, the fact is that my wonderful, funny, bright, handsome 23-year-old son was murdered by someone he knew and trusted.

It’s exactly three years today since Alex was killed between the hours of 5 am and 6:45 am. We will never know exactly when he died and I suppose it doesn’t much matter because it’s the manner of his death and the fact that he is gone that hurts beyond anything I’ve ever known or could have imagined. In this time, I’ve also learned that it’s a very lonely and frightening place to be because the chasm between where I am in my grief journey and where the majority of people stand is too wide to bridge.

Friends and kind strangers simply fail to comprehend the extent of the devastation left behind after a child is murdered.

The myriad of legal, financial, physical and psychological problems homicide parents face for years afterward make this a very misunderstood form of grief.

It’s not surprising that people can’t conceive of what I and others like me have gone through following the killing of our child or loved one. Let’s face it, nothing prepares any of us for this sudden harrowing loss, this obscene affront to decency, this wanton act of cruelty.

I had no skill set to help me when my son was killed, any more than my friends had experience of how to support me.

Most people are frightened by the violence of homicide and are utterly lost as to how to deal with the emotional trauma the victim’s family endures. It’s therefore understandable that only those who find themselves in the same devastating situation can relate to the horrors of my experience and I theirs.

So, I have decided to do something about it, in a small way, in the only way I know how. To put pen to paper, to type out my thoughts, to open a small window to our world.

In this four-part article, I attempt to convey the reality of homicide-loss and the problems and vulnerability experienced by the families of victims.

Firstly, in Breaking the Silence I seek to explain the emotional upheaval of homicide loss. The second article, Murder as Entertainment and the Psychology of Fear, looks at why society seems to struggle in helping co-victims and the effect this has on families affected by the loss. In the third piece Crisis, Trauma and the Justice System I cover the main difficulties faced by survivors during the legal process and the financial burden faced by families, and how best to meet their needs. In the final article, Emotional Support in the Initial Stages and Beyond I address the unique psychological challenges faced by survivors of homicide.

Read together, the four articles give an overview of the impact of losing a child or loved one to homicide and the argument for inclusive informed support. My hope is that in allowing for greater understanding our communities will be kinder and more compassionate places for us all.

Breaking the Silence - the homicide co-victim

So, let’s look at some basic facts.

Data on exact numbers in each country vary from year to year, so for ease of statistical understanding I have taken the USA, and England and Wales as examples of western countries.

On average, each year, there are 15,000 homicides in the USA, which includes both criminal homicide (intentional killing or Manslaughter) and vehicular homicide (e.g., homicide through drunk driving). In the England and Wales, it’s about 900 per year. These numbers represent the children and adults who lost their lives at the hands of another. In most cases, the victim was killed by someone they knew.

Each homicide leaves behind, on average, 5 to 10 close relatives, who are categorized as ‘survivors of homicide’, ‘co-survivors’ or ‘co-victims’. These numbers do not include extend-
ed family, friends, neighbors, or co-workers. Stop to think about that. Just the numbers are mind-boggling.

**Chances are that in your lifetime you will meet or know of someone whose child or relative was a victim of a homicide.**

And if this happens, will you approach them? Will you know how to support them? Years after the event, will you comprehend the enormity of their trauma and reach out to them? Certainly, in my case, I would have answered ‘no’ to all these questions - that is until I learned the hard way.

Co-victims’ life post-loss is harsh. Even after controlling for demographic and gender variables, the statistics point to a significantly higher risk of PTSD and depression as well as a deterioration in physical health. Additionally, alcohol and drug dependence can become a problem. Financial difficulties following the loss of income or legal costs are commonplace. Co-victims are often diagnosed with mental health issues following the homicide. Suicidal thoughts are not uncommon.

**The reality is that survivors of homicide are victims of violence, in the same way as other victims of crime are victims of violence.** The term ‘survivor’ I find unsettling because it somehow insinuates that we have survived and are doing ok. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We are not ok. We are hanging on by the skin of our teeth. We are just about coping with every day if that. **The psychological trauma lasts a lifetime and so does the grief.**

And there’s the crunch.

We not only mourn our children but simultaneously are also forced to deal with the violence of the killing and the suffering inflicted upon them at the time of their death. And then there’s the legal aftermath that can last for years.

Is it, therefore, any surprise that co-victims commonly describe themselves as ‘going crazy’? Feelings of helplessness, rage, injustice, and devastation throw their world into such turmoil that they can barely function. **Psychologists use terms such as ‘complex’ and ‘traumatic’ to describe this type of grief.**

**Part II - Murder As Entertainment And The Psychology of Fear**

In this the second article in the series on homicide loss I look at the challenges faced by co-victims in dealing with society’s response to their loss.

Our society is fascinated by crime. Murder sells, violence sells, drama sells. Photos and films repeatedly glamorize the action and thrill of police and detective stories, as well as the lives of the criminal themselves.

Documentaries and news reports depict real live crime scenes and carnage before moving onto the next violent incident.

So long as the violence is kept at arm’s length, it certainly seems that society enjoys a staple diet of blood and guts where the perpetrator of the crime is the repulsive yet devious, fascinating villain.

The more violent or heinous the crime, the more the accused will become a cult figure, fed by society’s morbid curiosity and its need for controlled excitement and fear.

**Yet what about the victim and those directly affected by a homicide?**

**Aren’t they, in fact, the real heroes and heroines?**

To my mind, if the quiet courage needed to keep living after your child is murdered were publicly understood and acknowledged, governments would have no option but to honor co-victims with a Medal for Valor.

Yet the difficult and complex stories of survivors following a crime rarely, if ever, make it into the news.

Entertainment is one thing but the destruction of innocent families’ lives through murder quite another.

**Co-survivors are the invisible victims. We have suffered the loss of a loved one in the most brutal and violent way imaginable yet for the most part, we as individuals are shunned by society because homicide stigmatizes.**

Co-victims of murder and homicide often feel abandoned by the difference of the police, the justice system and the community they live in.

Victim’s Rights Acts are a relatively new development - for example, victim impact statements are now accepted as part of the sentencing process and in some cases, co-survivors can apply to know about parole hearings - but these changes feel like having absolutely no rights at all.

**We are far, far away from having justice systems that are inclusive of the victim’s family and allow them to have legal representation during court proceedings.**

I would suggest that we, as a society, need to reframe violence and homicide and turn our approach on its head.

I admit that’s no mean task.

It’s not the murderer, the carnage, the violence that needs to be
plastered across our screens, but instead the dignity, sorrow, connection and love displayed by the co-survivors as they mourn their loved one and try to rebuild their lives.

Instead of repeatedly hearing about a murderer, could we not remember the victim and honor their life?

Is that not the community we wish to live in, a place that respects victims of crime and homicide and openly acknowledges the loss of the parents and family members?

I am certain that people can be encouraged to look behind a murder story instead of reducing it to a mere spectacle.

They simply need to be shown how.

Yet this does not answer the question as to why individuals keep their distance when a homicide occurs.

Why does the average person instinctively ignore the inner disquiet they feel when they hear of a homicide and turn away?

Fear. Pure and simple.

Co-survivors act as a stark reminder of each and every individual’s impotence in the face of evil, of violence, of innocence, smashed.

We, the co-victims, complicate the narrative - we are the messy suffering left behind by homicide.

And this is the part society does not want to see.

Basically, no one wants to think homicide could happen to them.

The thought that any of our children, our loved ones, could be the next victim of a shooting, a stabbing, a strangulation is too terrifying to process.

So we don’t go there.

I get that. If we lived in a permanent state of fear, we would never let our children out of our sight. We instinctively remain in denial about the risk and reality of murder.

Somewhere deep inside of us, we believe that homicide is something that happens to other people.

So friends and strangers turn away and pull up their inner defenses.

Avoidance and detachment resulting in even more loneliness and hardship for the co-victims.

And tragically, this “other people” attitude can go even a far as victim blaming.

In blaming the dead (at least in part) for getting killed, strangers manage to maintain the illusion that murder could not happen to them.

To this day I am disturbed and saddened at the finger pointing and rumors spread by those who seek to reassure themselves in this way.

Even after a guilty verdict, people may still shake their heads and gossip, suggesting that ‘it’s not the whole story’ as if by magic they know something the Court does not.

I’ve been there, I know.

Not only that, but co-victims themselves can become the target of abuse and internet trolling.

The parents of children murdered in the USA at Sandy Hook school who have suffered abuse and death threats may be an extreme example of this, but they are sadly not the exception - there are many cases of co-victims being singled out for criticism and being verbally attached or threatened.

I myself have received nasty mail with no return address or legible signature.

My crime?

That the man who killed my 23-year-old son was found guilty of intentional homicide.

Continued Summer 2021 Newsletter (Part III & IV)
Marie Belmontez

My name is Marie Belmontez, and I started attending POMC support meetings in Orange County, CA, in January 2001. Initially, I thought I would go just to lend support to my sister, Claudine after her son (and only child) Stephen was murdered at the age of 20 on July 30, 2000. Very quickly I realized, however, that I needed the emotional support just as much as my sister did.

By the end of 2001, I slowly started to find the strength to reach out to others; beginning with volunteering to be the POMC Chapter Librarian. As time went on, I volunteered to be on the Chapter Board of Directors, served as one of the two Chapter Co-leaders from May 2002 through December 2004, and eventually served for almost 16 years as Chapter Leader of the Greater Orange County Chapter, until I moved to Arizona in 2017.

A few of the things I volunteered to do to support other survivors while in California include:

• Coordinated the planning of our Annual Candlelight Vigil – our largest memorial event of the year
• Organized events for the National Day of Remembrance and Holiday Memorials
• Very proudly worked with the most amazing groups of people to host 2 POMC Conferences in California
• Encouraged members to be involved in events and fundraising endeavors
• Worked to foster relationships between POMC and the Orange County DA’s office, law enforcement, and other support groups
• Attended and volunteered at several National POMC Conferences, and I am now on the National Conference Planning Committee
• I was blessed to have been recognized with a victims’ rights award from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, National POMC Courage Award, and other recognition from crime victims support groups in California. These served to validate that I’m doing exactly what I’m called to do.

In Arizona, I served for a period of time on the Valley of the Sun Board of Directors before I had to step away. Now, I’m able to pick up where I left off as a Co-Leader for the Chapter. And, my desire is to first, honor God, and second to give whatever skills I have to offer to further the much needed and powerful mission of POMC, in memory of my oldest nephew, Stephen M. Sanchez.
Hello Everyone,

I hope that everyone is still staying safe and healthy during the pandemic that is still happening and hopefully will end soon. It has made everything a challenge to hold support groups and hold National Board meetings. Thank goodness for zoom and all other technologies to be able to hold support groups. Even if you can’t hold zoom meetings, phone calls are very supportive and I know many survivors appreciate the call.

Many changes were made at our National Board meeting in November, Howard Klerk who was the president for many years stepped down and POMC thanks him for so many years of dedication that he brought to the Board. Howard became president of the board in 2012 but was on the board for years before that. Howard’s niece, Lisa Marie Weaver was murdered by her husband in 1987. We would like to welcome our new president of the National Board, Connie Sheely from Rochester, Minnesota and Chapter Leader of the Southeast Minnesota Chapter. Connie’s brother, Joel Holbrook was murdered in Kansas City. She has been on the National Board for many years. Lori King from Frankfort, Ohio was voted in as Vice-President, and Lori’s sister Geneva Ann O’Dell was murdered. The secretary, Martha Lasher Warner, from Rensselaer, New York, stayed on as secretary and has been on the board for many years. Her daughter Liza Warner, was murdered by her husband. Cathy Familathe, from Los Angeles, California and the Chapter Leader for the Los Angeles Chapter was elected treasurer. Cathy’s nephew, Anthony Ray Maynez was murdered. POMC is very lucky to have hardworking and dedicated people on the board who meet 3 times a year and discuss the many issues and problems that come up. We also would like to welcome a new board member, Marie Belmontez, from Phoenix, Arizona and Co-Leader of the Valley of the Sun Chapter. Marie’s nephew, Stephen Sanchez was murdered in California. We are very excited for all the changes that have been made recently and look forward to continue working together to keep POMC going strong.

The conference committee is hard at work planning the 2021 National Conference that will be held in Scottsdale, Arizona on July 15-18, 2021 at the Scott Hotel and Resort. We are really optimistic that the pandemic will not make us cancel this year and we will be able to have our live conference. If anyone is interested in holding a workshop this year contact Sherry Nolan at snolan@pomc.org. We hope that many of you can attend and we do have a scholarship for new attendees to help pay for their registration. This scholarship was available last year and carried over for this year. There is a limited amount available so get your registrations in. The conference brochure and registration form is available on the website. The hotel $119.00 per night and it is a beautiful hotel. Make your registrations early and if you have trouble with steps please ask for a first floor room. The hotel is a two story and they have no elevator.

Let’s hope that 2021 is a better year and the violence stops everywhere and also that we see the end of the pandemic so that we can start in person support group meetings and get our Grief Retreat weekends and Effective Leadership Training back on track.

Stay Safe,
Bev
WHY ATTEND A POMC NATIONAL CONFERENCE?
By: Beckie Miller

I have often wondered why, in an organization of thousands of members and 40+ chapters, we do not have more than 300 attendees on average at our national conferences. It’s a shame more survivors do not utilize this wonderful experience. Then, I have to remember back to when I first began attending POMC meetings and how hard it was. It took me another couple of years to attend my first POMC conference, held by the Minnesota Hope Chapter. Once I attended one though, I knew I would attend again, despite the fact I was emotionally drained when I returned. You see, nothing in life after murder is ever the same. We are emotionally drained after a birthday party, a wedding, or graduation. Drained because we are constantly reminded of the fact our loved one no longer shares the milestones of our lives, drained because of the continual reminder that life goes on without them - never the same - but it does go on.

The first conference I timidly attended all those years ago taught me so much. The workshops were amazingly helpful, informative and one actually had a room full of survivors laughing their heads off. Can you imagine a workshop that could make you laugh when still tormented by the nightmare of fresh, traumatic grief? Darcie Sims, a grief therapist who specialized in humor, was presenting just such a workshop, and did we laugh! We laughed because she showed us how to laugh - at all the tuna casseroles we received after our loved one died, at all the “stupid” comments people made to us attempting to make us feel better in their extreme discomfort. We even laughed at the sight of Darcie wearing sunglasses with wipers for the tears, and how she filled her pockets with toilet tissue rolls, because one Kleenex was not enough for us. We laughed because we needed to laugh, to purge some of the pent-up emotions dragging us down and Darcie, a bereaved parent herself, showed us we could. Rest in peace dearest Darcie (she died February 2014).

I cried at the conference too. Of course, I cried. You cannot attend a POMC conference and not see tears at some point or another, especially during the beautiful memorial service and the parade of smiling pictures of those no longer with us shown on Friday night. But you cry among those who understand, and bonds are forged that become endless friendships. You don’t have to hide your emotions as you do in the real world when they begin to flow. I felt comfortable to cry there, I felt emotionally and physically hugged the whole time with hundreds of other compassionate survivors. I felt at home - something I had not felt at the home where my son no longer existed after his murder.

After murder, we have to be shown how to do everything again. Did you ever think you would laugh after your loved one was murdered? Did you thing you could ever feel any joy again (subsequent children and grandchildren born A.M. -after murder)? Did you think you would ever stop fearing going outside into the real world again, or letting your surviving children and family do so too? Did you ever think you would stop feeling anything but anger? Come to a POMC conference and learn that you can again feel something besides pain. Think about attending our conference this year …… I guarantee you will be surprised, uplifted, humbled, hugged, empowered and informed. Information makes this grief journey more bearable. It arms us to cope and to endure. This journey is made easier among others who truly understand. The conferences promote healing, rebuilding shattered lives, and a gentleness and compassion permeates the air in odd contrast to the violence that brings us all together. I wish none of us had to weather this storm but why not weather it together in the safety of a port of other survivors where no one is alone.

So, sign up now for the conference, this year in Scottsdale, Arizona, July 15 - 18. Take care of and be good to yourselves but sign up already. JUST COMMIT AND GO!
SAVE THE DATE

2021 NATIONAL POMC CONFERENCE
July 15 - 18, 2021

The POMC National Conference Committee members are excited to invite you to join us for the 2021 National POMC Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona!

WHERE: The Scott Resort & Spa
4925 N Scottsdale Rd
Scottsdale, AZ 95251
(877) 800-4888 (reservation)

IMPORTANT DATES

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<td>Workshop Sponsorship Deadline</td>
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<td>Hotel Reservation Deadline</td>
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<td>Submit Photo for Video Deadline</td>
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<td>Mailed Donations must be received by</td>
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*2021 POMC National Conference, 7507 E. Taylor St, Scottsdale, AZ 85257

Here is a list of tentative workshops covered this year:

For more information, contact pomcconference@gmail.com, call (513) 721-5683 or view conference brochure on website https://pomc.org
"In the Presence of Absence! Why G-D?"

Written by: Judith Fox-Goldstein

"May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life."

The air suddenly stilled. Everything around me was moving in slow motion. I could hear sounds, but there was no clarity in the words. As the door opened on a private meeting with the Dean, a voice could be heard saying, “You need to take this phone call, now!” I remember standing and then, my world as I had known it, stopped forever.

It’s hard to remember the years in between that phone call and the present. Let me start by introducing myself, “I am the Mother of a murdered child.” Putting those words in writing is excruciating. The word itself is vulgar, disorienting, unfathomable and incomprehensible, but the time has come for me to give voice to the pain, but more important to give my son, DANIEL, a voice so his beauty and the integrity of his life can be shared. “May his soul be bound by the BOND of life!”

When creating this image of “Why G-D?”, I came across this saying inscribed on many Jewish tombstones. It was like my heart leaped forward and, suddenly, I could breathe. I had a direction! My deep grief transformed into a loving responsibility to ensure that Daniel’s memory was safely enshrined in the hearts, the memory and the voices of others who loved him. This senseless act of evil took so much from our lives and, of course, from my beautiful son who never had an opportunity to live out his dreams.

Violence scars you in unimaginable ways. You’re inundated with language – with words that never before held meaning for you.

♦ The State’s case
♦ The Deceased (who were they talking about?)
♦ The Brutality of the Murder, the Jury, the Trial, Detectives, Police
♦ Reporters, the Loss of Privacy

And the friends who no longer remained in your “heart-circle!” Their pain was too great. “If this could happen to me – to our upstanding family – then it could happen to them!”

I couldn’t breathe!
I lost my way and my will to live!
I didn’t know how to “BE” me anymore!

Parents are NOT supposed to bury their children, choose a coffin, plan their funerals … how do you survive this? How can you share these thoughts with anyone? And, how did I protect, parent and spare my other child from the grief of a lifetime. It was impossible. He had to find his own path to solace.

And yet, today, I am standing strong! Grateful for my family, friends, the gift of writing, art and my forever wounded heart is still beating. The anthem “SAY HIS NAME”, rising from the social injustice that floods our lives today has also taken on a new meaning for me. SAY HIS NAME.

His name was Daniel Gideon and he was a beautiful soul! Passionate, kind, generous, talented, gentle and a gifted computer scientist. He gave his life in a futile attempt to save a victim of Domestic Violence. He paid for his bravery with his life. SAY HIS NAME! Daniel Gideon.

“The death of a child is considered the single worst stressor a person can go through,” In addition to losing your child, your dreams are lost, promise is gone and your family is forever changed, but there are ways to help grieving parents.

♦ Be available, be present and be supportive.
♦ Remember, you don’t HEAL from the loss of a child so don’t put expectations on the parents. This is a forever’ loss, but parents can determine to restructure their lives, realign, reinvent and rediscover a new way to be.
♦ Remember “special” days with notes, cards, calls… SAY HIS NAME!
♦ Include our children in your conversations, share memories or ask us to share a memory.
♦ Be patient, kind, understanding and offer sincere condolences.
♦ Don’t offer “Shoulds” … “We should be over this. it’s been long enough.”
♦ Remember that our children are ALLWAYS with us and we see the world very differently after losing a child.
♦ Never say “He’s in a better place now!”

Even if those are your beliefs, it may not
Always be good to yourself. Only you can heal you, so it's very important that you be good to yourself and take care of your body, mind and spirit. You're the driver on this journey, drive carefully, but do keep driving by being good to yourself.

Believe in your courage and your power. Courage you have. The testament to that is that you're reaching out for help by reading this. Believe in your courage and it can guide you to good places where you can never be taken from you.

Constantly reach out for ways to heal. There are many, many ways and places to find avenues for your healing. Through books, support groups, friends, family, asking for help and being in the moment, healing can happen at any time.

Do what's best for you. To regain your smile, grieve and heal in ways that work best for you. Others may try to steer you down the path they want you to take, but always take the path that feels right to you, regardless of what others want. Listen to your heart.

Express yourself in positive ways. There are positive ways and negative ways to let out your pain. How you do that will determine your healing habits. Grieve positively and you can heal and find your smile and meaning again. Grieve negatively and life could be more difficult for you and those who love you.

Fight for the life of your loved one. Your loved one is much, much more than just his/her body. Your pain is deepest because of the loss of the physical, but she/he child can still live through your memories, their life force and your love. Death can never take those three things from you. Don't let death take it all.

Give yourself time. This is a molasses-in-winter journey, be patient with your healing. It's slow, but it does move forward if you do your work. Don't expect your grief to ever completely leave you. After all, it tells you how much you loved.

Heal at your pace, regardless of what others may expect. "Are you over it?" is what others may think and say. Pay no attention to them. This is your journey to be walked at your pace. There is no logical conclusion or finish line to your process. Do it at your speed as you move further down your path. Be true to yourself.

It's okay to feel anything you want to feel. No matter how scary or frightening your emotions are in the beginning, it's okay to feel all of them. Let them in, express them in positive ways and the negative ones can leave you. If they linger and become your comfort zone, reach our for help.

Jump into a healing life with both feet. The deep end of the pool may be scary, but for healing to begin, you must jump in with both feet and learn how to swim. Full commitment to your healing can see your return to a meaningful life where you can find your smile again.

Keep on truckin'. Keep your pedal to the metal and never stop searching for ways to heal. You may have failures and setbacks (those are normal) and your engine may stop working for a while, but to heal your heart, pop the hood, crank your engine back up and throw yourself into forward gear.

Let your love keep you moving ahead. It's in your love where you will find your greatest healing. There is no past tense to love. The love you have, you will always have. The love they give, they will always give. Love is the "Super Bowl" of healing.

Make the decision to heal. Healing is a decision. Just like not to heal is a decision as well. Your broken heart will not mend, your smile will not return until you say, "I want to feel better, and I am determined to make that happen." Once that comes to your life, there will be no stopping you.

Never ever, ever, ever, ever, ever give up. Read that again. Winners never quit and quitters never win. Your life will be difficult, no way around that. If you give up on yourself, it will remain difficult. If you never give up; and I mean never give up on yourself, good things can come to your life in many, many ways.

Occasionally get away from your grief work. It's also okay not to grieve and to get away from your work for a while. Taking a break and having fun.
Maintaining the Beauty of the MURDER WALL...Honoring Their Memories

Time and much travel have put stress on the many panels of the Murder Wall...Honoring Their Memories, and scratches, nicks, and dents need to be repaired. Many of the cases that are used to transport the Wall have split or broken, handles have fallen off, and the protective material inside each case needs to be replaced.

Currently, the Wall is made up of 33 panels, displaying over 4,000 victims’ names, dates of birth and dates of death.

In order to maintain the beauty of the Wall, POMC continues to seek donations to help make some of the repairs. To help, please use the form below.

Donations made in memory/honor of, will be in the next issue of Survivors.

POMC-Wall Repair
(Please Print)

Name: ____________________________________

In memory/honor of: _________________________

Address: __________________________________

City, State, Zip: _____________________________

Email Address: ______________________________

Amount enclosed: $ _______ Check: _______

Money Order: ______ Visa: ______ MC: _______

Am. Express: _______ Dis: ______

Card Number: _______________________________

Expiration date: ____________________________

Security Code (back of card): ________________

Return to:
Parents Of Murdered Children, Inc.
635 W. 7th Street, Suite 104
Cincinnati, Ohio 45203

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WALL BOOKLET HONOR THEIR MEMORIES

POMC’s Murder Wall...Honoring their Memories is a beautiful memorial to the more than 4,000 murder victims whose names appear on the Wall. Behind each name there is a face and a story of a person whose life was taken prematurely. It is time to tell those stories.

Memorial booklets, which travel with the Wall, are compiled as an ongoing project of National POMC. Cost is $20.00 to include one page, front and back without a photo, or $30.00 if you wish to have a photo included. The photos are non-returnable and must be no larger than 2 1/2 by 3 1/2 inches.

Forms are available on the POMC Web Site at: www.pomc.org or by calling National at (513) 721-5683.

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Donations to Maintain the Beauty of the Murder Wall... Honoring Their Memories

Thank you for your donation to maintain the Murder Wall:

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<td>memory of Brian Jenny</td>
<td>memory of Jarrod Chrisman &amp; all homicide victims</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Howard &amp; Ann Klerk</th>
<th>Jean Lewis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>memory of Lisa Marie Weaver</td>
<td>memory of Scott Lewis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The names that appear in this issue of Survivors are those that have been submitted to the National Organization of POMC, Inc., with full or partial payment before February 22, 2021. Names after this date will appear in the next issue.

The Wall consists of solid walnut panels with each holding 120 brass plates inscribed with the name of the victim, along with the date of birth and the date of death. A donation of $75 is required before a name will be inscribed on a plate and permanently mounted on a panel. (See order form inside this edition.) Not only is this donation a tribute to the memory of your loved one, but it is a tribute that will guarantee that the memory of those we miss so deeply will survive forever. The Wall is a powerful statement of the violence in our society and of the numbers of loved ones senselessly killed by others. Not only does it give comfort, but also hope, because every name on it cries out silently for awareness, prevention and justice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loved ones name</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Baden Broussard</td>
<td>5/24/68 - 9/15/94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dustin Ryan Hadden</td>
<td>1/17/87 - 10/2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Wesley Hanks II</td>
<td>5/18/00 - 9/28/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Philip Incorvia</td>
<td>3/23/90 - 3/29/16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Elaine Shonkwiler</td>
<td>4/20/63 - 7/22/14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Murder Wall...Honoring Their Memories Order Form

Anyone interested in having their loved one’s name inscribed and permanently mounted on the Wall should fill out the order form below. Make checks payable to “POMC Wall,” or for your convenience, Discover, Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are accepted. Send to: Parents Of Murdered Children, 635 W. 7th Street, Suite 104, Cincinnati, Ohio 45203

LOVED ONES INFORMATION

Loved ones name __________________________________________

Date of Birth ____________________________ Date of Death ____________________________

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Choice of payment (check one): ______ Pay in full for $75.00 OR ______ 3 payments of $25.00 each

Payment type: ___ MC ___ Visa ___ Am. Express ___ Discover ___ Check

Card Number ____________________________ Exp. Date ________ Security Code ________

SUBMITTERS INFORMATION

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________

City, State, Zip ____________________________

Phone Number ____________________________

Relationship to victim ________________

The name will be added to the panel upon payment in full. Once your plate has been permanently mounted on the panel, you will be notified. New panels join the Wall as they are completed.
Parole Block™ is a program of the National Organization of Parents Of Murdered Children, Inc.

Parole Block Program

With Bev Warnock

1730 Convicted murderers have been denied parole through POMC’s Parole Block Program!

Support the Parole Block Program
In Memory of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jarrod Chrisman from Susie &amp; Rodney Chrisman</th>
<th>Shannon Marie &amp; Alexandra Jordan Nolan-Broe from LC &amp; Sherry Nolan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James “Jay” Hitt from Deborah Hitt</td>
<td>Becky Reed from James &amp; Ann Reed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Hullinger from Robert &amp; Charlotte Hullinger</td>
<td>Timothy Staunton from Denise Coleman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Isheim from Terry Isheim</td>
<td>Lisa Marie Weaver from Howard &amp; Ann Klerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Leonhardt from Carol Leonhardt</td>
<td>Scott Lewis from Jean Lewis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Denied Petitions:

- Jeffery Blair
- Eric Cazares
- Joseph Dailey
- Rene Enriquez
- Fernaldo Rivera
- Angelo Pavageau
- Robert Ramirez
- Lewis Scharff
- Erica Schleniker
- Edward Smith
- Joshua Smith
- Jordan Stewart
- Adrienne Williams

Released from Prison:

- Joseph (Jerry) McKray

Hearing Results:

- Jeffery Blair
- Eric Cazares
- Joseph Dailey
- Rene Enriquez
- Fernaldo Rivera
- Angelo Pavageau
- Robert Ramirez
- Lewis Scharff
- Erica Schleniker
- Edward Smith
- Joshua Smith
- Jordan Stewart
- Adrienne Williams

Letters From The Parole Block Program

Hello Beverly,
I'm happy to report that parole was denied for convicted murderers Walter Antonio Bailey, Johnny L. Williams, and Reco Williams. They're not eligible for parole again until 2025. I want to personally thank you for submitting a parole opposition letter. Your letter was instrumental in ensuring these convicted murderers remain imprisoned as they should be. My family and I are truly appreciative for your support. Happy Holidays! LaShondra

PAROLE HEARINGS TO BE HELD

Hearing Date: March 2021
Edward Cronell   ID#: 210762

On January 23, 1990, Melinda Snyder (22) was raped and murdered by Edward Cronell (23) who was the realtor for the house that Melinda was renting a room in. Melinda had just finished college and was a teacher’s assistant. Cronell broke in the house through the lockbox on the front door. He had shown the house the week before and Melinda was home. Cronell was convicted of murder and was sentenced to two life terms +30 years but eligible for parole after 20 years. He will have only served 24 years when he is considered for parole.

We, the undersigned STRONGLY OPPOSE parole for Edward Cronell. Justice demands he serve the full prison term of life given to him at the time he was sentenced for this heinous crime.

To protest, please write to:
South Carolina Dept. of
Probation, Parole & Pardon Services
PO Box 50666
Columbia, SC 29250

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South Carolina Dept. of
Probation, Parole & Pardon Services
PO Box 50666
Columbia, SC 29250
PAROLE HEARINGS TO BE HELD

Hearing Date: April 2021
Albert Scott  ID#: A146744

On September 23, 1975, Albert Scott and his two accomplices, kidnapped Lester Emoff at gunpoint as he left work and shot him to death as he begged for his life and then delivered a ransom note. Lester Emoff’s family borrowed the $400,000.00 in ransom money demanded by Scott and accomplices and paid it as directed. The three killers were caught by extremely good police work, but half of the ransom money was never recovered. The family of the victim spent years paying back the bank for the loan. Mr. Emoff’s body had been left where animals could get it, but was finally located from their confession.
Scott was convicted of aggravated murder, kidnapping and extortion and was sentenced to life. He will have only served 45 years when he is considered for parole.
We, the undersigned STRONGLY OPPOSE parole for Albert Scott. Justice demands he serve the full prison term of life given to him at the time he was sentenced for this heinous crime.
To protest, please write to:
Ohio Parole Board,
4545 Fisher Rd. Suite D,
Columbus, OH 43228

Hearing Date: March 2021
Andrew Gonzales  ID#: SID 04821254 / TDCJ 01852597

On July 9, 2011, Andrew Gonzales, 32, shot David Trillo, 31, while they were drinking in the garage of Gonzales’s home. They got into an argument and Gonzales fatally shot David. David was considered to be a friend of Gonzales’s. He was shot once in the chest with a .45 caliber handgun and died at the scene. David left 2 young children, a brother and parents.
Gonzales pled guilty of murder and was sentenced to 20 years in prison. He will have only served 10 years when he is considered for parole. Gonzales had many previous offenses.
We, the undersigned STRONGLY OPPOSE parole for Andrew Gonzales. Justice demands he serve the full prison term of life given to him at the time he was sentenced for this heinous crime.
To protest, please write to:
TDCJ
Attention: Correspondence
8712 Shoal Creek Blvd. Ste. 265
Austin, TX 78757

Hearing Date: August 2021
Michael Ardila  ID#: SBI 566277B

On February 12, 1989, Michael Ardila (21) ambushed and stabbed Anthony Jackson Pompelio (Tony) (17) with a hunting knife while he was at the home of one of his classmates. Ardila slit Tony’s throat as he begged for his life.
Ardila was convicted of 1st degree murder and was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole until he served 32 ½ years in prison. He will have only served 30 years when he is considered for parole.
We, the undersigned STRONGLY OPPOSE parole for Michael Ardila. Justice demands he serve the full prison term given to him at the time he was sentenced for this heinous crime.
To protest, please write to:
N.J. State Parole Board
PO Box 862
Trenton, NJ 08625

Hearing Date: May 2021
Richard Helsinger  ID#: SBI A549098

On February 12, 1989, Michael Ardila (21) ambushed and stabbed Anthony Jackson Pompelio (Tony) (17) with a hunting knife while he was at the home of one of his classmates. Ardila slit Tony’s throat as he begged for his life.
Ardila was convicted of 1st degree murder and was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole until he served 32 ½ years in prison. He will have only served 30 years when he is considered for parole.
We, the undersigned STRONGLY OPPOSE parole for Michael Ardila. Justice demands he serve the full prison term given to him at the time he was sentenced for this heinous crime.
To protest, please write to:
Ohio Parole Board
4545 Fisher Rd. Suite D
Columbus, OH 43228
Thank You

Thanks to all those who have chosen POMC as their charity of choice. Your donation has helped thousands of surviving family members; stopped the early release of 1,730 convicted murderers; assisted in POMC’s Second Opinion Services; provided the National newsletter, Survivors, to those who cannot afford it and so much more. POMC’s outreach would not be able to exist without your continued support.

**In Memory of**

Ann Bass from Jolene Braymen
Captain Victor Brown from Anita Jo Brown
Lynn Chaffin from Anita Martin
Dwayne Chubb from Dorothy & Albert Chubb
Keith Ciszewski from Jacqueline Ciszewski
Larry Cole from Carol Cole
Jamie Cooksey from Linda Cooksey
Christopher Coombs from Robert Coombs
Christopher Courtmanche from Lynne Arnett
Gian Carlo Cuccia from George Cuccia
Rita Doyle from Patricia Doyle
Lucy Adele Ellerton from Grant Ellerton
Cher Elder from Claudette Elder
Jonathan Estrada from Anthony Flores
Tammy Everett from Jo Everett
Margie Ann Fernette from Joan Krmzarick
Thomas Flood from David Flood
Alan Fryback from Virginia & Fred Fryback
Chris Fuller from Fred & Nancy Fuller

**In Memory of**

David Gorski from Mr. & Mrs. James Gorski
Shannon Marie Griffin from Dave Caswell
Christopher Guerrero from Manuel & Laverne Guerrero
Dustin Ryan Hadden from Mary & David Hadden
Aaron Hall from Flora & Benny Fazio
Ben Harvey from Susan Webb
James “Jay” Hitt from Deborah Hitt
Lisa Hullinger from Robert & Charlotte Hullinger
Steven Isheim from Terry Isheim
Brian Jenny from Joseph & Patricia Jenny
Amy Kanner from Robert & Caroline Kanner
Natalie Kiehle from Tristan Triebel
Nancy Klamfot from Laura Nicholson & Mr. & Mrs. J. Middleton
Glenna Krause from E. J. Krause
Jessica Lange from Gay Hynds
Darvis Lee Jr. from Sandra Lee
Janet Leonhardt from Carol Leonhardt
Scott Jonathan Lewis from Sarah & Jean Lewis

**In Memory of**

Lisa from Ilene Freedman
David Liu from Ying Liu
Judy Lloyd from Marit Lloyd
Owen Lynch from Ann Coughlin
Joshua Meyers from Susan Ullman
Mimi Mrakitsch-Beal from Pamela Mrakitsch
Peter Dodd Nichols from Lee & Terry Freeman
Shannon Marie & Alexandra Jordan Nolan-Broe from LC & Sherry Nolan
Andrea O'Donnell from Lesley & Mark Lane
Terry Pennington (mother of Christopher Spivey) from Lisa Dean
Virginia Pierce from Patty Walters
Lisa Marie Potter from Barbara Potter
David Pottinger from Carolee Hildenbrandt & Laura Perone
Becky Reed from James & Ann Reed
Michael Reichert from Jerri Reichert
Paul Rodgers from Bonnie Gay
Estee’ Sawyerr from William Sawyerr
Stephen Eric Senator from Stewart Senator

**In Memory of**

Timothy Staunton from Denise Coleman
Ronald Storr from Joann Storr-Font
Alicia Tverberg from Cyndi Ganzles
Wesley Valentine from Joe & Charlene Valentine
Nancy Walch from Judith Wayland-Smith
Tonya Wallace from Barbara Stonestreet
Lisa Marie Weaver from Howard & Ann Klerk
Nicole Anne Willson from Anne Spielman
Jack Wyman from Dorothy Scott Wyman

**Donations**

Kay Elizabeth Bland-Jenkins
Gale Borders
Julie Carlson
Crystal Church
Courtney Dunn
Julie Giroux
Chelsea Goodwin
Nancy Grewe
Allison Guzik
Knippenberg
Debbie Hall
Effie Hutto
Holly L’Oiseau
Carolyn Longstreet
Realize that it's okay to heal; it's okay to feel better. Losing your pain doesn't mean you're losing your loved one or forgetting them. Guilt is a destructive force with no upside. It's absolutely okay to heal, it's absolutely okay to smile; that's what the life of your loved one is telling you—listen!

Stay on track, stay positive, stay strong. Don't let grief win. Grief wants you down and thinking negative "I can't do this" thoughts. Give grief the boot by telling it "I am strong, I can do this," and keep your eyes on the prize, right along with your smile and meaning.

Touch the lives of others through your healing. You get when you give. You can't give your love directly anymore, but you still have all of it. Give that love away by helping others through volunteering, writing, speaking or just holding another bereaved person's hand. Give away your healing by giving away your love.

Understand that your journey is survivable. Look to other bereaved people who are further ahead on their path. Learn from them, listen to their healing stories and believe that you, too, can someday tell your healing story as well. This is a survivable journey where good things can actually come from the tragedy of your loved one's death. Sounds impossible I know, but it can be true. Keep working.

Victory can be yours. As you do your work, you'll experience large and small victories along the way. Embrace them all, absorb them all and use them as a shield against your pain and suffering. Your ultimate victory will come when you think of your beloved and smile much, much more then you will cry.

Windows of opportunity. Healing is possible every single day if you pay attention to the opportunities that come your way. It may be a butterfly, it may be a song, it may be a memory or a feeling of hope. HOPE: Healing Opportunities are Possible Everyday.

Yesterday, today and tomorrow. It's called the past for a reason, it's time that has passed, never to return. If you try to live there (visiting is fine) your healing will suffer. As you know, tomorrow is unpredictable. No one knows what the new day will bring. If you pay attention to this moment and search for the healing in it, you can find it. Right here, right now is where you'll do your best work.

QXZ-no, you're not going crazy, you're grieving. Just like these letters don't make sense, your life won't make sense for a long time and you might feel like you're going crazy. Your life is in a blender switched on high while you're working through the most difficult journey you've ever begun. Keep doing your work and the blender will slow down and eventually stop. Life can make sense again.

By: Rob Anderson, Grief Digest, www.centering.org
There are hundreds of survivors across the U.S. who volunteer for the National Organization of POMC as Chapter Leaders, Co-Leaders, Contact Persons and State Coordinators. If you are at a point in your life where you are ready to reach out to others who have suffered the loss of a loved one due to violence, please contact me.

The following states need someone to offer support services through phone, email, support group meetings, & court accompaniment, etc.:

- Alabama
- District of Columbia
- Hawaii
- Mississippi
- Montana
- Nebraska
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- Rhode Island
- South Dakota
- Utah
- Vermont
- Wyoming

Thank you to the following Chapters for dedication, compassion and selflessness shown through their continued efforts to provide on-going emotional support to others through phone calls, email, support group meetings, court accompaniment, local events bringing about awareness, education, and advocacy to victims of crime, and remembrance programs for the surviving family members whose loved ones lives were taken from them.

In this 2021 anniversary, POMC acknowledges those Chapters with Articles of Association that were signed between January 1st and April 30th of the year they became a probationary POMC Chapter:

- Metro Detroit Chapter/MI - 39 years
- Los Angeles Chapter/CA - 9 years
- Valley of the Sun Chapter/AZ - 35 years
- Central Minnesota Chapter/MN - 21 years
- Greater Cincinnati Area Chapter/OH - 20 years
- Kentuckiana Chapter/KY-IN - 2 years
- Sampson County Chapter/NC - 2 years
- Queens Chapter/NY - 18 years
- Sumter Chapter/SC - 7 years
- Southeast Minnesota Chapter/MN - 23 years
- Sacramento California Area Chapter/CA - 13 years
- Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter/MA - 13 years
- Maine Chapter/ME - 31 years
- St. Louis Area Wide Chapter/IL&MO - 36 years
- Delaware County Chapter/PA - 26 years
- Southwest Florida Chapter/FL - 22 years
- Miami-Dade County Chapter/FL - 38 years
- Kansas City Area Wide Chapter/MO&KS - 31 years
- Greater Portland Area Chapter/OR - 39 years
- Central Ohio Chapter/OH - 31 years
- Central Missouri Area Wide/MD - 13 years

CP/SC/CL UPDATES

If you have a message of interest, a great fundraising idea, upcoming Chapter events, special awards or recognitions received or ideas that you would like to share with our “POMC family”, please mail them to my attention: Sherry Nolan at National POMC or email them to snolan@pomc.org. The deadline for receipt of the next newsletter articles is April 1, 2021. Please note: due to deadlines or overflow of articles, etc., we may not be able to include all of those received in the next SNL, but may keep them for future newsletters.
Volunteers are essential in fulfilling our mission!

Nothing teaches hope, kindness, courage, and compassion like helping others.

Volunteers do not necessarily have the time…they just have the heart.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the many Contact Persons and State Coordinators throughout the U.S. who also offer valuable services to those survivors in their state who reach out to them for additional support, especially when there is not a POMC Chapter nearby. These volunteers are willing to spend time talking, and especially listening, to others about their loss. Let us recognize some of our Contact Persons as well as a State Coordinator who have offered continuous supportive services to others for more than 10 years.

We Honor...

Bonnie Rhea Tomeoni - State Coordinator, CA  
In Loving Memory of Her Son  
Paul Allen Howell  
Age: 17 Years

Laurie Gomm - Contact Person Since 2008, MA  
In Loving Memory of Her Daughter  
Nikki Gomm Halpin  
Age: 32 Years

Laura Nolan - Contact Person Since 2006, NY  
In Loving Memory of Her Brother  
Arthur Nolan III  
Age: 19 Years

Len Trimmer - Contact Person since 2011, AK  
In Loving Memory of His Daughter  
Jessica Ariana Trimmer  
Age: 28 Years
ATTENTION:
NEW ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP THROUGH FACEBOOK

Are you on Facebook? If so, make sure to join our Facebook support group which is being used as a topic forum to talk among one another, share stories of your loved one and lean on one another for support. You can join the group at www.facebook.com/groups/POMCOFFICIAL.

Please note, this is the ONLY official online POMC support group. If you belong to other groups claiming to be POMC, please be aware that they are not affiliated with or representatives of POMC.

We still have our National page on Facebook as well which is used for updates within the organization and National Office as well as other important information. Again, this is the ONLY official page for POMC (besides Chapter pages) so please be aware if you are linked with other pages claiming to be a POMC Facebook account. You can access our National Facebook page at www.facebook.com/POMC1978.

*REMINDER*

Has something changed? Please, let POMC know if your name, address, email or phone number have changed. Call us toll free at (888) 818-7662 or email us at natlpomc@pomc.org.

POMC Catalog Available

POMC’s “Journey Through Grief” catalog is available by contacting POMC at: (513) 721-5683. The catalog can also be downloaded from our website at: www.pomc.org.

The catalog provides color photos and a listing for all POMC items: books, bumper stickers, brochures, clothing, magnets, music, etc.

Information on items for POMC’s National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims, special gifts, memorials, and tributes are also included in the catalog.

Contact POMC today for your free copy.

Our future depends on you!

Please remember the National Organization of Parents Of Murdered Children in your will and estate planning.

Thank you for keeping us in mind.

Dedication Page Information

Dedication Pages are included in each publication of the Survivors Newsletters. Not only is this a way to memorialize our loved ones, it also helps to defray the cost of publishing the newsletter. We offer this opportunity to pay tribute with poems, photos (black and white only), letters/loving thoughts or special requests.

The prices for dedication pages are as follows:
$35.00 for a quarter page, $65.00 for a half page or $125.00 for a full page.

Send item and appropriate donation to “Dedication Page,” POMC, 635 W. 7th Street, Suite 104, Cincinnati, OH 45203. Please include your name and daytime phone number in case we have to contact you for clarification.

Did you know Amazon.com is a POMC sponsor?

POMC receives 4-13% depending on item of all Amazon.com purchases made through the Amazon link on our webpage. The use of this link does not increase the cost of your purchase.
**Survivors Newsletter Subscription**

Please find enclosed $10.00 for my annual subscription (three issues) for the Survivors Newsletter ($25.00 outside the United States). Please consider adding an extra subscription fee to help defray the cost for someone who cannot afford to subscribe. (Please Print)

Name:_____________________________________
Address:___________________________________
City, State, Zip:______________________________
Email Address:______________________________
Phone number: (____)________________________
Amount enclosed: $_________ for _______ year (s)
Payment method: ___Check    __Visa   __MasterCard
   __American Express    __Discover
Card number:_______________________________
Expiration date:_____________________________
Enclosed is an extra $__________ donation for
someone in need and is given in:
Memory of:_________________________________
Honor of:__________________________________

All those donating an extra gift ‘in loving
memory of’, or ‘in honor of’ will be listed in
the next issue of the Survivors newsletter. To
have POMC send a letter acknowledging your
gift to the family, please provide family’s
name, address, city, state, and zip code.

Return to:
Parents Of Murdered Children, Inc.
635 W. 7th Street, Suite 104
Cincinnati, Ohio 45203

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Parents Of Murdered Children, Inc.
For the families and friends of those who have died by violence
Parents Of Murdered Children, Inc.
*For the families of those who have died by violence*
635 W. 7th Street, Suite 104
Cincinnati, Ohio  45203

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