

SCARBOROUGH The Mirror.

WEEKLY IN PRINT. MUCH MORE ONLINE ANYTIME. Toronto.com

\$2.00

FAMILY DENTAL OFFICE
Dr. Kripanjali Pujari & Associates
 4830 Sheppard Ave. E #1.
 Scarborough, ON M1S 5M9
416-321-8999
NEW PATIENTS WELCOME
FREE Teeth Whitening
Regular value \$250. With complete new patient exam. Please call for details.

NORTH EDITION



Evelyn Fox/photo



Shauna Brown/photo

Get more community news now
toronto.com

READ MORE @

TORONTO.COM

Looking for more online?
Check out these stories...

Cancer patient faces eviction from Parkdale home

York South-Weston residents respond to rise in crime

The Ford effect on municipal politics in Etobicoke

East York women entrepreneurs break through barriers

North York Girl Expo offers hands-on sports and science

TWO MURDERS. NO JUSTICE.

KIESINGAR GUNN AND DEMAL GRAHAM WERE SHOT DEAD, AND NO ONE HAS BEEN CHARGED. IN TORONTO, 61 PER CENT OF GUN HOMICIDES ARE UNSOLVED. OUR INVESTIGATIVE TEAM EXPLORES WHY THE RATE IS SO HIGH. /P26



#TravelGoals 2018
Make this the year you discover a new destination!

travelalerts.ca

UNSOLVED: WHY ARE NO CHARGES LAID IN 3 OUT OF 5 GUN HOMICIDES?

TWO PART INVESTIGATIVE SERIES EXPLORES FAMILY IMPACT, BARRIERS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

ANDREW PALAMARCHUK
apalamar@toronto.com

MIKE ADLER
madler@toronto.com

If you kill someone with a gun in Toronto - you have a three in five chance of getting away with murder.

This startling statistic comes directly from Toronto police. If you use any other

weapon, your chances of being charged skyrocket.

Why are so many gun homicides unsolved in Toronto?

Metroland Media's investigative team spoke to police, community activists and academics to try to identify the barriers, and some possible solutions.

In this first of a two-part investigation, we tell the stories of Demal Graham and Kiesingar Gunn, two young men shot to death in the prime of their lives. No one has been charged in their murders.

DEMAL GRAHAM

People know who killed Demal Graham - about

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION:
THIS SERIES EXPLORES WHY 61 PER CENT OF GUN HOMICIDES IN TORONTO ARE UNSOLVED. BARRIERS INCLUDE LACK OF EVIDENCE AND COMMUNITY COOPERATION, AND MORE STRANGER-ON-STRANGER CRIME.

that, Shauna Brown is certain.

Brown started hearing rumours a couple of months after her son, a shy man devoted to making music in his basement studio, was shot in their Scarborough driveway on July 23, 2017.

Graham, 25, was watching his daughter playing on townhouse steps across the street when a car came circling by on Empringham Drive in Malvern.

Police later told Brown they didn't think her son was an "intended target."

Maybe he was just the first man his killers saw.

But more than a year later, he's dead and they're still anonymous, except, Brown believes, to a sizable number of people who know something but won't tell, because that would mean "snitching."

Some are "close enough to have known me. Some of these people have been inside my home. They knew my granddaughter, they know my girls," said Brown.

"There's a lot of people who know the answer, and we don't."

To Brown, struggling with anxiety and depression after her son's death, people keeping the killers' secrets are "no better than the person who pulled the trigger," she said.

"They have kids, they have sons, they have grandchildren. How would they feel if this happened to them?"

Brown moved her family away from Empringham, where they lived for 12 years, and where her son attended barbecues, and participated in countless water fights. She distanced herself and her family from

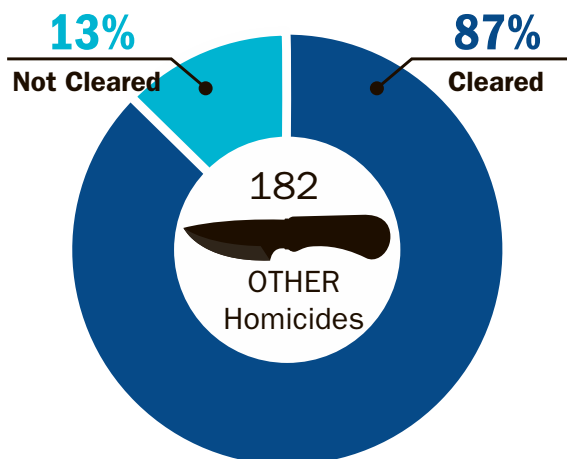
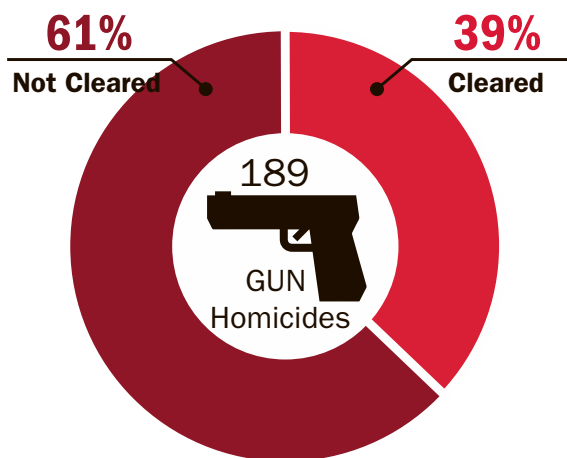


Bambang Sadewo/Metroland

Shauna Brown holds up a photograph of her and her late son Demal Graham, as a child. (Below) Demal Graham, 25, was shot to death in his Scarborough driveway on Empringham Drive.

TORONTO HOMICIDES 2012-2017

371 Total Homicides



SOURCE: Toronto police data as of Sept. 12, 2018

Cleared refers to cases where a charge has been laid.

Metroland graphic

many friends, even some relations.

She said her son's case "could be solved at any time," if certain people broke free from "the pull of the street mentality" and gave information to police.

If people stay silent because of the code against "snitching," said Brown, using a common term for co-operating with police, they're promoting more violence and serving men like the one who fired the fatal shots at Graham.

"This person is out free, walking the streets. They're giving more loyalty to this person who shot and killed my son than to the memory and life of my son. It's cowardly."

Music became an outlet for Graham - called Milli by many - after his father died when he was 12. He wanted to start a children's music program in Malvern. He kept to himself a lot, sitting on his steps, writing down his problems and turning them into songs.

If you got to know him, Graham was really funny, said Janese Davis, a long-time friend and neighbour. "He was someone you could definitely confide in,"

When he got shot, a friend called Davis.

"She's like, 'Demal's gone.' That was definitely the last person for me to think would be ever be gone like that," she remembered last month. "He was

never that type of guy."

Davis's favourite track of Graham's is one he recorded for his daughter, I Try, in which Graham sings he wants to shield her from violence and would do anything for her.

Rock-a-bye baby, no diamonds and pearls/I'm going harder than that/I'm trying to give you the world.

It could be true people know who killed him, Davis said. "In the community, when certain people don't want to be labelled as a snitch."

"No snitching," she believes, is rooted in the same "ego and pride" which sets many shootings off, the idea that, "if someone stepped on my shoes, I'm going to kill you for that," Davis said.

"At the end of the day, a bullet doesn't have a name to it, so a bullet can kill anybody."

Early on the day Graham was murdered, two other men, Dwayne Campbell, 30, and Rinaldo Cole, 33, were also shot to death during a crowded barbecue party on Gennela Square, a Morningside Heights street a short distance from Empringham.

Those shooters, whose gunfire also wounded a woman, haven't been caught either.

Brown wants the public to know it wasn't just her family who has suffered, but a whole neighbourhood.

She knows people may be afraid to talk.

"But we have to testify (once the shooters are caught). On top of being



Toronto Police Service/photo



Dan Pearce/Metroland

Evelyn Fox, mother of murder victim Kiesingar Gunn, 26, who was shot and killed in 2016. (Below) Kiesingar Gunn with fiancée Naomi, eldest daughter Felicity and son Terrence.

victimised once, we have to go through the whole process. To me, there's no excuse why someone else couldn't do the same thing."

She has never wanted revenge, she said. That just "perpetuates the cycle" and would force another mother to go through what she's gone through.

But Brown wants justice for Graham, for her granddaughter most of all.

"She got the least amount of time with him, and she'll deal with the effects the rest of her life," said Brown.

"My family and the family of the person who killed my son, we're now connected, and we'll be for the rest of our lives."

KIESINGAR GUNN

"Stop worrying about me. ... Nothing's going to happen to me."

Those were Kiesingar Gunn's final words to his mother.

Three days later, the 26-year-old Scarborough father of four was dead, hit by a stray bullet out front of the Forty2 Supperclub at 42 Mowat Ave.

Evelyn Fox said she was watching the news Sept. 8, 2016 when she turned to her son and warned him not to

get into arguments with anyone because "people carry guns." It was then that Gunn told his mother not to worry, assuring her that nothing would happen to him.

"And that was our last conversation," Fox said. "It haunts me."

Gunn, the oldest of four children, was born May 2, 1990. He grew up in the Jane and Finch area until age 10 when he moved to Scarborough's West Hill neighbourhood with his family.

"He was very loving but very adventurous and accident prone," Fox said in a recent interview. "He was adventurous to the point where I had numerous hospital visits for broken bones, stitches, you name it."

Gunn played baseball and football; it was during football games that he broke his clavicle bone and nose.

Fox noted her son loved to play pranks on his family. "He was forever trying to make people laugh and bring a joke to a situation. He was very heartwarming like that."

And Gunn also took good care of his two youngest siblings. "Kiesingar was 14 and he was not only a big brother but almost like a father figure to them.

He used to take the kids to day care and from day care when I was working and going to school," Fox said. "And then he would have dinner made for them, give them a bath and everything before I even got home."

Gunn went to Sir Robert L. Borden Business and Technical Institute and volunteered at Variety Village. After graduating high school, Gunn went straight into the workforce. He worked for a roofing company and a racking company up until his death.

"I finally talked him into going back to post-secondary school, and he was supposed to start a home renovation program in the Sep-

tember that he passed away," Fox said.

Gunn was engaged to his girlfriend, who he had three of his four children with.

Fox described her son as "the most amazing" father.

"The kids were glued to him because he was so playful," she said. "If one kid wanted spaghetti for dinner and another one wanted hamburgers and the other one wanted something else, he would make all three different meals. He was just that type of father: very engaged, hands-on."

Gunn rarely went to clubs though he had been to the Forty2 Supperclub

twice and liked it enough to return a third time for a birthday party with his fiancée and a man Fox described as her son's godbrother. A fourth person, the godbrother's friend, also went with them.

It was 4 a.m. Sept. 11, 2016 when Gunn, his fiancée and his godbrother left the club and saw a commotion outside; a crowd had formed around two men who were arguing.

"My godson happened to notice that his friend was in the crowd, the friend that they ended up going to the club with," said Fox, noting her godson pulled over the van and walked towards the crowd to get his friend.

Gunn also got out of the vehicle and approached the crowd of 20 to 30 people.

"And within seconds he was hit by a stray bullet," Fox said. "He was just going to stand close by, just to make sure that nothing happened with my godson."

Gunn, shot in the head, was taken to St. Michael's Hospital where he died at 9:25 p.m. that day.

Police confirmed Gunn wasn't the intended target of the shooting.

Police and Fox believe there are witnesses who know the identity of the killer.

Fox said that not having justice for her son's death has made it hard to move on.

"It (an arrest) would at least help me try to heal. I wouldn't be harbouring all this anger that prevents me from even attempting to heal."

There has been a recent attempt to reinvigorate the investigation.

On the second anniversary of the murder, police posted a \$50,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the shooter.

Det. Leslie Dunkley told reporters at the time that prior to the shooting the suspect was among more than 200 patrons inside the club. "After the shots were fired, (the suspect) fled to a waiting vehicle that was parked on Mowat Avenue, and the vehicle proceeded northbound towards Liberty Street," he said, adding there was someone there "that can identify the shooter and that knows the shooter ... and we're asking that those individuals come forward."

The suspect is black with a dark complexion, 18 to 22 years old, five feet 11 inches to six-feet tall with braided hair, possibly in cornrows, and a slim build. He wore a white hooded sweatshirt with black prints or a logo.

"If he has any type of moral compass at all, if his mother raised him with any type of morals or ethics period, then the right thing for him to do is to turn himself in," Fox said.

As for why more witnesses haven't yet come forward, Fox suggested "fear" could be part of the problem.

"I don't know if it's fear from their community (or) fear from that person, but this guy is not the mafia, he's not a hit man," she said. "I don't understand why it is people would be fearful, maybe of their reputation. Is someone's reputation more important than a person's life?"

Next week in part 2 of Unsolved, we explore some of the barriers to solving gun homicides, and what police, experts and grieving family members think it will take to overcome them.

—Data research by Aaron D'Andrea



Evelyn Fox/photos

STORY BEHIND THE STORY

In covering crime stories, we discovered that in the majority of gun homicide cases in Toronto, no one is ever charged. We wanted to find out why 61 per cent of gun murders are unsolved, and identify some potential solutions.

SCARBOROUGH The Mirror.

WEEKLY IN PRINT. MUCH MORE ONLINE ANYTIME. Toronto.com

\$2.00

**CHILDREN'S
WALK-IN CLINIC**
INSIDE THE GOLDEN MILE SHOPPING CENTRE
**MON - FRI
12PM - 8PM
SAT & SUN
9AM - 6PM**
**1880 EGLINTON AVE. EAST
416-285-7575**

SOUTH EDITION



Toronto Police Service/Photo

TOTAL DENTURE CARE 15% OFF
DUE TO CONSTRUCTION
James D. Kontos DD
416-759-4535
Dentures that suit all Budgets
RELINES • REPAIRS • FULL, PARTIAL & IMPLANT
2425 Eglinton Ave. East (at Kennedy)
www.jameskontosdentureclinic.com

**Keep your
community
news alive**
REGISTER NOW
AT
toronto.com

**READ MORE @
TORONTO.COM**

- Looking for more online?
Check out these stories...
- Longtime tenants in Parkdale granted stay of eviction
- Bloor West students protest repeal of 2015 sex education
- North York clothing bank needs more warm winter wear

UNSOLVED: GUN MURDERS

POLICE, POLITICIANS AND ACTIVISTS WEIGH IN ON WHY NO CHARGES ARE LAID IN 3 OUT OF 5 GUN HOMICIDES, AND WHAT'S NEEDED TO IMPROVE THOSE NUMBERS /P28

KIA BEST YET SALES EVENT **0% FINANCING* + NO-CHARGE MAINTENANCE ON SELECT MODELS** **NO-CHARGE + WINTER TIRES ONLY AT SCARBORO KIA WITH THE PURCHASE OF A NEW KIA**

ON NOW AT SCARBORO KIA! CHECK OUT PAGE 2 FOR MORE OF OUR EXCLUSIVE OFFER!

Only At Scarboro Kia | 2592 Eglinton Ave East (East of Midland) | 416.266.0066 | www.scarborokia.ca

KIA The Power to Surprise

UNSOLVED: WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO SOLVE MORE GUN MURDERS?

PART 2 OF INVESTIGATIVE SERIES IDENTIFIES BARRIERS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

ANDREW PALAMARCHUK
apalamarchuk@toronto.com

MIKE ADLER
madler@toronto.com

*In this second instalment of *Unsolved*, we begin with a repeat of the startling statistic that got this investigation going: if you kill someone with a gun in Toronto, you have a three in five chance of getting away with murder.*

Metroland Media's investigative team set out to find out why 61 per cent of gun homicides are unsolved in Toronto. In part one of this series, we shared the stories of Demal Graham and Kiesingar Gunn, two young men shot to death. No one has been charged in their murders.

In part two, we speak to police, politicians, community activists and academics to identify the barriers, and some potential solutions, to solving gun homicides.

STRANGER-ON-STRANGER

While there are many reasons why gun homicides are more difficult to solve, interviews with veteran homicide investigators point to three main barriers: lack of DNA evidence, higher rates of stranger-on-stranger crime and the unwillingness of witnesses to cooperate.

Acting Insp. Hank Idsinga, the interim head of Toronto police's homicide squad, said that guns tend to be used more often in murders where there's not much history between suspect and victim, and that that's why they're harder to clear.

"I don't think it's so much the fact that a gun was used," Idsinga said in a recent interview. "Unfortunately, the ease of using a

firearm tends to attract the stranger-on-stranger murders, or the murders that happen for very little motivation, and I think that's what makes them difficult to solve."

When there's a connection between a suspected murderer and a victim, there's likely to be a shared circle of family and friends that police can interview. There may also be a prior history that police are aware of. These options don't exist when the victim and offender are unknown to each other.

WITNESS PROTECTION

Many gun murders are committed by gang members or take place in neighbourhoods with gang activity.

Idsinga suggested that when the shooting is gang-related, witnesses are often reluctant to come forward "because they have to live in those neighbourhoods."

More can be done, he said, to encourage participation, such as offering witness protection to a person whose life may be in danger as a result of testimony.

"I really don't think it's so much an issue of people not wanting to talk to police. I think it's people not wanting to become involved in the court process as well as people who are genuinely fearful."

When witness protection is too extreme an approach, police may opt to help witnesses move from one housing complex to another.

Financial assistance may also be available, Idsinga said.

"But it becomes a challenge in court. If a lawyer can make the insinuation that someone has given evidence simply to further their own situation then their credibility might get reduced."

Police also need to develop relationships with potential witnesses, Idsinga said, to encourage more cooperation.

"You can't drop leaflets on someone's front door, asking them to call if they have information, and expect

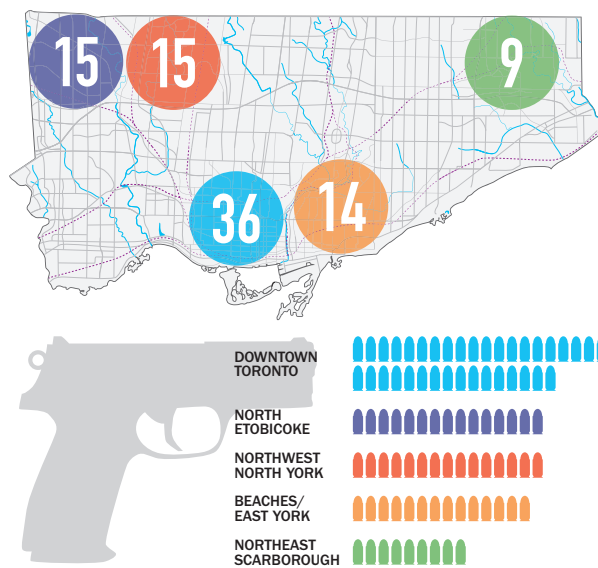


Acting Insp. Hank Idsinga, interim head of Toronto homicide, at a news conference.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION:
SERIES EXPLORES WHY 61 PER CENT OF GUN HOMICIDES IN TORONTO ARE UNSOLVED. BARRIERS INCLUDE LACK OF EVIDENCE, TENSIONS WITH POLICE, STRANGER-ON-STRANGER CRIME.

Randy Risling

TORONTO GUN HOMICIDE HOTSPOTS 2012-2017



SOURCE: Toronto police public safety data portal

Metroland graphic

them to call all the time," he said. "The face-to-face conversation is much more important."

After years of relationship-building in Etobicoke's Dixon Road neighbourhood, police received significant help from that community in the 2015 gun murder of 27-year-old Kabil Abdulkhadir.

Toronto police spokesperson Meaghan Gray said the relationship-building

included officers going into the neighbourhood on a regular basis, not just when responding to calls, so residents could "get to know their police officers even outside of that traditional police response."

Witnesses did come forward to testify, and police believe their co-operation helped secure convictions against Mohamud Abdiwal Dirie and Ayub Hirsi Ali, who were convicted of

first-degree murder and manslaughter respectively.

"This prosecution, I hope, will also lend to the message that if you do come forward, we are successful and we do get results," lead investigator Det. Sgt. Joyce Schertzer said in an interview in July. "I kind of made up this little saying during my tenure at homicide: if you want to end the violence, you have to end the silence."

LACK OF DNA

Shooting murders are harder to solve because often there is a lack of physical evidence, Det. Sgt. Stacy Gallant, head of the cold case section of the homicide squad, said during an interview earlier this year.

"A lot of times you don't have that exchange of DNA," he said. "Most times when a shooting occurs the only thing left at the scene is the victim, perhaps a shell casing and the bullets that are in the deceased ... so we're left with relying on witnesses, the community to come forward and identify (the suspect) and be willing to go to court and hold someone accountable."

In a gun murder, the offender does not necessarily have to get close to the victim, so there may not be

any blood, hair, saliva or other identifying DNA evidence. However, Idsinga noted, there is ballistics evidence in shooting murder investigations "which you don't get with a knife or with a beating."

STAFF SHORTAGE

Toronto Police Association president Mike McCormack said "most" shootings in the city are "gang related," and require more intelligence and "investigative capacity" than other crimes, but shootings in Toronto increased just when Toronto police have seen this capacity diminished.

The police union has criticized a hiring freeze put on the force in 2016, though the city resumed hiring this year by accepting 80 recruits. McCormack said homicide detectives are "busier than they've ever been," and until staffing increases, police are "going to be caught in this hamster wheel."

The low gun homicide clearance rate "emboldens the people who are doing the shootings" while their brazenness - many shootings taking place in broad daylight, with shooters not bothering to conceal identities - intimidates people into not coming forward with information, McCormack added.

McCormack puts some blame for low gun murder clearances on the absence of random street checks by police, the much-criticized practice known as "carding."

McCormack argued such checks made it easier to get search warrants and intelligence leading to ar-



Toronto Star file photos

Left to right: George (Knia) Singh, lawyer and mayoral candidate, Mayor John Tory, mayoral candidate Jennifer Keesmaat; Evelyn Fox with her son Kiesingar Gunn who was murdered in 2016.

rests in gun homicides.

"You took that tool away of street checks and they replaced that with nothing."

Police data shows low clearance rates for gun homicides from 2012-2017. Carding was banned across Ontario in January 2017.

BATTLING ASSUMPTIONS

George (Knia) Singh is a lawyer and Toronto mayoral candidate who campaigned for years against carding and takes issue with McCormack's claim it helped solve cases.

There's "no connection between stopping innocent people and solving homicides," said Singh. "When carding was prevalent in 2005," a year including the infamous Summer of the Gun, there were still 80 murders, 52 by firearm, he said.

The low clearance rate in gun murders, Singh said, "has to do with the value placed upon people's lives when an investigation is taking place."

"Unfortunately when people die in poor neighbourhoods and they happen to be people of colour, specifically those of African descent, it seems like there is an assumption that they deserved it and that they are not worth the extra time or effort."

According to Singh, media plays a part in perpetuating those assumptions, often referring to people of African descent slain in shootings as "known to police" or the shootings as "gang related."

To see justice done for those affected by gun murders, he said, "the police as an institution have to stop viewing and treating

young people of African descent as gang members and criminals."

An anti-violence campaigner from Scarborough, Louis March of the Zero Gun Violence Movement, called the 39 per cent solve rate for gun homicides unacceptable and said it should prompt an immediate review by the city of what can be done to close the wide gap with non-gun homicides, which have an 87 per cent solve rate.

That includes police re-evaluating investigation strategies and how they dedicate resources for cases, March said.

MISTRUST OF POLICE

Gun murders go unsolved in racialized communities because of tensions between the community and police, said Jooyoung Lee, a sociologist who writes about young people's experiences with police and gun violence.

Immersing himself in the hip-hop culture of young Black men in Los Angeles, Lee studied the influence of "growing up in the shadow of Crips and Bloods," and said he gained insights into gang culture and how young men make sense of shootings and policing in their neighbourhoods.

Many young people, in U.S. cities and Toronto, have negative interactions with police or know friends or family members who have had them; even hearing about "police brutality" in other cities affects attitudes and opinions, said Lee.

"The 'stop snitching' culture is born out of this collective experience of Blackness, of feeling the police are not there to protect you

but to surveil you," said Lee.

"There's always been a belief in the Black community that police aren't there to help."

Skepticism in marginalized areas, said Lee, is not just directed at police but the larger criminal justice system.

Now part of a team researching Toronto gun violence, Lee said he's worried this city will follow in the footsteps of others "in adopting a more reactionary, tough on crime" policy emphasizing "more boots on the ground" and technological fixes such as Shot-Spotter, devices Toronto is considering employing that are meant to monitor the sounds of gunshots.

"This is a really short-term play" and doesn't address root causes of why young people get into violent altercations, argued Lee.

Like others, he believes building trust between marginalized communities and police is a way to turn the clearance rates around.

But this, Lee said, will take a long-term commitment to policing, in which, through "mundane ordinary interactions," residents and police get to know each other on a name-to-name basis and build a sense of mutual respect

CANDIDATES WEIGH IN

Metroland Media asked Toronto mayoral candidates John Tory and Jennifer Keesmaat to comment on why the rate for unsolved gun murders is so high. Neither addressed this question directly.

Responding through a spokesperson, Don Peat,



Evelyn Fox/photo

Tory, the current mayor and a member of the Toronto Police Services Board, said he "remains determined to do everything possible to stop gun violence in Toronto - that's why we are investing in neighbourhood policing and community engagement along with hiring more police officers."

Tory's spokesperson cited a \$30-million package of anti-violence and anti-gang initiatives passed by Toronto City Council this year, and the mayor's promise to hire 200 officers this year and next. Tory is also exploring the possibility of banning handguns.

Keesmaat said Tory, as mayor, played "yo-yo with the staffing level" of police, cutting their budget and freezing hiring, which "jeopardized the service's ability to respond to 911 calls much less investigate shootings," before promising to hire more officers.

Keesmaat added her policing model "includes strategies for gathering vital intelligence that will lead directly to a higher

solve rate," though she didn't elaborate.

KEEPING THE CASE ALIVE

For many family members of murder victims, keeping the case alive in the public eye and offering incentives are important steps to solving the crimes.

Evelyn Fox, mother of shooting murder victim Kiesingar Gunn (profiled in part one of this series), had been pushing police to offer a reward in her son's case and even started a GoFundMe page to raise the reward money herself.

The GoFundMe page was taken down after police, on Sept. 11 (the second anniversary of Gunn's murder), posted a \$50,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the killer.

Lead investigator Det. Leslie Dunkley said police don't routinely offer rewards in homicide cases. "Usually when you get to a certain stage in your investigation, if you can't do any more or if we feel it's going to be helpful, then we look at the reward sys-

tem." At the time of publication, the Gunn murder case remained unsolved.

However, it's never too late to solve a gun murder, according to the interim head of Toronto's homicide squad, Hank Idsinga.

"We want to solve all of our cases, and if information comes through two years later, five years later, 10 years later, we'll still pursue it and hopefully bring them to a successful conclusion," he said. "We've had firearms cases that are 20 years old, 25 years old that get solved with that little bit of information."

- Data research by Aaron D'Andrea

STORY BEHIND THE STORY:

In covering crime stories, we discovered that in the majority of gun homicides cases in Toronto, no one is ever charged. We wanted to find out why 61 per cent of gun murders are unsolved, and identify some potential solutions.