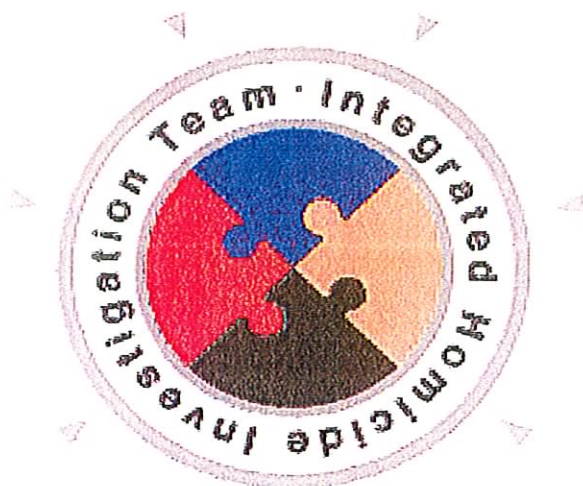




IHIT

Integrated Homicide Investigation Team

12992 - 76th Avenue, Surrey, British Columbia, Canada V3W 2V6



IHIT

2006 Annual Report



Executive Summary

IHIT has recently completed its fourth year of operations. The unit strength now stands at seventy-six investigators, eight civilian members (electronic file administrators) and twelve public service employees. The total establishment is ninety-six persons, of which, the Province of British Columbia provides twenty.

In 2006, IHIT investigated forty three homicide cases and seventeen other investigations. These “other” investigations include police-involved shootings and in-custody deaths, suspicious sudden deaths, high profile attempt murders and missing and kidnapped persons in which homicide remains a possibility.

The IHIT operational budget, achieved through the IHIT funding formula, has been met in 2006.

To date, IHIT has cleared sixty two percent (62%) of its 2006 homicide investigations, with several still very active. Many 2006 files were high profile investigations that involved teams of investigators heavily occupied for long periods and utilized significant human and financial resources.

Comprehensive homicide investigation is non-discretionary. While IHIT can not guarantee the resolution of all murders, it can guarantee that a consistent pool of experienced investigators will respond with the appropriate investigative structure. Homicides are expensive investigations and they represent extreme financial pressures for individual agencies.

In 2006, IHIT became one of the primary units for the “police shooting - observer project”. The Commission for Public Complaints embeds an independent observer, to report on IHIT’s independence and neutrality during these investigations. This will not effect municipal police department partners.

In 2006, IHIT became the pilot project for the “crime scene liaison officer” program. All IHIT homicides are now attended by members of the Forensic Laboratory Evidence Recovery Unit in addition to Forensic Identification Section personnel. These efforts are designed to streamline and prioritize laboratory submissions. The attendance of a laboratory specialist ensures a collaborative approach to analysis decisions and is assisting with the forensic lab backlog.

Over the course of the last year, IHIT has had several opportunities to be showcased nationally and internationally. It is widely recognized that IHIT’s model is modern, progressive and meets the needs of our current environment. IHIT is the envy of many in this country.



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Integrated Homicide Investigation Team - 2006 Annual Report.

2007-09-11

The Integrated Homicide Investigation Team has recently completed its fourth year of operations. The unit strength now stands at seventy-six investigators, eight civilian members (electronic file administrators) and twelve public service employees. The total establishment is ninety-six persons, of which, the Province of British Columbia provides twenty.

IHIT includes investigators from four Lower Mainland Municipal Police Departments, (Abbotsford, New Westminster, Port Moody and West Vancouver) and all lower mainland, RCMP Detachments. Leadership roles within the unit are occupied by representatives from both Municipal and RCMP partners. The unit currently operates from two locations. Team one through six are positioned at the RCMP's Surrey Satellite complex. Teams seven and eight are located at the Upper Fraser Valley Regional office in Chilliwack.

In early 2007 IHIT Inspector Bill Fordy joined IHIT as the Operations Officer. He is widely recognized as one of the country's leaders in interview and interrogation. He brings with him an extensive interview, polygraph, major crime and undercover background. His mandate will be to maintain oversight of operations and directly liaise with each partner agency on operational matters.

The Integrated Homicide Investigation Team has maintained its philosophy of accountability to the partner agency Chief of Police or Officer in Charge. The team works towards the resolution of all homicides on behalf of the partner agency. IHIT is the homicide unit for the agency rather than a separate investigative entity. IHIT has received outstanding cooperation from all partner agencies throughout the past year. IHIT has continued its presence at the monthly Regional Operations Police Management Committee meetings as well as at the IHIT advisory group. Operations officers from each partner agency's are briefed on investigations and provided an opportunity for direct feedback and input. In addition each partner agency's Operations Officer is provided a thirty day report on the status of each homicide investigation within their jurisdiction.

Members of IHIT are experienced and sought after investigators. The unit benefits from highly experienced investigators and nationally recognized subject matter experts in a variety of investigative specialities. Many lecture at a variety of police colleges throughout the country. The unit has maintained high morale despite extreme demands. This has largely been achieved through a culture that supports investigators to be successful. Many investigators remain at IHIT for lengthy periods, foregoing promotional opportunities elsewhere. This dedication and commitment is unparalleled. It has provided the partner agencies with real solutions to staffing and attrition pressures. Small investigative units have a very difficult time gaining and maintaining sufficient experience and expertise to investigate a wide variety of homicide cases. The pooling of expertise and the rapid training of new investigators in the IHIT team environment provides for consistent broad based expertise. This concept has and will continue to train the Lower Mainland's future police leaders, and managers of high-end investigative units.



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In Spring 2007, IHIT underwent its first Management Review. The results of this review were very positive. Morale was consistently found to be high. Investigators indicated that they were supported in their efforts.

As the unit has grown, office space has become a challenge. IHIT will soon open a third work site located at 132 Avenue and 76th Street in Surrey. This location will house two full investigative teams. The Surrey satellite complex will then be remodelled to provide a more suitable work environment. Current plans call for the integration of all IHIT teams into a single office environment in Surrey. The three offices will be closed upon completion of the new RCMP facility currently being constructed and planned for occupancy in 2012-2013. This new facility will have suitable interviewing, project and exhibit facilities.

The Integrated Homicide Investigation Team has centralized records management in conjunction with Prime implementation. The unit has recently secured a records management specialist and will now take conduct of all its records, PRIME and CPIC data. All records remain available to the partner agencies.

The IHIT concept was designed to provide modern structure, philosophy and support to homicide investigators faced with increased demands by Crown Counsel, the Courts, as well as by organized and cross-jurisdictional crime. The complexity of homicide investigations and the demands on the Crown and courts have continued to increase over the past four years. The unit handles numerous organized crime, “gangland” and contract murders annually. They are complex, require a myriad of expensive covert investigative techniques, and take months or years to complete. Partner agencies face the same challenges with respect to serious crimes other than murder. Offences such as kidnapping, home invasion, extortion, robbery and sexual assault face the same increased demands. Partner agencies can remain focussed on their serious crimes while IHIT takes responsibility for homicide investigations.

In 2006, IHIT investigated forty three homicide cases and seventeen other investigations. These “other” investigations include police-involved shootings and in-custody deaths, suspicious sudden deaths, high profile attempt murders and missing and kidnapped persons in which homicide remains a possibility. The team also continued several complex, long-term investigations from 2005.

As in past years, I have forwarded a separate package to each partner agency Chief Constable or Officer in Charge. That package provides a synopsis of each IHIT investigation for 2006. The document contains protected information that could compromise ongoing or future investigations and therefore cannot be widely distributed. The synopsis describes each investigation, unique challenges, and the investigative strategy, effort and resources applied to the case. All homicides are not the same. Some are solved quickly, while others take years and the dedication of a team or teams for protracted periods of time. The complexity of a single case and the pressure of multiple, complex cases directly impacts the units capacity to handle other investigations.



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I am proud to say that IHIT investigators continue to investigate cases from 2004 to 2006 in an effort to resolve them. The ability to advance historical cases is always directly proportional to the complexity and rate of new cases that the team must handle. The synopsis of each will provide partner agencies with an understanding of the efforts applied. The annual (calendar year) IHIT investigations are as follows:

a.	2007 Homicides - 23 (to date)	2007 Other - 8 (to date)
b.	2006 Homicides - 43	2006 Other - 17
c.	2005 Homicides - 53	2005 Other - 34
d.	2004 Homicides - 36	2004 Other - 22
e.	2003 Homicides - 26	2003 Other - 25

The following represents the 2006 IHIT investigations by policing jurisdiction:

<u>Partner Agency</u>	<u>Homicides</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
Abbotsford	3	1	4
Burnaby	6	2	8
Coquitlam	5	3	8
Langley	1	1	2
Ridge Meadows	0	0	0
Mission	0	0	0
North Vancouver	2	0	2
New Westminster	3	3	6
Port Moody	0	0	0
Richmond	4	1	4
Sea to Sky	0	0	0
Sunshine Coast	0	1	1
Surrey	13	3	16
UBC	1	0	1
Upper Fraser Valley	4	0	4
West Vancouver	1	0	1
White Rock	0	0	0
Assist Other	0	2	0
Total	43	17	60



The Integrated Homicide Investigation Team considers an investigation cleared when, after review of an IHIT Crown brief, Crown Counsel lays appropriate charges based on the facts and evidence outlined in the Crown brief.

In the Province of British Columbia, police agencies including IHIT, do not have the authority to approve charges. Ultimate authority for the charge approval lies with the Crown. In British Columbia, Crown Counsel evaluate police investigations against the standard of a “substantial likelihood of conviction”. This means that all cases must meet the Crown’s standard for charge approval, for each person involved in a case, before a charge is laid. The standard applied to charge approval has increased over the past decade, evolving annually in response to case law decisions and complexity of crime.

This standard creates numerous challenges for investigators. Many gang and organized crime investigations involve multiple offenders or persons party to the offence. The Crown standard for charge approval means a significant case must be built for each individual before a charge is laid. Homicide investigators go to great lengths to obtain evidence through a variety of means including complex covert operations, for each suspect. The high Crown standard also results in high rates of conviction for those ultimately charged.

There are other variables that complicate a clearance rate measured on cases in which Crown has laid charges. These factors represent a percentage of cases investigated annually. They impact on overall clearance rates as they cannot be categorized as cleared despite the challenge the specific issue presents. Cases such as described below remain in the under investigation category. They include:

- a. Following a thorough homicide investigation and analysis of the evidence, investigators and Crown Counsel believe murder charges are not warranted. Alternative charges may be more appropriate. Examples of this include, self defense, an accident or in cases such as police shootings where the actions are found to be justified. These cases represent complete homicide investigations but would not be calculated as a murder charge.
- b. Following a thorough homicide investigation and analysis of the evidence, investigators and the Coroner can not conclusively determine the case is a homicide and it must remain an unexplained sudden death.
- c. Investigations in which a substantive body of information and evidence identifies a suspect. The suspect dies prior to conclusion of investigation. This can occur in the case of gang activity, often with the murder of the suspect.
- d. Cases where the homicide investigated is linked to a larger investigation, as part of a larger organized crime or multiple murder investigation involving common suspect group and charges laid in a series of murders but not necessarily the single murder. The suspect may be charged, but not necessarily for murder of all victims. The incarceration of the suspect for life precludes additional investigative techniques that could resolve the outstanding case.



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- e. Following a thorough homicide investigation and analysis of the evidence, investigators submit a Crown brief. The unsavory nature of victims, associates and witnesses, preclude believable testimony and Crown Counsel declines to lay charges in the face of substantive evidence. This is a common scenario in relation to organized crime and gang activity.

To date, IHIT has cleared sixty two percent (62%) of its 2006 homicide investigations. Several are still underway and very active. 2006 was a challenging year with several high profile investigations. These investigations involved teams of investigators heavily occupied for long periods and utilized significant human and financial resources. In part, they include:

- a. In April 2006, fourteen year old Chelsey Acorn's body was found in a shallow grave outside of Hope. She was reported as a missing person from Abbotsford. It was determined that she had been befriended by a father and son from Surrey. These two suspects are alleged to have sexually exploited young, vulnerable females. A lengthy two part covert investigation lasting over one year and operating in jurisdictions throughout the LMD, Vancouver Island and Alberta was conducted. Two persons are charged with Chelsey's murder. This investigation cost approximately 1 million dollars, not including the annual salary for investigators. The case and expenditures are ongoing.
- b. In November 2005, pregnant Tasha Rossette was murdered in Surrey. This contract killing resulted in charges of two men following a dedicated year long investigation. This very challenging investigation was complicated by the ongoing chronic crime by the two suspects. All police investigative techniques were utilized. The cost of this investigation exceeded 1 million dollars, not including the annual salary of investigators. The case and expenditures are ongoing.
- c. In November 2005, Anthony Serdoncillo was murdered in Richmond during a home invasion. Anthony Serdoncillo was visiting a home which became the subject of a home invasion. He was murdered by the gang perpetrating the crime. He was an innocent victim in the wrong place at the wrong time. An extensive initial investigation identified a suspect gang. The suspects lived throughout the LMD. In the spring of 2007 an extensive covert investigation resulted in the charges of three persons for murder. Two suspects were identified in Halifax, Nova Scotia and had no ties to the LMD. Months of police work were involved. This investigation continues and costs exceed \$700,000 not including the annual salary of investigators.
- d. In January 2006, Brian Sinclair was murdered in Coquitlam. This investigation required an innovative covert investigation. A young offender has been charged with the murder. Months of investigation and several hundred thousand dollars were expended, not including the annual salary of investigators.



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- e. In June 2006, Lilly Rong disappeared from a casino in Richmond. IHIT investigators identified two suspects after a lengthy investigation. The investigation was conducted in various locations throughout British Columbia and a suspect has been charged. The suspect led investigators to the buried body of Rong in the Jerricho beach area of Vancouver.
 - f. In June 2006, Kee Woo was murdered in a home invasion in Surrey. This organized crime murder investigation identified suspects living in the LMD. The suspects were found to also be engaged in criminal activity throughout the LMD. A project investigation, lasting many months, resulted in murder charges. The investigation costs were in excess of \$500,000 not including the annual salary of investigators.

Clearance rates for IHIT homicide investigations in 2003 were approximately 80%. Clearance rates for IHIT homicide investigations in 2004 were approximately 77%. Clearance rates for IHIT homicide investigations in 2005 were approximately 68% with many investigations still active. Rates for 2006 indicate the current clearance rate for homicide cases, to date is 63%.

In early 2004 IHIT examined homicide clearance rates for seven of the larger Lower Mainland RCMP Detachments as well as the Abbotsford Police Department and New Westminster Police Department. There are many variables to be considered when analyzing historical data. They include data entry and scoring failures. They do not consider the continually evolving complexity of crime or the changing, and ever more demanding requirements of crown counsel and the courts. The study determined that between 1998 and 2002 clearance rates were approximately 50%.

IHIT investigates numerous complex murder cases each year. These expensive investigations represent extreme financial pressures for individual agencies. The IHIT operational budget, achieved through the IHIT funding formula, has been met in 2006. Each partner agency contributes to IHIT based on an accepted funding formula. This formula utilizes a percentage of a five year rolling average of criminal code statistics combined with a percentage of population, to arrive at agency budgeted costs. To illustrate this further, a partner agency may be required to pay, for example, \$400,000 annually to become a IHIT partner. That \$400,000 is used to pay the salary dollars, benefits and overtime for any investigators from that partner agency embedded in IHIT. All residual funding is pooled into an operational budget.

The following details the IHIT municipal budget over the past four years:

- a. 2006-2007 budget \$9,315,000 - Final expenses of \$9,161,193.
- b. 2005-2006 budget \$8,995,691 - Final expenses of \$8,684,885.
- c. 2004-2005 budget \$7,550,000 - Final expenses of \$7,932,932
- d. 2003-2004 budget \$6,155,277 - Final expenses of \$5,750,782.



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The 2004-2005 budget overage was shared by all partner agencies based on the same formula used to determine their IHIT participation.

In 2006-2007 IHIT became the pilot project for the “crime scene liaison officer” program. All IHIT homicides are now attended by members of the Forensic Laboratory Evidence Recovery Unit in addition to Police Forensic Identification Section personnel. These efforts are designed to streamline and prioritize laboratory submissions. The attendance of a laboratory specialist ensures a collaborative approach to analysis decisions and is assisting with the forensic lab backlog.

IHIT is scheduled to implement one additional team in April of 2008. IHIT continues to champion “canvassing training” and the coordination of a flexible pool of trained personnel to canvass large areas for information. In 2007-2008, IHIT plans to continue with training LMD agencies and is adding a first responders element to assist in educating front line personnel with their critical function when attending homicides or other serious crimes.

In addition, both “E” Division Major Crime Unit, and IHIT are the primary units for the police shooting - observer project. RCMP jurisdictions experiencing an officer involved shooting may be involved in the project, as a result. The Commission for Public Complaints will embed an independent observer, to report on IHIT’s independence and neutrality during these investigations. This will not effect municipal police department partners.

Over the course of the past year, I have had several opportunities to showcase IHIT both nationally and internationally. It is widely recognized that IHIT’s model is modern, progressive and meets the needs of our current environment. IHIT is the envy of many in this country. In my view, it’s success cannot be measured in clearance rates alone. It must be noted that the IHIT model increases our partner agency’s ability to continue to conduct other serious local investigations. IHIT, by pooling financial resources, has managed to successfully conduct numerous high end project investigations and remain within budget. This provides municipalities the ability to forecast homicide costs rather than react to unexpected costs that result from complex multi-jurisdictional investigations.

IHIT’s team structure provides intense training and develops experience in personnel. The benefit of the case load and number of annual project investigations results in a continued pool of experienced investigators that would be difficult to maintain at a local level. Comprehensive homicide investigation is non-discretionary. While IHIT can not guarantee the resolution of all murders, it can guarantee that a consistent pool of experienced investigators will respond with the appropriate investigative structure. Those resources work with a single professional ideology and are supported when innovative and complex investigative techniques are required. Every stakeholder can assure a victim’s family that, all that could be done, was done.



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The nature of crime, the sophistication of criminals, and the complexity of prosecution have changed in the past decade. The personnel who make up IHIT sacrifice much in order to achieve success. Long hours, periods of on call and unpredictable call outs create extreme pressures and demands. Project investigations which are increasingly necessary, require a level of expertise and tenacity unparalleled in policing.

I am confident that the dedicated investigators, civilian members and public service employees that make up IHIT and represent each partner agency will continue to be highly successful in the upcoming year. This inspiring group of people are, and will continue to be, supported in their difficult task through the structure provided by the partners commitment to IHIT.

I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you in person and provide you with further information on the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team or answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at the numbers below.

Original Signed By

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