

For more than 20 years, a serial murderer has been killing women in South L.A., and the community has not been informed!

Did you know that the serial murders of Black women (and one Black man) have been going on unresolved in South L.A. since the 1980s? Law enforcement has divided the murders into three sets, but the time periods overlap and it isn't even clear how many women have actually lost their lives in this brutal and vicious way.

Because the killings were not connected as serial murders, the enormous tragedy of the situation has been hidden and downplayed, and vital evidence, connections and patterns may have been missed. Public attention would have been greater if the total numbers of murders had been known which would have been a pressure on law enforcement and elected officials to make the investigation a priority. Lives might have been saved and the community better protected from further attacks.

The first set of murders was announced in the mid-1980s after eleven women had already been killed in a 40-mile radius in South L.A. The police falsely referred to the killer as the "Prostitute Killer," a name then picked up by the press.

With community pressure from the **Black Coalition Fighting Back Serial Murders:**

- The police and the press changed the name of the killings to South Side Slayer from Prostitute Killer.
- The community was informed in a grassroots public information campaign.
- Press attention was won locally, nationally and internationally.
- A reward was established, and the law enforcement task force was expanded.

By the end of the 1980s the public was told that the murders committed by the Southside Slayer were solved.

The police named the second set of murders the "Strawberry Murders" (a name given by LAPD

because they said the victims were mainly women who exchanged sex for drugs). A Sheriff's Deputy, Ricky Ross, was arrested and charged with three of the murders and then subsequently released for lack of credible evidence.

In a story broken by the *L.A. Weekly* newspaper, it emerged that the murders are still going on: the last known victim was killed in 2007 and evidence has linked the recent murders to the killer from the 1980s. He is now called the "Grim Sleeper." Additionally, the police have only recently released the tape from a 911 call in 1987 from a witness who saw the driver of a van dumping of a body, giving the description of the vehicle and license number to the police.

Families of several of the victims were never notified by law enforcement that their loved ones were killed by a serial murderer—and neither was the lone survivor of the attacks. Each was made to believe that it had been a random killer. Many families had to learn from press articles or from television! Crucial patterns of evidence have been missed.

Why was so little done in 20 years to solve these murders? Why did LAPD bungle the investigation of evidence found? Why was the 911 eyewitness report of a body being dumped kept hidden from the community for more than 20 years? Why were family members kept in the dark?

If the murders had not happened in South L.A. against working-class Black women but in Beverly Hills or some other affluent neighborhood would they have been handled with the same lack of care and seriousness, would they be so under-reported by the media? What do you think?

WE DEMAND ANSWERS! WE DEMAND JUSTICE!